Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ

Study

A compilation of the Verses of the Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ

Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan,

English translations

And Commentaries

Contents

About this Study - Organizational Notes

For each chapter of the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, there are two sections (detailed contents of each follows below):

a) "**Summaries, etc**.": This section includes summaries, outlines, commentaries and Batchelor's "poetic" translation for each chapter of the text.

b) "**Kārikā Study**": This section includes versions of the text in Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan (1.), a compilation of translations in English (2.), and commentaries (3.).

a) "Summaries, etc."

Title	Font	Source and Notes
MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)	Times New Roman	**Source:** Mabja Jangchub Tsondru, "Ornament of Reason – The Great Commentary to Nagarjuna's *Root of the Middle Way*." Trans. Dharmachakra Translation Committee, Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2011. **Notes:** The topical outline included in this study is from the Appendix. Mabja was active in the 12th c. and one of the first Tibetan Madhyamaka commentators to rely on Candrakirti. As the "Ornament of Reason" comes to over 500 pages, it did not seem practical to include it in this study.
TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)	Arial	**Source:** rJe Tsong Khapa, "Ocean of Reasoning – A Great Commentary on Nagarjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*." Trans. Geshe Ngawang Samten & Jay L. Garfield, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. **Notes:** Like Mabja's work, the "Ocean of Reasoning" by Tsong Khapa (1357-1419) comes to over 500 pages. Included in this study are three sections on each chapter from the commentary: the Outline, Explanation and Summary. This is just to give a general sense of the structure and approach of Tsong Khapa's commentary (which seems to follow the structure of Mabja's topical outline above).
INADA (Chapter Introductions)	Garamond	**Source:** Kenneth Inada, "Nāgārjuna. A Translation of his MūlaMadhyamaka-kārikā with an Introductory Essay." Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1970. **Notes:** Inada's translations of the verses are included below.
KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)	Corbel	**Source:** David Kalupahana, "MūlaMadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna." Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991. **Notes:** These chapter overviews are excerpted from the "Analysis of the Karika" section of the Introduction. Other sections of the Introduction are included in the "Supplemental Introductions" section and Kalupahana's translation and commentary on each verse are included in the Kārikā Study.
BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")	Cambria	**Source:** Stephen Batchelor, "Verses from the Center: A Buddhist Vision of the Sublime." New York: Riverhead Books, 2000. **Notes:** This is Batchelor's "free, poetic" version of the text, which does not line up with the original verse for verse. Also see Kārikā Study below for Batchelor's more literal translation from the Tibetan.
JONES (COMMENTARY)	Constantia	**Source:** Richard H. Jones, "Nagarjuna – Buddhism's Most Important Philosopher." New York: Jackson Square Books, 2010. **Notes:** This is Jones' chapter by chapter commentary. His translation is included in the Kārikā Study. His essay on emptiness and explication of key terms from the same publication are included in the "Supplemental Introductions".
GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)	Times New Roman	**Source:** Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, "The Sun of Wisdom: Teachings on the Noble Nagarjuna's Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way." Trans. Ari Goldfield, Boston & London: Shambala, 2003. **Notes:** Includes selected verses which are also in the Kārikā Study.

Note: the above commentaries, outlines and summaries are included for each of the 27 chapters of the text, but only some are included in the "Introductions and Overviews" and "Dedication" sections.

Supplemental Introductions and Commentaries

This includes introductions, essays or commentaries on the work as a whole, as well as on selected Chapters.

Sprung – excerpts from "Preface: Text and Translation" and "The Thought of the Middle Way: Translator's Introduction" from: Mervyn Sprung, "Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way: The Essential Chapters from the Prasannapada of Candrakirti." London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.

Jones – "Essay: Emptiness – The Philosophy of Nagarjuna" and "Twelve Key Sanskrit Terms for Understanding Nagarjuna" from: Richard Jones, "Nagarjuna – Buddhism's Most Important Philosopher." New York: Jackson Square Books, 2010.

Kalupahana – This section includes the remaining section of the Introduction (with the exception of "Nagarjuna's Mission" and "Structure of the Karika" sections included in the "Overview of the Whole Text" section above) from: David Kalupahana, "MūlaMadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna." Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991.

Westerhoff – "Supplemental Introductions" includes Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 10 from: Jan Westerhoff, "Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka – A Philosophical Introduction." Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. "Supplemental Commentaries" to MMK Chapters I, II, III, XIII & XVIII include (in order) Chapters 5, 6, 8, 9 and 7 of "Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka."

b) "Kārikā Study"

1. Original Sanskrit text, translations into Chinese and Tibetan, and romanizations:

Text	**Font**	**Source**
DEVANAGARI मध्यमकशास्त्रम्	Mangal	http://dsbc.uwest.edu/node/8237 (accessed June 2011)
CHINESE CHARACTERS 中論	Word file: MS Mincho. PDF file: PDF default	https://www2.hf.uio.no/polyglotta/index.php?page=volume&vid=27 With minor changes based on: http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T30/1564_001.htm Specfically, the Polyglotta version: (both accessed June 2011) - Slipped the last verse of Ch VII into Ch VIII so that all of Ch VIII is misaligned. - Seems to leave out the extra verse in Chinese in Ch XIII. - Does not skip XXI.6 which has no corresponding verse in Chinese. - Slipped the last verse of Ch XXIII into Ch XXIV so that all of Ch XXIV is misaligned. - In Ch XXVI, there are 3 fewer verses in the Chinese. Verses 4 and 6 are correctly skipped, but then verse 7 is skipped rather than verse 11.
TIBETAN SCRIPT དབུ་མ་རྩ་བའི་ཚིག་ལེའུ་བྱས་པ་ཤེས་རབ་ཅེས་བྱ་བ།	Microsoft Himalaya	http://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/Mulamadhyamakakarika:_Verses_from_the_Centre (accessed June 2011)
SANSKRIT romanization Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ	Times New Roman	https://www2.hf.uio.no/polyglotta/index.php?page=volume&vid=27 With minor changes based on: http://dsbc.uwest.edu/node/8237 (both accessed June 2011)
PINYIN romanization **zhōng lùn**	**Franklin Gothic Medium**	Converted from the Chinese text using (accessed June 2011): http://www.words-chinese.com/pinyin-converter/
TIBETAN romanization rgya gar skad du	Times New Roman	https://www2.hf.uio.no/polyglotta/index.php?page=volume&vid=27 (accessed June 2011)

Differences between the Sanskrit (& Tibetan) and Chinese versions:

MMK Chapter	**# of Verses in Sanskrit**	**# of Verses in Chinese**	**Specific Variances**
III	9	8	Sanskrit III.7 has no counterpart in the Chinese
VII	34	35	Sanskrit VII.7 = Chinese VII.7-8
VIII	13	12	Sanskrit VIII.11 has no counterpart in the Chinese
XIII	8	9	Chinese XIII.4 has no counterpart in the Sanskrit
XXI	21	20	Sanskrit XXI.6 has no counterpart in the Chinese
XXIII	25	24	Sanskrit XXIII.20 has no counterpart in the Chinese
XXVI	12	9	Sanskrit XXVI.4, 6, & 11 have no counterpart in the Chinese

2. English Translations

Translator	Font	Source and Notes
INADA (form Sanskrit)	Garamond	**Source:** Kenneth Inada, "Nāgārjuna. A Translation of his MūlaMadhyamaka-kārikā with an Introductory Essay." Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1970.
JONES (form Sanskrit)	Constantia	**Source:** Richard H. Jones, "Nagarjuna – Buddhism's Most Important Philosopher." New York: Jackson Square Books, 2010. **Notes:** Jones endeavors for "Plain English Translations".
KALUPAHANA (from Sanskrit)	Corbel	**Source:** David Kalupahana, "MūlaMadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna." Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991.
MCCAGNEY (from Sanskrit)	Times New Roman	**Source:** Nancy McCagney, "Nagarjuna and the Philosophy of Openness." Lanham, Boulder, New York & Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. **Notes:** McCagney explores "space" (akasa) as an early image of sunyata, which she renders as "openness."
NISHIJIMA (from Sanskrit?)	Arial Narrow	**Source:** http://gudoblog-e.blogspot.com/2009/08/interpretative-translation-of-mmk.html (Accessed 6/27/11) **Notes:** I am not sure if the blog version is identical to the forthcoming publication: Brad Warner and Gudo Wafu Nishijima, "Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarika." Monkfish Book Publishing, 2011.
SPRUNG (from Sanskrit)	Book Antigua	**Source:** Mervyn Sprung, "Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way: The Essential Chapters from the Prasannapada of Candrakirti." London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979. **Notes:** Does not include MMK Chapters VII, XI, XII, XIV, XVI, XVII, XX, XXI, XXVI and XXVII.
STRENG **(from Sanskrit)**	**Franklin Gothic Medium**	**Source:** Frederick Streng, "Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning." Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967. **Notes:** The version I had access to was missing: MMK IX.10 and XXVIII.6.
BOCKING (from Chinese)	KaiTi	**Source:** Brian Christopher Bocking, "AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THE CHUNG-LUN, with Nagarjuna's Middle Stanzas, a basic text of Chinese Buddhism." PhD Dissertation, The University of Leeds, 1984. **Notes:** I am not sure if this version is identical to the publication: Brian Bocking, "Nagarjuna in China: A Translation of the Middle Treatise." Edwin Mellen Press, 1995.
BATCHELOR (from Tibetan)	Cambria	**Source:** http://www.stephenbatchelor.org/verses2.htm **Notes:** Batchelor's "Literal English Translation".
DOCTOR (from Tibetan)	Century	**Source:** Mabja Jangchub Tsondru, "Ornament of Reason – The Great Commentary to Nagarjuna's *Root of the Middle Way.*" Trans. Dharmachakra Translation Committee, Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2011.
GARFIELD (from Tibetan)	Times New Roman	**Source:** Jay Garfield, "The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way - Translation and Commentary of Nāgārjuna's MūlaMadhyamakakārikā." Oxford University Press, 1995.
GARFIELD-SAMTEN (from Tibetan)	Arial	**Source:** rJe Tsong Khapa, "Ocean of Reasoning – A Great Commentary on Nagarjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā.*" Trans. Geshe Ngawang Samten & Jay L. Garfield, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. **Notes:** In the Introduction, Garfield states that this translation is on some accounts more accurate than his earlier version ("Fundamental Wisdom" 1995 above), and at other points simply represents a different but equally valid translation choice.
HAGEN (paraphrase from other translations)	Euphemia	**Source:** Unpublished, available with his audio course at: http://www.dharmafield.org/courses/middlewayCD.htm **Notes:** Hagen may be preparing this for publication.

GOLDFIELD (from Tibetan)	Times New Roman	**Source:** Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, "The Sun of Wisdom: Teachings on the Noble Nagarjuna's Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way." Trans. Ari Goldfield, Boston & London: Shambala, 2003. **Notes:** Includes only the following verses: Dedication, I.1, II.1, III.8, IV.1, IV.7-9, V.1, V.7-8, VI.1, VII.33-34, VIII.12, IX.12, X.10, X.14-15, XI.6, XII.10, XIII.7, XIV.1-2, XV.7, XV.10, XVI.1, XVI.3-6, XVI.10, XVII.33, XVIII.1-5, XVIII.9, XIX.1, XX.19, XXI.10-11, XXII.11-12, XXII.16, XXIII.9-12, XXIII.22, XXIV.14, XXIV.18-19, XXV.3, XXV.19-20, XXVI.8-12, XXVII.22, XXVII.29-30.
NG (from Sanskrit & Chinese)	Times New Roman	**Source:** Yu-kuan Ng, "T'ien-T'ai Buddhism and Early Madhyamika", Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993. **Notes:** I have just included his comparative translations of the Sanskrit and Chinese of XXIV.18.
ROBINSON (from Sanskrit & Chinese)	Times New Roman	**Source:** Richard Robinson, "Early Mādhyamika in India and China." Madison, Milwaukee, London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967. **Notes:** Incomplete – just includes the verses he translates in Chapters 2 and 3.
STCHERBATSKY (from Sanskrit)	Times New Roman	**Source:** Theodore Stcherbatsky, The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968. **Notes:** Just MMK Chapters I and XXV.
WESTERHOFF (from Sanskrit)	Times New Roman	**Source:** Jan Westerhoff, "Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka – A Philosophical Introduction." Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. **Notes:** Incomplete – just the verses I was able to extract from the text and notes.

Generally, the first column of the English translations are translations from the Sanskrit. The translations from the Sanskrit do, however, spill over into the second column frequently. The second column generally starts with the translation from the Chinese by Bocking, then includes the translations from the Tibetan. Generally, I kept the verse enumerations from the source texts, and as the editions of the text are not all in complete agreement, the enumerations sometimes vary within a single kārikā (for example, Kārikā III.7 is not included in all Sanskrit editions).

The fonts for a given author are consistent in attempt to connect the translation with the respective commentary.

In the Study, after the name of the translator, there is an indication of what language the translation was made from: **(Skt):** Translated from Sanskrit. **(Ch):** Translated from Chinese. **(Tb):** Translated from Tibetan. **(paraphrase):** A version based on other translations into English.

3. Commentaries

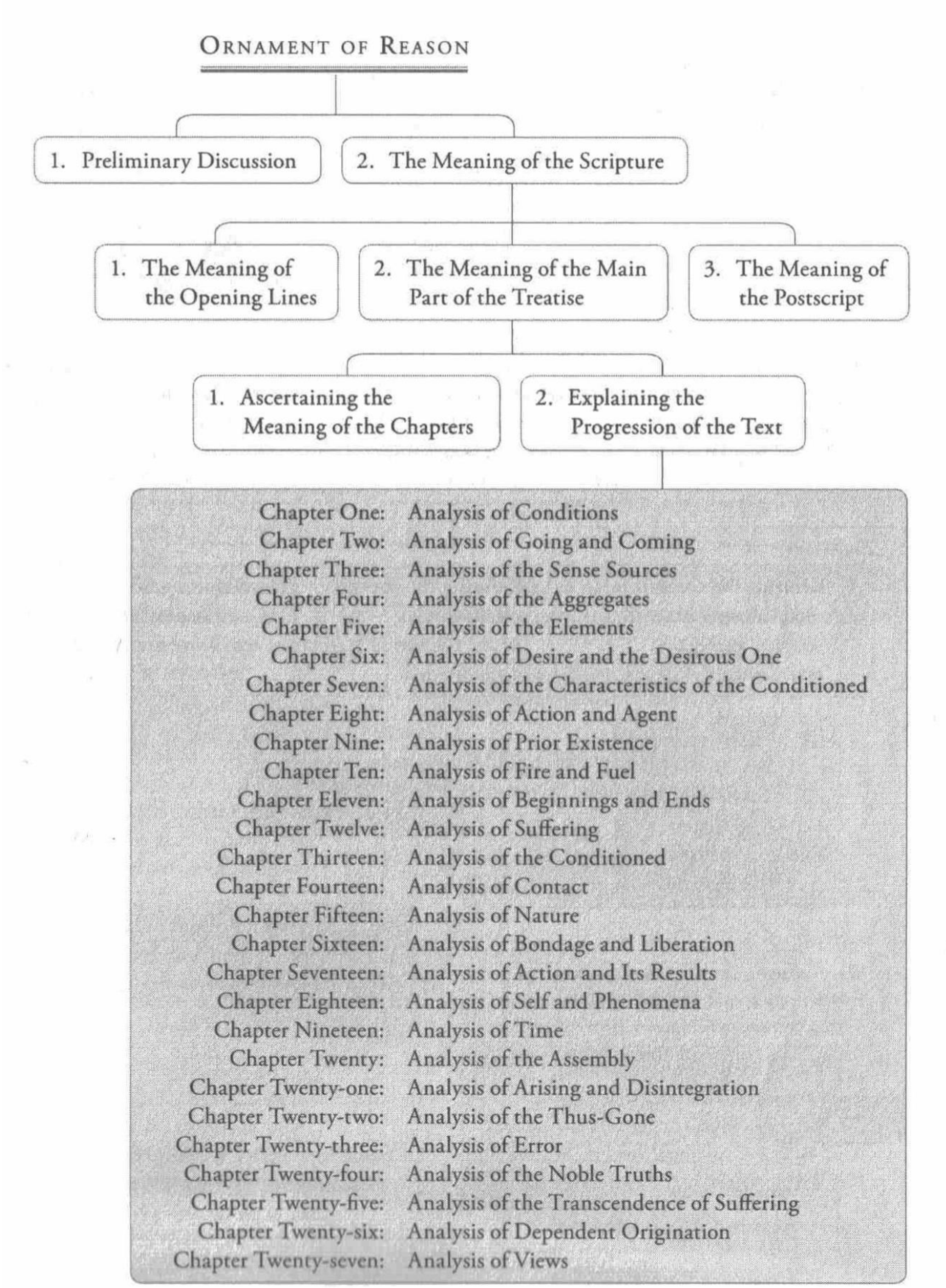
PINGALA COMMENTARY	Kaiti	**Source:** Brian Christopher Bocking, "AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THE CHUNG-LUN, with Nagarjuna's Middle Stanzas, a basic text of Chinese Buddhism." PhD Dissertation, The University of Leeds, 1984. **Notes:** Bocking's footnotes are not included in the Study. Pingala is perhaps a 4th c. Indian monk.
CANDRAKIRTI COMMENTARY	Book Antigua	**Source:** Mervyn Sprung, "Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way: The Essential Chapters from the Prasannapada of Candrakirti." London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979. **Notes:** The Chapter numbers included here refer to Sprung's enumeration, not the MMK. Includes most of the footnotes. Candrakirti, a 6th – 7th c. Indian monk, key interpreter of MMK.
KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY	Corbel	**Source:** David Kalupahana, "MūlaMadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna." Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991. **Notes:** Kalupahana contends that MMK basically extends the early Buddhist Middle Way teaching of the *Kaccayanagotta-sutta* (Discourse to Katyayana). Footnotes are not included.
GARFIELD COMMENTARY	Times New Roman	**Source:** Jay Garfield, "The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way - Translation and Commentary of Nāgārjuna's MūlaMadhyamakakārikā." Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. **Notes:** Most of the footnotes are included.

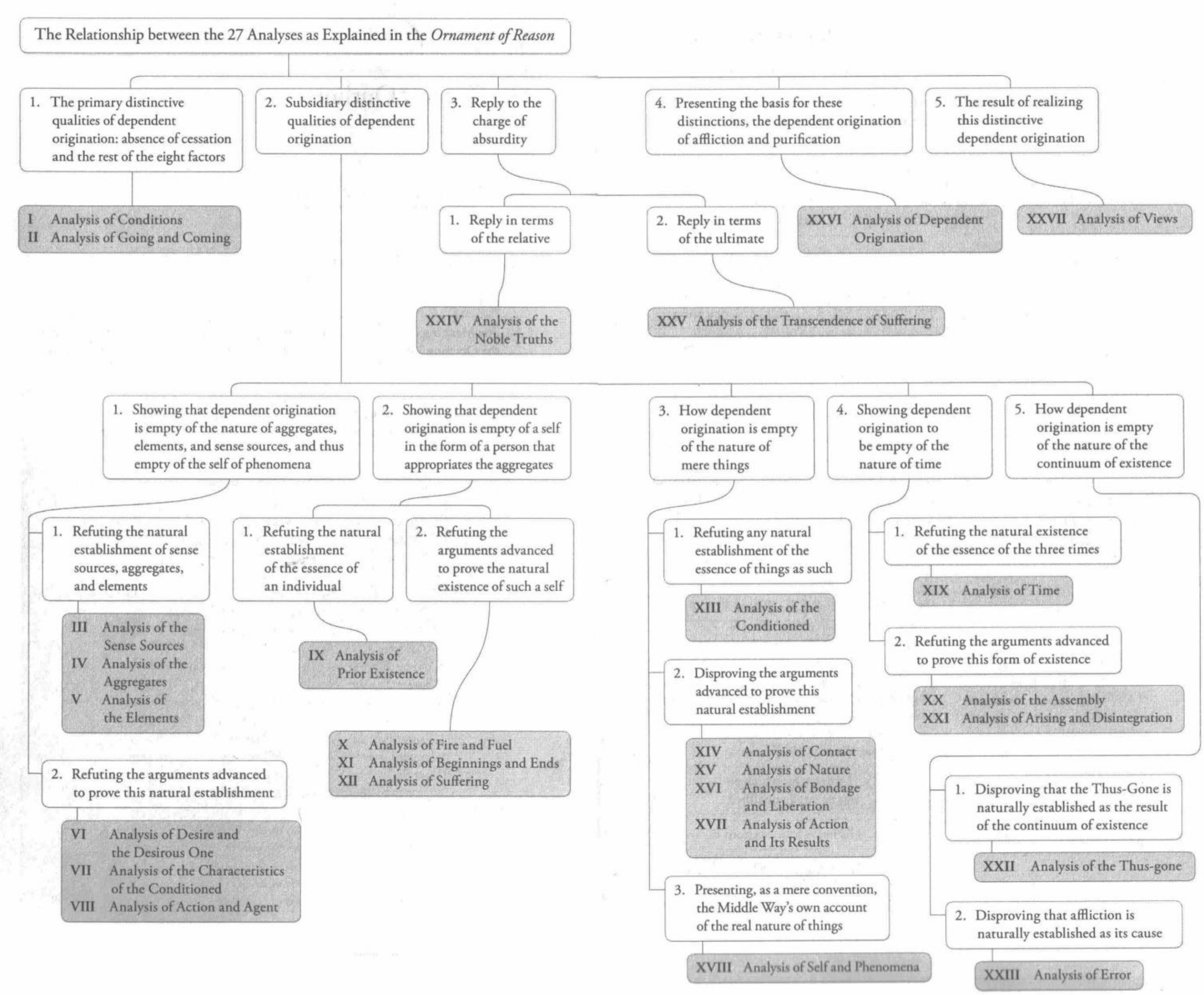
Introductions and Overviews

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

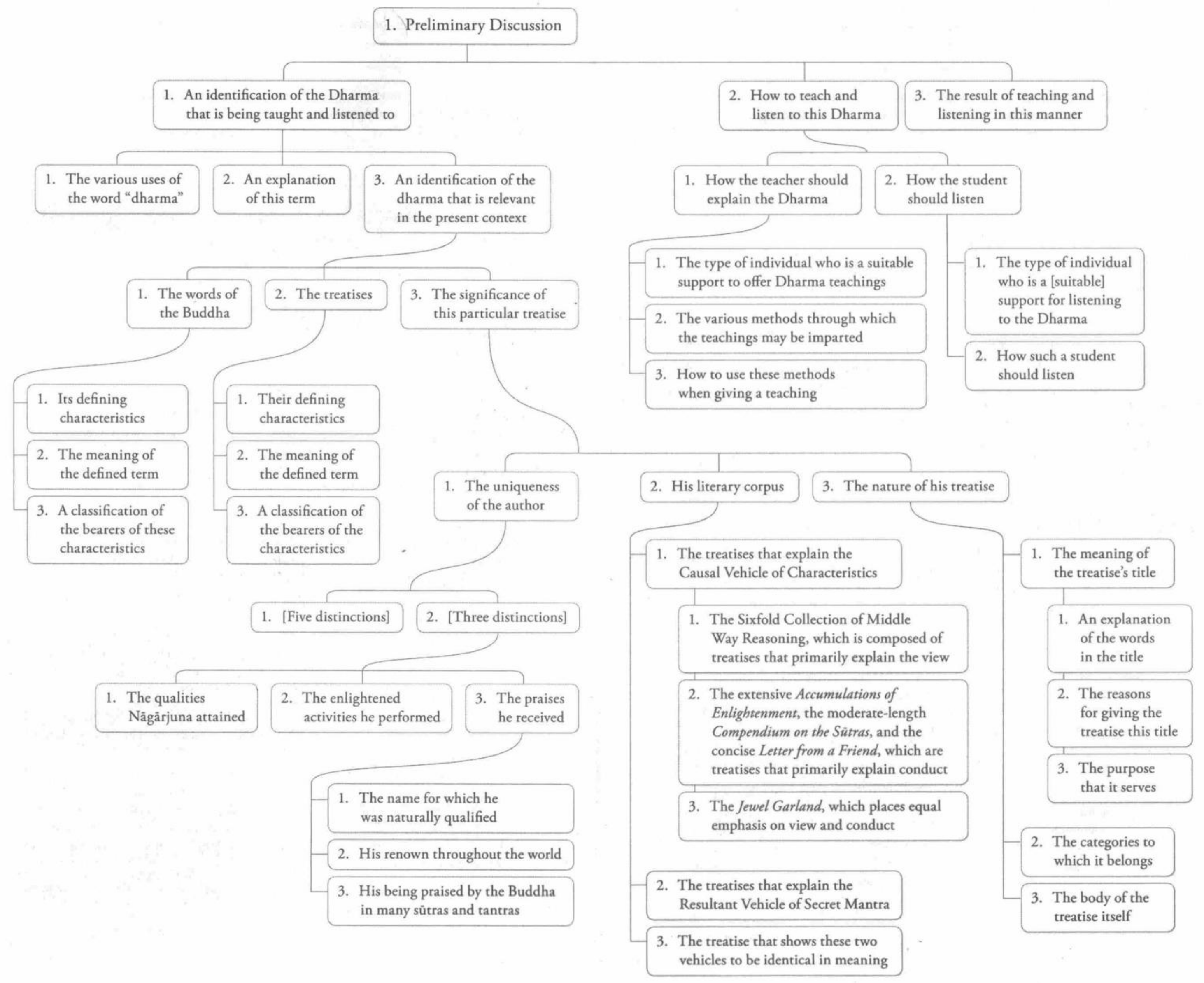
Introductions / Overviews

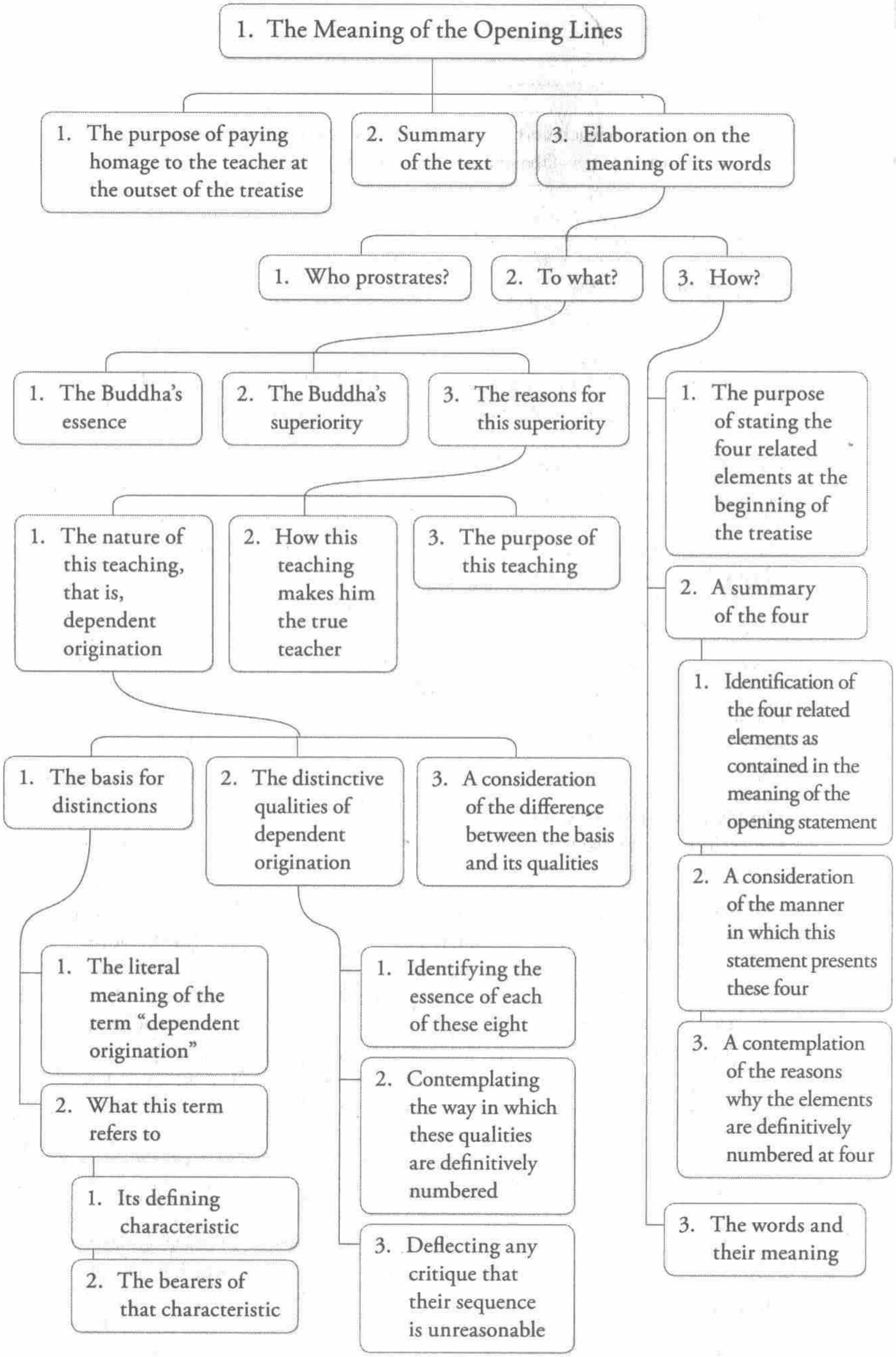
MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)

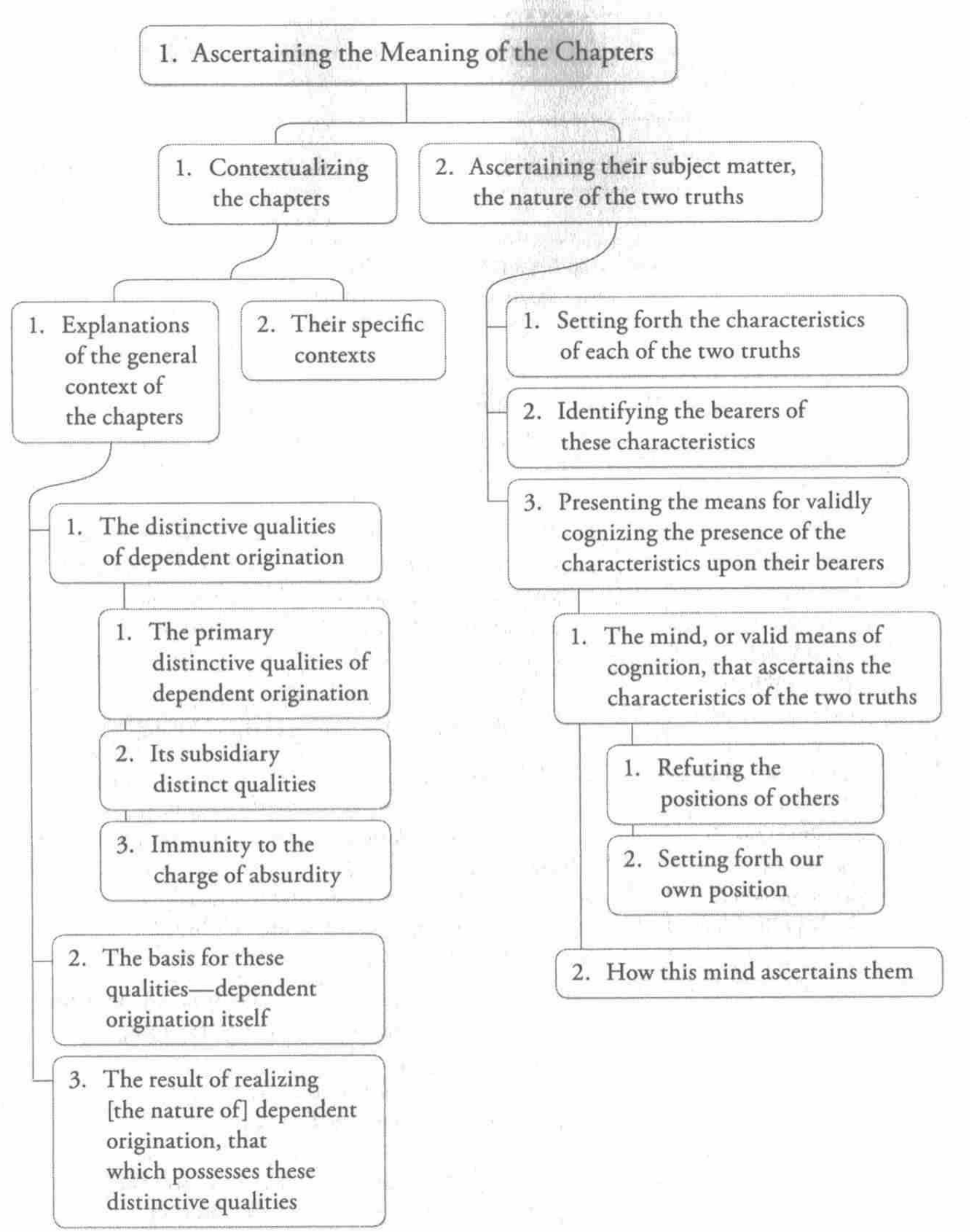




The Relationship between the 27 Analyses as Explained in the Ornament of Reason
1. The primary distinctive qualities of dependent origination: absence of cessation and the rest of the eight factors
I Analysis of Conditions
II Analysis of Going and Coming
2. Subsidiary distinctive qualities of dependent origination
3. Reply to the charge of absurdity
1. Reply in terms of the relative
XXIV Analysis of the Noble Truths
2. Reply in terms of the ultimate
XXV Analysis of the Transcendence of Suffering
4. Presenting the basis for these distinctions, the dependent origination of affliction and purification
XXVI Analysis of Dependent Origination
5. The result of realizing this distinctive dependent origination
XXVII Analysis of Views
1. Showing that dependent origination is empty of the nature of aggregates, elements, and sense sources, and thus empty of the self of phenomena
1. Refuting the natural establishment of sense sources, aggregates, and elements
III Analysis of the Sense Sources
IV Analysis of the Aggregates
V Analysis of the Elements
2. Refuting the arguments advanced to prove this natural establishment
VI Analysis of Desire and the Desirous One
VII Analysis of the Characteristics of the Conditioned
VIII Analysis of Action and Agent
2. Showing that dependent origination is empty of a self in the form of a person that appropriates the aggregates
1. Refuting the natural establishment of the essence of an individual
IX Analysis of Prior Existence
2. Refuting the arguments advanced to prove the natural existence of such a self
X Analysis of Fire and Fuel
XI Analysis of Beginnings and Ends
XII Analysis of Suffering
3. How dependent origination is empty of the nature of mere things
1. Refuting any natural establishment of the essence of things as such
XIII Analysis of the Conditioned
2. Disproving the arguments advanced to prove this natural establishment
XIV Analysis of Contact
XV Analysis of Nature
XVI Analysis of Bondage and Liberation
XVII Analysis of Action and Its Results
3. Presenting, as a mere convention, the Middle Way's own account of the real nature of things
XVIII Analysis of Self and Phenomena
4. Showing dependent origination to be empty of the nature of time
1. Refuting the natural existence of the essence of the three times
XIX Analysis of Time
2. Refuting the arguments advanced to prove this form of existence
XX Analysis of the Assembly
XXI Analysis of Arising and Disintegration
5. How dependent origination is empty of the nature of the continuum of existence
1. Disproving that the Thus-Gone is naturally established as the result of the continuum of existence
XXII Analysis of the Thus-gone
2. Disproving that affliction is naturally established as its cause
XXIII Analysis of Error


1. Preliminary Discussion
1. An identification of the Dharma that is being taught and listened to
2. How to teach and listen to this Dharma
3. The result of teaching and listening in this manner
1. The various uses of the word "dharma"
2. An explanation of this term
3. An identification of the dharma that is relevant in the present context
1. How the teacher should explain the Dharma
2. How the student should listen
1. The type of individual who is a suitable support to offer Dharma teachings
2. The various methods through which the teachings may be imparted
3. How to use these methods when giving a teaching
1. The type of individual who is a [suitable] support for listening to the Dharma
2. How such a student should listen
1. The words of the Buddha
2. The treatises
3. The significance of this particular treatise
1. Its defining characteristics
2. The meaning of the defined term
3. A classification of the bearers of these characteristics
1. Their defining characteristics
2. The meaning of the defined term
3. A classification of the bearers of the characteristics
1. The uniqueness of the author
2. His literary corpus
3. The nature of his treatise
1. [Five distinctions]
2. [Three distinctions]
1. The qualities Nāgārjuna attained
2. The enlightened activities he performed
3. The praises he received
1. The name for which he was naturally qualified
2. His renown throughout the world
3. His being praised by the Buddha in many sūtras and tantras
1. The treatises that explain the Causal Vehicle of Characteristics
1. The Sixfold Collection of Middle Way Reasoning, which is composed of treatises that primarily explain the view
2. The extensive *Accumulations of Enlightenment*, the moderate-length *Compendium on the Sūtras*, and the concise *Letter from a Friend*, which are treatises that primarily explain conduct
3. The *Jewel Garland*, which places equal emphasis on view and conduct
2. The treatises that explain the Resultant Vehicle of Secret Mantra
3. The treatise that shows these two vehicles to be identical in meaning
1. The meaning of the treatise's title
1. An explanation of the words in the title
2. The reasons for giving the treatise this title
3. The purpose that it serves
2. The categories to which it belongs
3. The body of the treatise itself


1. The Meaning of the Opening Lines
1. The purpose of paying homage to the teacher at the outset of the treatise
2. Summary of the text
3. Elaboration on the meaning of its words
1. Who prostrates?
2. To what?
3. How?
1. The Buddha's essence
2. The Buddha's superiority
3. The reasons for this superiority
1. The nature of this teaching, that is, dependent origination
2. How this teaching makes him the true teacher
3. The purpose of this teaching
1. The basis for distinctions
2. The distinctive qualities of dependent origination
3. A consideration of the difference between the basis and its qualities
1. The literal meaning of the term "dependent origination"
2. What this term refers to
1. Its defining characteristic
2. The bearers of that characteristic
1. Identifying the essence of each of these eight
2. Contemplating the way in which these qualities are definitively numbered
3. Deflecting any critique that their sequence is unreasonable
1. The purpose of stating the four related elements at the beginning of the treatise
2. A summary of the four
1. Identification of the four related elements as contained in the meaning of the opening statement
2. A consideration of the manner in which this statement presents these four
3. A contemplation of the reasons why the elements are definitively numbered at four
3. The words and their meaning



KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

[Overview of the whole text]

Nagarjuna's Mission

Nagarjuna, who lived at a time when the Theravada-Mahayana conflict had not degenerated to the level that is presented in the *Saddharmapundarika*, therefore had an already different mission. It was indeed not the least different from the mission that lay before Moggaliputtatissa, to expose the untenability of certain heretical views that were gradually becoming popular in the Buddhist tradition. A careful reading of the *Karika* will reveal the fact that Nagarjuna had all the help he needed to achieve this task. As mentioned before, even after the transference of the Pali canon to Sri Lanka, the discourses and the Abhidharma texts survived in India. Thus the discourses of the Buddha as well as the tradition of the disciples (*sravaka*) were available to Nagarjuna. The

humility with which Nagarjuna bows down to the Buddha and the respect with which he treats the Buddha's disciples (*sravaka*)62 are in complete contrast to the unsympathetic attitude of the later Mahayanists toward the earlier Buddhist tradition.

In the following analysis of the *Karika*, it will be shown that Nagarjuna attempted to discredit heterodox views, especially those of the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas, and establish the non-substantiality of all *dharmas* (Chapters III- XV) as well as the non-substantiality of *pudgala* (Chapters XVI- XXI) and thereafter to explicate the positive doctrines of the Buddha as embodied in the early discourses like the *Kaccayanagottasutta*. The present analysis is, therefore, contrary to the more popular interpretation of Nagarjuna espoused by commentators like Candrakirti who emphasized the *reductio ad absurdum* (*prasangika*) method. It will be more sympathetic to the interpretations offered by Nagarjuna's disciples like Bhavaviveka and the more positive thinkers of the Madhyamika school. While highlighting the ingenuity and philosophical maturity of Nagarjuna, the present analysis will at the same time be unsympathetic toward the myth that Nagarjuna was a second Buddha.

Structure of the Karika

Selections from the works of a major philosopher belonging to a tradition may be helpful in introducing that tradition but not in providing a complete view of that philosopher's thought. The reason is that when a philosopher presents his ideas in some form, he feels that everything he has said in that work is relevant to his thought. If anything that he has said is irrelevant to what he proposes to convey to his readers, he would be not only wasting his time, but also the reader's.

Attempts have often been made by modern scholars to pick out selections or chapters from the works of eminent philosophers of the East, hoping thereby to provide a complete and accurate picture of their ideas. Sometimes they are considered to be *essential* secitons or chapters, the implication being that the rest is inessential. 63 This undoubtedly has contributed to a great deal of misunderstanding and sometimes deliberate distortion of the author's ideas. Considering the unsatisfactoriness of such a method, the present analysis of Nagarjuna's thought will be presented on the basis of an examination of his *Karika* taken as a whole, with every word, every verse, and every chapter in it treated as in integral part of that work. This is done in the absence of any concrete evidence that some portions of this work are not by Nagarjuna.

A superficial reading of this work, with 448 verses divided into 27 chapters, could leave the reader with the impression that the text is repetitious. This wrong impression will disappear like a mirage if one keeps in mind the circumstances that led to the complication of this work, the motivation for writing it, the background in which it was written, and the goal that was to be achieved. Such considerations will enable one to see a carefully executed plan or structure in the *Karika*. In order to highlight this structure, the *Karika* will be analysed here into four major sections, without changing the sequence either of the individual verses or of the chapters.

Section I

This first section includes Chapters I and II, which deal with the most fundamental doctrines of Buddhism, causation and change. The problem of causation or "dependent arising" is taken up in the first of these. If this were a text written during the Buddha's day, this chapter would undoubtedly have dealt with theories of existence presented by the traditional schools of Indian philosophy advocating the reality of a permanent self (*atman*) and the Materialist school that denied such a self (*an-atman*) thereby denying the continuity of the human person as well as his moral responsibility. However, Nagarjuna was living in the second century AD and his problems, as mentioned earlier, were created more by the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas than by the non-Buddhist schools. This is clearly evident from the way in which Nagarjuna begins his first chapter. The lust verse in this chapter refers to four different theories of causation or arming: (i) self-causation, (ii) external causation, (iii) both self- and external causation, and (iv) arising out of a non-cause. After enumerating four such theories, any further explanation would naturally commence with an analysis of the lust of these four theories, self-causation (*svata-utpatti*). Thus, the four types of relations (*pratyaya*) referred to in the next verse should be taken as examples of the theory of self-causation (*svata-utpatti*), even though the most respected modern interpreter of Nagarjuna, namely T.R.V. Murti, following the footsteps of Candrakirti, took these four types of causal relations to represent the theory of external causation, and not self-causation.64 He assumed that self-causation was presented by the Hindu schools and external causation was a theory advocated by the early Buddhists only. As explained above, the early Buddhist theory of causation cannot be placed under the category of either selfcausation or external causation. Nagarjuna was clearly aware of this and therefore, even though in the first verse he denied the possibility of any one of the four causal theories, in the second verse he recognizes four conditions (*pratyaya*) without denying themthough to make his analysis more comprehensive he denies a fifth condition. The denial comes only in the third verse, but what is important to note

is that it is not a denial of the four conditions (*pratyaya*) but of the manner in which the condition is considered to be related to the effect. When Nagarjuna said, "The self nature of an existent is not evident in the causal condition, etc." (*Na hi svabhavo bhavanam pratyayadisu vidyate,* I. 3), he was not rejecting or denying conditions, but only selfnature (*svabhava*) that some philosophers were positing in the condition (*pratyaya*) in order to account for the arising of the effect. This is a quite clear indication that Nagarjuna was not rejecting the Adhidharma theory of conditions but only its interpretation by some of the metaphysicians, in this particular case that of the Sarvastivadins. As pointed out above, there is every evidence that it was the Sarvastivadins who interpreted the theory of conditions (*pratyaya*) on the basis of a conception of substance (*svabhava*). In the same verse, Nagarjuna proceeds to deny external causation (*parata-utpatti*) or, more specifically, the conception of "other nature" (*para-bhava*) advocated by the Sautrantikas. If this background is kept in mind, the understanding of Nagarjuna's ideas in the *Karika* is not as formidable as has been assumed.

Chapter II deals with the problems creatednot by an empirical theory of change and impermanence (*anityata*), for that was a fundamental conception of early Buddhismby a more metaphysical theory of change and impermanence based on a logical or even a psychological theory of moments (*ksanavada*).

Section II

The second section includes thirteen chapters, beginning with an examination of sense faculties (*indriya,* Chapter III) and ending with an examination of substance (*svabhava,* Chapter XV). The entire section is an attempt to establish the doctrine of the nonsubstantiality of phenomena (*dharma-nairatmya*) without having to get rid of any one of the categories such as the aggregates (*skandha*), spheres of sense (*ayatana*), and elements (*dhatu*), all of which were part of the early Buddhist teachings embodied in the discourses as well as in the Abhidharma. Almost all the important subjects dealt with in early Buddhism are taken up, once again not with the intention of rejecting them, but with a determination to rid them of any metaphysical explanation, especially of existence (*astitva*) and of nonexistence (*nastitva*), implying permanence (*sasvata*) and annihilation (*uccheda*) which the Buddha was openly rejecting in the *Kaccayanagotta-sutta*.

Section III

The third section includes eleven chapters from XVI to XXVI. It is a section that has caused confusion in the minds of many who wrote on Nagarjuna's thought. First, many of the topics dealt with in the previous section are again analysed here. This gave the impression that the text is repetitive and therefore it is possible to ignore some of its parts when presenting Nagarjuna's philosophy. For example, the examination of action and agent (*karma-karaka*) was attempted in Chapter VIII, and a longer chapter (XVII) on the examination of the fruit of action (*karma-phala*) is included in this section. Secondly, this particular chapter (XVII) deals with the doctrine of karma in a more positive way, asserting the existence of a more appropriate view than the one criticized at the beginning of the chapter. Such an assertion seems to go against not only the doctrine of emptiness (*suyata*), as it is generally understood by modern scholars, but also the view that neither the Buddha nor Nagarjuna had a view to propound.

However, reading the eleven chapters one cannot help coming to the conclusion that they were intended to establish the non-substantiality of the individual (*pudgala-nairatmya*) but not to eliminate the conception of an individual or person altogether. The conception of the individual involves the problems of bondage and freedom (*bandhana-moksa*) and, after defining these, five chapters are devoted to the problem of bondage. These five chapters are undoubtedly commentary on a verse that seems to have been extremely popular among the Buddhists and which both Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu were conversant with, for we find the latter composing a whole treatise called Karmasiddhiprakarana.65 This verse is quoted by Candrakirti in his commentary, and runs thus:

Actions are not destroyed even by [the passage of] hundred myriads of aeons. Having reached the harmony of conditions and the proper time, they bear fruits for the human beings.

Na pranasyanti karmani kalpakotisatair api, samagrim prapya kalam ca phalanti khalu dehinam.66

The denial of a permanent self (*atman*) by the Buddha prompted his critics to insist that the Buddha could not satisfactorily explain the problem of moral responsibility. The present verse is only a summary of the Buddha's causal explanation of the doctrine of moral responsibility, not an admission of a permanent and eternal *karma*. In fact, the determinism that may appear with the reading of the first line, is immediately corrected with the conditionality specified in the second line. Three main topics are dealt with here: the imperishability of karma (*avipranasa*), the harmony of conditions (*samagri*) and the appropriate time (*kala*). It is therefore not surprising to see Nagarjuna inserting two chapters on "harmony" (*samagri*, XIX) and time (*kala* XX), after stating the "imperishability" of karma (XVII) and denying the existence of a permanent and eternal "self" (*atman*, XVIII). To eliminate any one of these

chapters as inessential to the understanding of Nagarjuna's thought is, therefore, highly unwarranted.

After a clarification of the meaning of bondage (*bandhana*) in the context of a human being who is without a permanent and eternal self and who still continues to wander along experiencing births and deaths, happiness and suffering, Chapter XXII takes up a person who has attained freedom (*moksa*), who has "thus gone" (*tathagata*) without having to wander along as a person in bondage. No other issue in Buddhist thought has been as misunderstood and misinterpreted, not only by the non-Buddhists, but also by the Buddhists themselves, as the conception of *tathagata*. Probably for this reason, Nagarjuna felt the need to begin his discussion of freedom with an examination of the conception of *tathagata*. It will be shown that Nagarjuna's analysis follows exactly the method of analysis given by the Buddha. The chapter that follows explains the reasons for such misconceptions (*viparyasa, XXIII).*

Modern scholarship on Nagarjuna has empahsized the conception of two truths to the complete neglect of his explanation of the four truths as enunciated by the Buddha. It will be shown that the two truths in Nagarjuna are not an improvement on the four noble truths, nor a special insight on the part of Nagarjuna, but an understanding of a doctrine that is already clearly expressed in the early discourses. This lengthy chapter (XXIV) concludes with a recognition of the four noble truths and the doctrine of dependent arising that is the foundation of the four noble truths. The chapter on *nirvana* (XXV) is a refutation of the absolutist interpretation of the notion of freedom and a determined attempt to go back to the non-absolutist form of Buddhism enunciated in the early discourses. Contrary to the view of most modern scholars of Nagarjuna's thought, Chapter XXVI (*Dvadasangaparksa*) is here presented as an elaboration of the Buddha's own conclusion in the *Kaccayanagotta-sutta*. It deals with the Buddha's positive explanation of how a human being in bondage can free himself from the mass of suffering.

Section IV

Nagarjuna could have concluded his treatise with the previous section. However, he was aware that his most favorite discoursethe *Kaccayanagotta-sutta*began with the queston regarding "right view (*sammaditthi*). Nagarjuna has already explained almost every aspect of the Buddha's doctrine and shown what constitutes a "right view" as against the "wrong or confused views" (*micchaditthi*) that appeared in the Buddhist tradition. Yet there were some views that the Buddha left aside without either asserting or denying them. These pertained to the ten, and sometimes fourteen, unexplained or undeclared questions (a*vyakata*, Sk. *avyakrta*). A treatment of these questions was needed before Nagarjuna could make a final comment about the attitude of the Buddha, the "freed one'' (*nibbuta*), with regard to all varieties of views, whether they be right or wrong. One could hardly expect a better conclusion to a text intended to bring about freedom from all obsessions (*prapancopasama*) than this last chapter. It represents an explanation of the highest form of freedom, that is, freedom from ideological constraints, that the Buddha as well as his disciples (*sravaka*) had attained and which made Buddhism one of the most tolerant religions ever to appear on earth.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

[Afterword]

Every translation of a classical text is governed by two imperatives: to be faithful to the original, and also to make it intelligible to readers other than those for whom it was written. This tension becomes all the more apparent when working with a text that is not only ancient but from a culture other than one's own. Such a translation cannot but be an interpretation. Just as the Chinese saw Nagarjuna as a kind of Taoist sage, and emptiness as way of speaking about the Tao, so Western translators compare Nagarjuna to figures from their own culture, and emptiness to corresponding ideas in their own preferred philosophical, religious or cultural discourse.

No matter what style, tone or terminology is used, the translator seeks to persuade the reader of his or her authority by giving an impression of a detached, informed and reasonable objectivity. Yet 'beneath every clear and confident statement on the printed page lie conscious and unconscious layers of unstated beliefs, intuitions, preferences, antipathies, uncertainties and desires.

Work on this book started in the early 1990'S with a study of Tsongkhapa's commentary on the chapter *Awakening* (MMK 24) in his *An Ocean of Reason: A Great Exposition of the Root Text* Verses from the Center, written in 1407. This refamiliarized me with both the philosophical tradition of the Tibetan Geluk order (in which I had been trained) and the work of the Indian Centrist commentator Chandrakirti on which it is based.

In 1996 I began a systematic translation of the Tibetan text of *VersesIrom the Center,* I consulted two editions of

the Tibetan (Lhalungpa and Woodblock to Laser) and compared them with the text embedded in the prose of Tsongkhapa's word-by-word commentary. I also read the available English translations from Sanskrit (Streng, Inada and Kalupahana). This enabled me to produce my own edited text of the Tibetan verses, which I translated as literally as possible into English without paying any attention to style. On finishing a chapter, I put the Tibetan aside and treated my literal English translation as the first draft of a poem, which I worked and reworked through numerous drafts until arriving at a text that satisfied me as both consistent with Nagarjuna's original as well as accessible to a contemporary reader.

In an ideal world, I would also have learned Sanskrit, the language in which the original was composed. By choosing to base my translation on another translation, i.e., the Tibetan, I was conscious oflosing the philological proximity with Nagarjuna's words that a Sanskrit scholar would have had. At the same time I was aware of working with a text that exists as part of a living Buddhist tradition. From an experiential perspective it was important to me that I could *hear* the text as it would have been spoken by my Tibetan teacher, the late Geshe Rabten. Tibetan tradition understands the nature of a text such as *Verses from the Center* to be that of speech. The printed copy is merely a record of the spoken word; its value is diminished once the oral tradition in that tongue has died out. Having chosen to emphasize the poetic rather than the philosophical dimension of *VersesIrom the Center,* my aim throughout was to be able to hear Nagarjuna's voice. I tried to capture the playful and disconcerting quality of his logical moves through wordplay, internal rhymes, jarring contrasts, apparent non sequiturs and unexpected echoes of non-Buddhist sources. I was conscious of influences as diverse as those of John Keats, T. S. Eliot and John Lennon on the formation of my Nagarjunian voice. I was not content with a chapter until I could recite it out loud in a way that (to me at least) caught something of the pulse of emptiness.

A central difficulty for many contemporary readers of Nagarjuna's work is the high degree of abstraction characteristic of Indian Buddhist philosophical writing. I tried to resolve this by making the most of concrete imagery whenever it appeared in the original. Occasionally I introduced a concrete image to Hesh out an abstract idea. Although Nagarjuna almost entirely avoids personal pronouns, I tried as much as possible to use the first person "I" as the authorial voice, which enabled me to introduce the second person "you" for the real or hypothetical "other" with whom Nagarjuna is often engaged in dialogue. The recovery of the poetic threads of the text entailed a rigorous editing of the verses, which resulted in an abridged and adapted translation. Lines, verses and sometimes entire sequences of verses were removed or reordered in this process. At times it seemed that either Nagarjuna or perhaps a later hand had interpolated a passage in order to develop a logical or doctrinal point, which a modern writer would probably have chosen to include as a footnote. Some verses were omitted on the grounds of repetition, others because of obscure doctrinal references, and others simply because I could make little or no sense of them. At other times, though, I expanded the text in order to clarify expressions which Nagarjuna uses as a form of technical shorthand. (The five aggregates *[skandha],* for example, are either listed in full or rendered as "mind and matter.")

Rather than introducing foreign terms or Buddhist neologisms into the fabric of ordinary speech, I sought a contemporary, idiomatic language in which familiar words arc surreptitiously invested with new meanings. Likewise, instead of insisting on the same English word throughout to translate a particular term in Tibetan/Sanskrit, I chose to vary the translation as much as possible. *Dukkha,* for example, is translated as "anguish," "suffering," "pain," "misery," etc. This forced me always to consider what word would work best--both in terms of accuracy and style--in any given context. It was also a recognition of the complex range and nuance of Buddhist terms, for which exact equivalents rarely exist in English. Nonetheless, I consistently translated certain key terms which arc central to Nagarjuna's vision, such as "emptiness" and "fixation." Tibetan, Sanskrit and Pali equivalents of key terms are given in the glossary that follows.

Central to the Korean Zen Buddhist tradition in which I trained under the late Kusan Sunim is the practice of a *hwadu.* A *hwadu* refers to the central question or dilemma that underpins a koan, i.e., the account of a student's awakening under the guidance or provocation of a Zen master. One of the most famous *hwadu* is "No!" *(mu)*-Chao- chou's response to the question: does a dog have buddhanature? The twelfth-century Korean Zen master Chinul compares the *hwadu* "No!" to "a mass of fire; if you approach it, it burns your face." Nagarjuna's *Verses From the Center* often felt to me like an incandescent shout of "No!" to which my translation was but a stammering response. Nagarjuna constantly reminded me of how my choice of words was contingent both on the fallibility of my understanding and the ambivalence of my motives.

Appendix [regarding] *Conditions* (MMK 1), *Combination* (MMK 20) and *Confusion* (MMK 23).

This translation includes twenty-four chapters out of a total of twenty-seven in the original. The three omitted chapters are *Conditions* (MMK I), *Combination* (MMK 20) and *Confusion* (MMK 23), which are translated here. The reason for the omission of these chapters from the main body of the translation is primarily a literary one. I found that their removal restored an organic unity to the unfolding of Nagarjuna's vision. I felt that these chapters hindered the poetic flow and coherence of the text. In contrast to the other chapters, they also proved more resistant to being rendered in a contemporary and idiomatic style.

Conditions, traditionally the opening chapter, is uncharacteristically doctrinaire. It could be a later addition, designed to impress the reader with an unequivocal statement of Nagarjuna's "position." Its tone and subject matter are in striking contrast to the immediacy of the chapters that follow: *Walking. Seeing. Body.* etc. *Combination* and *Confusion* are illuminating but lengthy digressions from the trajectory and pace of Nagarjuna's core inquiry. In terms of content, all three chapters are consistent with the rest of *Verses from the Center.*

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

[From the Preface:]

ON HIS TEACHING TOUR of Europe and the United States in 2000, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche chose to explain the noble protector Nagarjuna's great treatise The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way on several occasions. Rinpoche's style was to select important verses from each chapter as the basis for what in Tibetan is called a chidon, an overview explanation of the entire text. Rinpoche based his teachings on the commentary to the text by Ju Mipham Rinpoche entitled *A Jewel of the Powerful Nagarjuna's Intention That Perfectly Illuminates the True Nature*. I had the great fortune to serve as Rinpoche's translator when he gave these teachings.

In response to the many requests from students that Rinpoche's explanations of The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way be published in written form, Rinpoche directed that this book be compiled from the teachings he gave on the text at three different Dharma centers: Tekchen Kyetsal in Spain, Karma Ling in France, and Karme Choling in the United States.

Introduction

WHATEVER ACTIVITY WE ENGAGE IN, our motivation is very important. According to the tradition of Mahayana (Great Vehicle) Buddhism, the motivation we should cultivate is bodhichitta—the mind turned toward supreme enlightenment. One way to do so is to think first of our father and mother in this lifetime, and then extend the love and compassion we feel for them to all sentient beings, including even our enemies. It is the case that all sentient beings, including our enemies, have been our own father and mother countless times, and therefore they have been indescribably kind to us countless times. The greatest thing we can do to repay sentient beings' kindness is to lead them all to the state of complete and perfect enlightenment, the state of buddhahood, and in order to do this, we must listen to, reflect upon, and meditate on the teachings of the genuine Dharma with all the enthusiasm we can muster. This is the supreme motivation of bodhichitta—please give rise to it as a first step whenever you read, reflect on, or meditate upon the teachings in this book.

The topic of this book is the text known as The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way, composed by the noble protector Nagarjuna. Nagarjuna is a special teacher in the history of Buddhism. The Buddha himself prophesied that Nagarjuna would be born four hundred years after the Buddha's own passing and that he would give vast and perfect explanations of the Buddha's teachings. Nagarjuna fulfilled this prophecy both as a teacher of many students who went on to become great masters themselves and as an author of texts that expound and clarify the meaning of the Buddha's words. Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike have studied these texts from Nagarjuna's time to the present.

Nagarjuna's commentaries form three main collections of texts that explain, respectively, the Buddha's own three series of teachings known as the three turnings of the wheel of Dharma. Thus, in the set of compositions known as The Collections of Advice, Nagarjuna's focus is the first turning of the wheel. He describes how a human life gives one the invaluable opportunity to practice the Dharma; how this life and everything one knows of and experiences within it are impermanent; how samsara—the cycle of existence in which confused sentient beings endlessly wander from one lifetime to the next—is characterized by constant suffering, in both gross and subtle forms; and how practicing the Dharma leads to the attainment of nirvana, the state of liberation that transcends samsara's suffering once and for all. This is a brief summary of the teachings the Buddha gave in his first turning of the wheel of Dharma. These are teachings from the perspective that appearances truly exist in just the way they seem to—that the individual, the individual's past and future lives, the suffering the individual experiences in samsara, and the liberation the individual can attain in nirvana all exist in precisely the way they appear.

In the middle and final turnings of the wheel, the Buddha described the true nature of reality, explaining that the way things appear to be is different from the way they actually are. The Buddha taught that of all the progressively subtle ways of explaining the true nature of reality, the ultimate description one can make is that the true nature of reality is the true nature of mind, the union of luminous clarity and emptiness. It is difficult, however, to understand what “the union of luminous clarity and emptiness” means as an initial statement, and therefore the Buddha taught about the two aspects of emptiness and luminous clarity separately and in great detail in the sutras of the middle and final turnings, respectively. Once students understand what emptiness is, and then what luminous clarity is, they can then much more easily understand how it is that genuine reality is in fact the union of the two.

Nevertheless, the profundity and vastness of the Buddha’s teachings in the sutras make them difficult for ordinary individuals to understand. For this reason, Nagarjuna composed The Six Collections of Reasonings to explain the middle turning’s Sutras of Transcendent Wisdom (the Prajnaparamita Sutras), and The Collection of Seventeen Praises to explain the final turning’s Sutras on the Buddha Nature. From among The Six Collections of Reasonings, the major text is The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way.

WHAT IS THE MIDDLE WAY?

Since it is a commentary on the middle turning of the wheel of Dharma, the main topic of The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way is emptiness. In fact, the terms Middle Way and emptiness are synonyms. Middle Way means that the true nature of the phenomena we experience lies in the middle, between all possible extremes that can be conceived of by the intellect. The true nature of reality cannot be described by any conceptual fabrication, by any conventional term or expression. Thus, it is not existent, not nonexistent, not something, not nothing, not permanent, not extinct; it is not the lack of these things, and it is not even the middle in between them, for that is a conceptually fabricated extreme as well. The true nature of reality transcends all the notions we could ever have of what it might be. This is also the ultimate understanding of the second turning’s description of emptiness. Emptiness ultimately means that genuine reality is empty of any conceptual fabrication that could attempt to describe what it is.

The path leading to the direct realization of this inconceivable, genuine nature of reality begins with gaining certainty in this profound view of emptiness. This is an essential first step because it is not enough just to read the teachings that say, “All phenomena are emptiness; the nature of reality is beyond concept,” and, without knowing the reasons these teachings are accurate, to accept them on blind faith alone. If we do, we will not remove our doubts, and our mere opinion that the teachings are valid will not do us any good when these doubts come to the surface. When we gain certainty in the teachings on emptiness, however, then it will be impossible for doubts to arise.

The way that Nagarjuna helps us to gain such certainty is through the use of logical reasoning. This is particularly important for us in this day and age, when academic inquiry, science, and technology are at the forefront. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, people are very well educated and are used to using their intelligence to examine and understand things. Nagarjuna’s method is perfectly in harmony with this—he teaches us how to determine the true nature of reality for ourselves by logically analyzing the things that appear to us. By analyzing in this way we can gain stable certainty in the profound view. Many of Nagarjuna’s logical reasonings negate the true existence of things and conclude that things do not truly exist, that they are empty of inherent nature. This leads some people to think that Nagarjuna’s view is nihilistic—he negates actors, actions, causes and results, the Buddha, and everything else in samsara and nirvana. What then is left of our experience? What is the use or meaning of life if everything is empty in this way?

THE THREE STAGES OF ANALYSIS

It is therefore very important to know that the Buddha taught about the nature of reality in three stages. First, in order to teach his disciples that positive actions lead to happiness and negative actions lead to suffering, the Buddha taught about these things as if they were real. In order to help disciples give rise to renunciation of samsara and longing for nirvana, he taught about samsara’s suffering and nirvana’s liberation from that suffering as if they were real. Furthermore, since all of these teachings depend upon the existence of a self, the Buddha taught about the self, who performs positive and negative actions and experiences their results, who wanders from lifetime to lifetime in samsara, and who can gain the liberation of nirvana, as if it were real. This was the first stage of the teachings, the teachings of the first turning of the wheel, called the stage of no analysis—no analysis of the true nature of the phenomena about which the Buddha taught.

The second stage reflects the fact that once students gain confidence in the law of cause and result and develop renunciation of samsara and longing for nirvana, it is then important that they reverse their clinging to themselves and these phenomena as being truly existent, because this clinging actually prevents them from gaining the liberation for which they strive. In the second stage, therefore, the Buddha taught that phenomena do not truly exist. For example, in the Heart of Wisdom Sutra, the Buddha taught, “There is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind,” and so forth. This second stage is called the stage of slight analysis—– the point at which phenomena are

analyzed and found to be lacking in inherent nature, to be empty of any truly existent essence.

In this way, we can see that we need the teachings on nonexistence to help us reverse our clinging to things as being existent. The true nature of reality, however, transcends both the notion of existence and that of nonexistence. Therefore, in the third stage, the stage of thorough analysis, the Buddha taught that we must also give up our clinging to nonexistence if we are to realize the simplicity, the freedom from all conceptual fabrications, that is reality's ultimate essence.

The Buddha taught these latter two stages in the middle turning of the wheel of Dharma. Of the two philosophical schools whose explanations are based on this middle turning, the Middle Way Autonomy school (Svatantrika Madhyamaka) emphasizes the second stage, that of slight analysis, whereas the Middle Way Consequence school (Prasangika Madhyamaka) emphasizes the third stage, that of thorough analysis. The Autonomy school refutes true existence and asserts emptiness to be the true nature of reality; the Consequence school refutes true existence but does not assert anything in its place, because its proponents recognize that to do so would obscure realization of the freedom from all conceptual fabrications that is the true nature of reality itself.

The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way teaches from the perspectives of both the second and third stages, and therefore both the Autonomy and Consequence schools find their roots in this text. It is important for us to identify what stage a particular teaching in the text is coming from so that we can link it with the explanations of one of these two schools and also understand its intended purpose. If it is a refutation of existence, its purpose is to help us overcome our clinging to things as being real; if it teaches the freedom from all conceptual fabrications, it is intended to help us understand how reality is actually beyond all our concepts of what it might be.

DEPENDENTLY ARISEN MERE APPEARANCES

Understanding these three stages of the Buddha's teachings highlights one of the main differences between the Middle Way view that Nagarjuna teaches and the view of nihilism. A nihilistic view would have a strong clinging to the notion of nonexistence, whereas in the third stage, the Middle Way explains that the nature of reality transcends both existence and nonexistence.

A nihilistic view would also completely deny the existence of past and future lives, the law of cause and result, the rare and supreme Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and so forth. The Middle Way does not fall into that extreme, however, because it does not deny that all these things—in fact all the outer and inner phenomena that compose samsara and nirvana—exist as dependently arisen mere appearances. The best example to help us understand what this means is the moon that appears on the surface of a pool of water. When all the conditions of a full moon, a cloud-free sky, a clear lake, and a perceiver come together, a moon will vividly appear on the water's surface, but if just one condition is absent, it will not. Thus, the moon has no independent power to decide to appear—it appears in the water only in dependence upon the coming together of these causes and conditions. At the same time, it appears, however, it is just a mere appearance, because it is empty of true existence—not the slightest atom of a moon can be found anywhere in the water. Thus, the water-moon is a mere appearance of something that is not really there. In the same way, all the phenomena of samsara and nirvana appear due to the coming together of causes and conditions, and at the same time as they appear, precise knowledge (prajna) that analyzes their true nature cannot find the slightest trace of their actual existence. They are appearances that are empty of any substantial essence, just like water-moons, but just like water-moons, their emptiness of essence does not prevent them from appearing vividly when the proper causes and conditions come together. This is the truth of dependent arising, the union of appearance and emptiness that is the essence of the Middle Way view. It frees the Middle Way from the extreme of realism, because it does not superimpose true existence onto the nature of genuine reality where there is none, and from the extreme of nihilism, because it does not deny that things appear due to the coming together of causes and conditions.

Gaining certainty in this view is incredibly beneficial, because such certainty helps us to begin to eradicate the root cause of our suffering—our confused tendency to cling to things as being truly existent. As a result of thinking that things truly exist, we become attached to things we like, averse to things we do not like, and stupidly indifferent to everything else. Such experiences of attachment, aversion, and stupidity are called the mental afflictions (kleshas), and when we come under their influence, our minds become agitated and we accumulate karma, meaning that we think confused thoughts and perform confused actions in a constant attempt to get the things we like and avoid the things we dislike. The only result, however, of all our confused struggles to gain happiness and avoid suffering is to become further enmeshed in the mental afflictions, in hope and fear, and in the suffering of losing or not getting what we like and of meeting up with what we do not wish for.

If, however, we can see that things are not truly real—that they are mere appearances whose true nature is beyond all concepts of what it might be—then our experience of both good and bad events in life will be open, spacious, and relaxed. When something good happens, we will be able to enjoy it in a relaxed way, free of clinging to it and free of the fear of it departing. When something bad happens, if we

recognize its true nature, we will be relaxed within it and our minds will be undisturbed. In short, realizing the true nature of reality brings inner peace—genuine happiness and ease that outer conditions cannot disturb. As the lord of yogis Milarepa describes it in a vajra song of realization called An Authentic Portrait of the Middle Way, also included in this book, appearance-emptiness is “a union vast and spacious,” and realizing that this is the true nature of reality brings the experience of genuine reality’s natural openness and spaciousness. The enlightened masters of the past have all described this experience of realization in precisely this way, and some of their songs appear in this book to give you an idea of what this direct experience of reality is like. By gaining certainty in emptiness, instead of accumulating the causes of suffering, you will accumulate the causes of gaining this very realization that Milarepa and all other enlightened masters have achieved.

Our current confusion and the prospects of liberation from it are illustrated well by the example of dreams. When we dream and do not know that we are dreaming, all the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations we seem to perceive on the outside, and all the thoughts we seem to have on the inside, appear to be real; we believe they are real, and we have further experiences that seem to confirm to us that they are real. As a result, we experience the turmoil of attachment to things in the dream that we find pleasing and of suffering when we think something or someone is harming us, even though all the while there is nothing really there at all. If we can simply recognize that we are dreaming, however, then all that trouble just vanishes. We see that all the images that appear in the dream—appearances of clean and dirty, good and bad, friend and enemy, happiness and suffering, and everything else—are all mere appearances that are not real. They are actually of the nature of perfect equality—there is really no difference between them at all. We see that the true nature of all of these appearances is beyond all concepts of what it might be. Then, whatever good or bad appears to happen, since we know that it is just a dream, we know that we do not need to fixate on it—we can just experience whatever it is in a way that is untroubled by the mental afflictions, in a way that is open, spacious, and relaxed. We can even do things like fly in the sky.

Like dream appearances, the daytime forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations we perceive on the outside, as well as our thoughts and mental states within, are all mere appearances that are empty of inherent nature, that do not truly exist. Appearing while empty, empty while appearing, all the phenomena we experience are the union of appearance and emptiness, like dreams and illusions. The more you understand this, the less troubled you will be by the mental afflictions—in fact, even when mental afflictions and suffering arise, you will be able to know that they too are illusory, and they will gradually lose their strength and dissolve. You will gain deeper and deeper insight into the genuine nature of reality beyond concept, insight that will become more and more subtle and will eventually transform into the wisdom of direct realization.

WISDOM AND COMPASSION TOGETHER The Mahayana path that leads to the state of complete and perfect enlightenment, however, is not just the path of wisdom realizing emptiness alone—it is rather the path that combines wisdom and compassion together. In fact, the easiest way to understand what it means to attain “complete and perfect enlightenment,” or buddha- hood, is to know that it is the state one achieves when one has taken one’s wisdom realizing emptiness to its ultimate degree and one’s compassion for others to its ultimate degree. Upon achieving that level, one has the greatest motivation and ability to be of benefit to others, and, putting that ability into action in a truly infinite way, one performs limitless benefit for others and naturally benefits oneself at the same time. Therefore, cultivating compassion for others is an essential component of Mahayana practice.

How should we cultivate compassion? From among the many different methods the Buddha taught, all of which are important for us to train in, the one that is particularly connected with the view of the Middle Way is this: Understanding that reality is appearance- emptiness, one cultivates compassion for those sentient beings who suffer because they mistakenly believe that appearances, particularly appearances of suffering, are truly existent. As Milarepa once sang, “I see this life to be like an illusion and a dream, and 1 cultivate compassion for sentient beings who do not realize this.”

This is the answer to the question raised above: From the perspective of the Middle Way’s teachings on emptiness, what is the meaning or purpose of life? The purpose is to follow Milarepa’s example by, first, continually training in the view that sees that all our experiences in this life are dependently arisen mere appearances whose true nature is beyond conceptual fabrications, is open, spacious, and relaxed; and second, cultivating compassion for all sentient beings who suffer as a result of not realizing that this is the genuine nature of reality. We should do whatever we can to help others on a conventional level, for example, by practicing generosity toward those in need and taking care of those who are sick; and at the same time we should continually make aspiration prayers that in the future we will be able to help all sentient beings realize the true nature of reality, because when they do so it will most definitely liberate them from samsara’s ocean of suffering once and for all. In order to help them gain this realization that is the one certain antidote for suffering and the one certain bestower of happiness, we need to gain it ourselves, which we do by studying, reflecting, and meditating upon the teachings on the true nature of reality contained in such extraordinary texts as The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way. Dedicating ourselves in this way to training on the

Mahayana path of wisdom and compassion together, whose fruition is the attainment of buddhahood, and which is of infinite benefit to limitless sentient beings, is the greatest purpose we could ever have.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way is composed of twenty- seven chapters. Each is itself a commentary on a different statement made by the Buddha in the sutras comprising the second turning of the wheel of Dharma. Nagarjuna proves the validity of the Buddha's teachings with logical reasoning. The chapters also answer the successive arguments put to Nagarjuna by those who believed that things truly exist. In each chapter, Nagarjuna would successfully refute one such argument; his opponents would then come up with another argument that they thought proved that things were real, and Nagarjuna would refute that, and so on—that is why there are twenty-seven chapters! They are all very beneficial to us because they help us to overcome our own doubts, the same doubts that Nagarjuna's opponents had.

Some of the chapters are long and the logical reasonings they present are quite detailed. This book examines the most important verses from each chapter. It is necessary to proceed in this way because very few people today have the time to study the entire text. People in modern times need concise Dharma teachings that are profound, easily understandable, and readily applicable to daily life. By reading, contemplating, and meditating on the teachings in this book, you will get to the heart of Nagarjuna's text in a direct way that will greatly enhance your precise knowledge of the genuine nature of reality.

There are similarities from one chapter to the next in the methods of logical inference and reasoning used to help you gain certainty in emptiness. This similarity of method makes it easier for you to gain facility with these logical reasonings, and will also help you to see how wonderfully applicable they are to such a great variety of subjects. By reviewing these same basic reasonings as they apply to different subjects, your familiarity with them will grow and you will gain more and more certainty in their conclusions. Emptiness is the deepest and most subtle topic one could ever attempt to understand, so it is never enough to hear or read teachings on emptiness just once. Rather, we must analyze them again and again, apply them again and again, and continually cultivate familiarity with their profound meaning.

Along these lines, this book also includes other selections of texts that will help to deepen your understanding of emptiness and strengthen your certainty. The first is the Heart of Wisdom Sutra, one of the Buddha's most concise teachings on emptiness, yet incredibly powerful and profound. This sutra was actually spoken by the great bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, but since he did so through the power of the Buddha's blessing, it is considered to be the very speech of the Transcendent Conqueror himself. By analyzing the nature of reality with your intelligence in the way that Nagarjuna describes, you will gain stable certainty in the teachings of this sutra. Furthermore, seeing the similarity between the teachings of the Buddha and those of Nagarjuna will increase your confidence in Nagarjuna's words.

Also included here are the verses that describe the twenty emptinesses from the text by the glorious Chandrakirti (fn A great Indian master of the Middle Way Consequence school.) called Entering the Middle Way, itself a commentary on the meaning of Nagarjuna's Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way. Actually, within emptiness itself there are no distinctions between different types of emptiness because emptiness' true nature transcends all concepts that differentiate between one thing and another. Therefore, from the perspective of genuine reality, emptiness cannot actually be divided into twenty different categories or classifications. When the Buddha taught the twenty emptinesses, however, he did so from the perspective of the twenty different types of phenomena whose various appearances we cling to as being truly existent. Going through the twenty emptinesses helps us to free ourselves from this clinging step by step. The first sixteen emptinesses are the extensive presentation, and these are then summarized into four. Studying Nagarjuna's reasonings makes the twenty emptinesses easy to understand, and at that point Chandrakirti's verses will be a great help to your meditation practice. You can use these verses to practice analytical meditation by reciting the verses describing a particular emptiness and using the logical reasonings Nagarjuna presents to help you come to certainty in the verses' meaning, and then practice resting meditation by simply resting in that certainty that your analysis has produced. You can repeat this process as many times as you like. Machig Labdron, the greatest woman practitioner in the history of Tibet, taught her students to meditate on the twenty emptinesses in this way as a method to help them realize prajnaparamita, the transcendent wisdom that realizes emptiness, that is called the Great Mother of all enlightened beings.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, this book includes the vajra song of the lord of yogis Milarepa called An Authentic Portrait of the Middle Way. This is one of Milarepa's most important songs because it teaches from the common perspective of the Autonomy and Consequence schools' views. If studying this great text by Nagarjuna, the basis of the Middle Way, leads you to wonder about the Kagyu tradition's particular perspective on these matters, you will find the answer by referring to this song of Milarepa, one of the founders of the Kagyu lineage. An Authentic Portrait of the Middle Way is a short song, but it contains a meaning that is profound and vast. It teaches that all of the phenomena of samsara and nirvana do not truly exist and yet they still appear—there is a mere appearance of things, and

that appearance is the union of appearance and emptiness. Therefore, it is very helpful to read or sing this song, to memorize it, and to meditate on its meaning. That will be a very good connection for you to make with the profound view of the lineage and the one who realized it perfectly, Milarepa.

Milarepa was the one yogi in the history of Tibet who was universally acknowledged to have attained buddhahood in a single life. If you have faith in him, then singing or reciting his Authentic Portrait as you study Nagarjuna's teachings will be of great benefit, because it will help you to overcome your fear of emptiness. If you already have certainty in emptiness, then singing the songs about emptiness that were sung by the realized masters will cause your certainty to grow greater and greater.

In general, all the verses in this book are excellent supports for developing your precise knowledge of genuine reality through study, reflection, and meditation. You should recite them as much as possible, memorize them, and reflect on them until doubt-free certainty in their meaning arises within. Then you should recall their meaning again and again, to keep your understanding fresh and stable. Whenever you have time, use them as the support for the practices of analytical and resting meditation. If you do all of this, it is certain that the sun of wisdom will dawn within you, to the immeasurable benefit of yourselves and others.

Supplemental Introductions

SPRUNG'S INTRODUCTION

(excerpts from LUCID EXPOSITION of the MIDDLE WAY – source of the CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY)

Omissions and abridgements

Ten chapters of the *Prasannapada's* twenty-seven are not included in this translation. Perhaps my energies ebbed, but it seemed to me that the text is both formally and substantially repetitive in such degree that it should be easily possible to present all facets of the middle way philosophy in the seventeen chapters which were selected for translation.

The only passages omitted from the chapters translated consist of Buddhist scriptures - *sutras* - which Candrakirti quotes and which bestrew an otherwise clean and precise commentary. This procedure will seem a sacrilege to many and an impropriety to others. I decided, with a view to presenting as closely knit and persuasive an English text as possible, to omit those quotations from the Buddhist scriptures, whether short or long, which in my view slowed and complicated the flow of Candrakirti's thought for the English language reader. The *sutras* Candrakirti quotes, do not, with only rare exceptions, clarify or advance his argument in any way. With virtually no exceptions the first sentence of the commentary which follows a *sutra* explicitly and unmistakably picks up the argument at precisely the point it had reached immediately before the quotation. This, it seems to me, tells us quite clearly that the scriptural quotations do not contain material indispensable to establishing the point at issue. They do, of course, often bring illustrative material of interest and value for the contemporary reader; where I found this to be so they have not been omitted. At some points in the text the quoted *sutras* accumulate at a disturbing rate: the fact that some are not found in the Tibetan translation lends weight to the possibility that later hands than Candrakirti's may have been at work. The purpose of the elaborate and often too weighty embellishments from the Mahayana scriptures is clearly to generate credence for the Madhyamika understanding of Buddhism. This understandable device was probably essential to Candrakirti's purpose when we reflect on the almost heretical character of much of Nagarjuna's thinking. It mayor may not have been effective in this sense, but in any case it is irrelevant to the contemporary reader - unless he is interested in sectarian controversy. The philosophy of the middle way will establish itself on its own merits, or fail to do so, quite without regard to its Buddhist orthodoxy. The only remaining reason for not omitting any of the quoted *sutras* would be to contribute to the study of extant Buddhist literature of the seventh century AD. But as students of Buddhism can use the Sanskrit text this would hardly justify detracting from the economy of the English translation.

Further, some passages have been abridged. Except for the lengthy, rambling account of the Buddhist soteriological path given at 479.1 to 487.4, an account which is effectively re-stated in brief by Candrakirti himself subsequently, and which is thus of no interest for the rising pitch of the attack on Nagarjuna developing at just that point, all the passages abridged are in the first chapter of the translation. They are, without exception I believe, concerned with Candrakirti's controversy with Bhavaviveka, his rival commentator within the Madhyamika school, or with his support of Buddhapalita, a commentator he attempts to follow, or else with traditional arguments of the Samkhya school having to do with causation. These controversies are important, obviously. Yet to place them with all their meticulous, Indian love of syllogistic detail, in what is otherwise a finely targeted introduction to the entire *Prasannapada*, however natural they were to Candrakirti's contemporaries, is to make access to the work for contemporary readers difficult and discouraging. The abridged translation of such passages, it is hoped, contains the essential point of the argument being given and in this way permits the forward movement of thought without gap or soft spot.

Table 1 lists all passages abridged or omitted.

Table 1

Text Page and line reference	Translation Omissions and abridgements
3.8 to 3.10	Nagarjuna's dedication is given in full from II. 13-16
5.7 to 10.10	abridged
14.4 to 16.1	"
16.11 to 18.5	"
19.8 to 23.2	"
28.4 to 29.7	"
31.1 to 34.5	"
34.13 to 35.9	omitted
36.13 to 37.5	abridged
38.13to 39.4	"
47.1 to 48.14	"
50.1 to 50.3	omitted
50.12 to 52.12	"
53.6 to 54.4	"
109.4 to 112.4	"
122.3 to 122.7	"
128.5 to 128.14	omitted
Chapter VII	"
191.1 to 191.9	"
200.4 to 201.8	"
215.10 to 217.14	"
Chapter XI	"
Chapter XII	"
Chapter XIV	"
277.5 to 278.4	"
Chapter XVI	"
Chapter XVII	"
354.10 to 355.2	"
361.1 to 363.12	"
374.5 to 374.14	"
377.6 to 378.2	"
387.15 to 389.6	"
Chapter XX	"
Chapter XXI	"
461.1 to 461.2	"
463.10 to 464.20	"
472.7 to 474.10	"
479.1 to 487.4	abridged
516.1 to 518.6	omitted
520.4 to 520.5	Adapted from Stcherbatsky (p. 184)
524.1 to 524.4	" " " (p. 189)
Chapter XXVI	omitted
Chapter XXVII	"

Correlation of chapters in the text and in the translation

The lengthy and unfocussed first chapter of the Sanskrit is so unmistakably composed of discrete sections that we must suspect careless editing some time before the extant manuscripts came into being. This is especially so as all other chapters are structured with nothing less than an artistic sense of theme development. With a view to presenting the work in appropriate contemporary form it was important, in the first place, to separate out the middle section (58.14 to 76) which begins and ends without any internal relation to the .commentary preceding and following it. This is the controversy With the Buddhist opponent, either Dignaga or Bhavaviveka, and forms Chapter II of the translation. From p. 76 to the end of the first chapter of the Sanskrit the text is a normal commentary on Nagarjuna's *karikas* concerned with causal conditions and is Chapter III of the translation. The opening sections of the first chapter of the Sanskrit are Candrakirti's introduction to the *Prasannapada* as a whole and as a major work in Buddhist philosophy. In these sections Candrakirti sets Nagarjuna's thought in historical perspective, singles out its central theme and uses the first *karika* as a vehicle to raise the critical questions concerning Madhyamika as a school of Buddhism and as a philosophical method. These first sections, which close with the words 'in the remaining chapters' and so appear to have been, at one time, an introductory chapter in their own right, form Chapter I of the translation.

Table 2 shows how the chapter numbers of the translation relate to the chapter numbers of the original.

Table 2

Sanskrit Text	Translation
I	I, II, III
II	IV
III	V
IV	VI
V	VII
VI	VIII
VII	omitted
VIII	IX
IX	X
X	Xl
XI	omitted
XII	omitted
XIII	XII
XIV	omitted
XV	XIII
XVI	omitted
XVII	omitted
XVIII	XIV
XIX	XV
XX	omitted
XXI	omitted
XXII	XVI
XXIII	XVII
XXIV	XVIII
XXV	XIX
XXVI	omitted
XXVII	omitted

The Thought of the Middle Way:

Translator's Introduction

The work whose essential and major portions are presented here in translation from the Sanskrit is, in form, and in the Buddhist tradition, a commentary on an earlier treatise, but in substance and for Western readers, it is, in its own right, a philosophical work of originality and rigor. The author, Candrakirti, a Buddhist monk writing probably during the first quarter of the seventh century AD, undertakes to expound the thought of Nagarjuna, himself a Buddhist monk, one great in legend and performance, who had, probably in the second century AD, with a lion's roar second only to that of Buddha, flung the philosophy of the 'middle way' at his receptive, dumbfounded, and outraged contemporaries. In his treatise, which comes to us without a title but which is referred to as a *Treatise on the Middle Way (Madhyamakasastra)*, or *Verses on the Principles of the Middle Way (Mulamadhyamakakarikas)*, Nagarjuna, generally agreed, whether grudgingly or admiringly, to be the acutest intellect in Buddhist history, thinks his way relentlessly through to the conclusions he found implicit in Buddha's promise of freedom *(nirvana)* for all beings. Gathering into rigorous thought some of the spiritual currents of his time in India (and not merely among Buddhists) he became the founder of the Madhyamika school of Buddhism-- the school of the middle way - and made it impossible for Buddhist religious and philosophical thinking ever again to turn back to earlier conceptions. Nagarjuna marks, for philosophy, the historical realization of the later phase of Buddhism known as the Mahayana? After Nagarjuna some form of Mahayana was irrevocable.

Four or five hundred years later a monk, presumably resident in the then, and today even in its ruins still, fabulous university at Nalanda in northern India, undertook to expound and defend the terse and many-faceted verses of Nagarjuna. Disputes had naturally arisen among Nagarjuna's Madhyamika followers concerning their interpretation and there had been earlier commentators, Buddhapalita and Bhavaviveka being the best known; Candrakirti, so far as we know the last to deal exhaustively with Nagarjuna's treatise, claimed that his exposition was *prasannapada* - clear-worded, or lucid, or serene -- and it is commonly known by that Sanskrit designation. Nagarjuna's work ran to some 450 couplets, which, printed consecutively, might fill 65 or 70 pages; the *Prasannapada* in its European edition runs to nearly 600 pages; the difference is Candrakirti's own work. In what ways Candrakirti might differ from his master - in how far we should attempt to free Nagarjuna from his commentator's embrace -. is an important question and one so difficult that no one has as yet tried his hand at it. This introduction and the footnotes throughout the translation treat the *Prasannapada* as a homogeneous work and ignore the problem. For the contemporary reader, whose interest is in the relevance of the thought developed and not in the history of Buddhism, it is a matter which may be overlooked.

The invocation to the *Prasannapada*, the body of literature from which quotations are drawn in every chapter, and Buddha's easy coming and going from page to page throughout the work, leave us in no doubt about its cultural origins and about the faith - philosophical and religious - of the author. It is, indeed, a key work in the development of Buddhist thought - and a bright jewel in the rich crown of Indian philosophy. It is presented here, however, not primarily as a contribution to Buddhist studies or to the history of Indian philosophy, though it cannot of course be separated from these concerns, but as a work relevant to the most vital problems of philosophy as these engage thinkers of our own time, whatever their language and cultural background. Its thought is rigorous, fresh and often disconcertingly contemporary. If we can treat the details of the historical matrix of the *Prasannapada* with the tolerance we exercise toward ancient and medieval Western philosophical writing, there should be no insuperable difficulty in seeing its incisive relevance to the questions now obsessing us in the West. That this is possible is the conviction behind this translation as it is behind the approach to philosophical and religious thought often calling itself comparative philosophy, or comparative thought. Those who have penetrated even a short way into Sanskrit and Chinese find that the great questions which frame the religious sense and the intellectual wonder of these cultures are, however different from those of Greece and Europe, still indefeasibly cognate with them so that we can move from one tradition to another without ever leaving the human scene. If this were not so then works like the *Prasannapada* would be of antiquarian interest only.

Madhyamika thought has been virulently controversial from the beginning, arousing misunderstanding, disbelief and outrage in roughly equal measure. Classical Indian opponents frequently repudiated it as nihilist, as did E. Burnouf, the first European scholar to study the *Prasannapada* when it arrived in Europe in manuscript form from Nepal about the middle of the nineteenth century. Burnouf pronounced it 'nihilisme scholastique' and suggested that Hindu opponents of Buddhism could not do better than adopt its negative arguments. Madhyamika does deny our most deeply rooted intellectual and vivial habits, holding that nothing, whether metaphysical or everyday, can be known in an unequivocal sense; holding that, hence, measured by knowledge, there is no difference between truth and falsehood, that no one, including all the Buddhas, has ever uttered one true word, that all conceptions, Including that of an enlightened human being *(buddha)* fall short of the truth.

A century ago Europeans and Americans had, within their tradition, no way of comprehending such seeming nonsense. Today, thanks to the crumbling of some traditional

habits of thought and to the pioneering work of some Western philosophers - Nietzsche, Heidegger and Wittgenstein to mention the best known - we can attempt once again and In fresh terms to learn what we may from Nagarjuna and his school about the puzzlements and conundrums of human existence. Nietzsche attacked the capacity of human reason to yield knowledge much as Nagarjuna had done, if not quite so thoroughly, and was the first of the Europeans to suspect that the reality of a human being did not lie in his individuality understood as ego. Heidegger has tried to think his way in under the traditional conceptions of the self-contained subject and an objective world and so to understand truth as trans-objective. Wittgenstein has labored to show that language is not cognitive in the accepted sense, but functions as an integral element in complex human situations. None of these ideas will be strange to Madhyamika and, I believe, none of the ideas of Madhyamika will any longer be strange to us - whatever we may think about their tenability.

The first phase of the thought of the Prasannapada

The *Prasannapada* remains, for all this, a work of formidable strangeness, unlikely to yield its most interesting insights easily or swiftly. There is no preferred way of taking it up. The great chapters are those on 'Self-Existence' (XIII), 'Self and the Way Things Really Are' (XIV), 'The Four Buddhist Truths' (in substance about the absence of being in things and the two levels of truth) (XVIII), and *'Nirvana'* (XIX). The key to what may otherwise be persistent bafflement is given in the first chapter, 'The Concern, Method and Assumptions of the Middle Way Philosophy'. This is Candrakirti's introduction to the commentary as a whole and is a statement of his understanding of Nagarjuna's thought. None of the other chapters will make good sense without it, and yet it will not make good sense until its application has been tested in the major chapters.

There may or may not be a dramatic structure in the *Prasannapada,* but the investigation proceeds, with some zigzagging, through several discernible stages. The first chapter explains and defends Candrakirti's understanding of Nagarjuna's purpose and the principles of his procedure. This purpose (p. 33) is to give a fresh interpretation of the Buddhist term 'dependent origination' in furtherance of the enlightenment of all beings. Dependent origination will come to mean the absence of both being and non-being in particular things *(sunyata); sunyata* will be understood as the true nature of things which cannot be expressed in assertions making cognitive claims but can only be realized in the life of an enlightened being, which is *nirvana.* Nagarjuna proceeds, so Candrakirti maintains, without making a single claim to knowledge (p. 37), but simply by persuading those who do make such claims, whether rival Buddhists or spokesmen for the Hindu schools of philosophy, that nothing they say is, in the end, intelligible (p. 37). He shows that every position taken up, every view *(drsti)* held, entails claims that are either self-contradictory (pp. 37-9), or false in the face of everyday experience, or incompatible with the possibility of enlightenment - a possibility which neither Nagarjuna nor Candrakirti ever questions and which, therefore, serves as a devastating condemnation of inadequate philosophy.

Following this general introduction by Candrakirti, Nagarjuna's own inquiry moves through what may be seen as two phases. In the first phase he examines a series of concepts and theories advanced to establish everyday experience on an intelligible and acceptable basis. These concepts and theories are for the most part Buddhist and yet include all the metaphysical possibilities known at that time in India. Causality, the first and most fundamental way of bringing order into experience, is found to be unintelligible (Chapter III), because it presupposes effective entities which, on examination, prove to have merely nominal, not effective, status. Then motion, an assumption no less basic and indispensable, is taken up and dropped in a hopelessly shattered state (Chapter IV); motion cannot be conceived separately from the object or person moving (for then what would move?) nor these from motion (for then how could they be in motion?). In rapid and ruthless succession other possibilities of understanding experience are rejected: perception is unintelligible (Chapter V) because an agent cannot be related to an activity; perceived objects cannot be understood as external and material objects cannot be understood as perceived (Chapter VI); ordering the world into things with attributes is fictitious because neither thing nor attribute makes sense without the other (Chapter VII); affective involvement of persons with people and things is a puzzle because the affections - desire, hatred and so on - are inconceivable without the affected person who in turn is meaningless apart from the inconceivable affection (Chapter VIII); a subject of perception apart from the activity of perceiving is impossible otherwise one could be a perceiver without bothering to perceive (Chapter IX); persons and their actions and any other relation of agent and product are equally fictitious because to *be* an agent entails the *activity* of agency and this makes nonsense out of both concepts (Chapter X). This series of enquiries into the possibilities of ordering a world is concluded by a treatment of the ungraspability of all process, using fire and fuel as the paradigm (Chapter Xl). The rigor and imaginativeness of this last Investigation is matched in the entire work only by the enquiry into motion and rest. Though fire is accepted as obvious in ordinary experience, we cannot *think* the relationship of *what* is burning (fuel) and the *burning* of it (fire). The unflamed process is overlayed and falsified by the concepts of 'fuel' and 'fire'.

Up to this point Nagarjuna and Candrakirti have attempted to invalidate, not to say shatter, any or all sets of concepts designed to give an Intelligible account of the everyday world. The first phase of the enquiry is rounded off

with a summary statement of the conclusion reached and a hint of the Madhyamika resolution to be worked out in the later chapters. In the chapter 'The Absence of Being in Things' (XII) the conclusion is given in this way: 'Whatever is not what it pretends to be, is unreal.' All proffered concepts have shown themselves to be pretence, and it is bluntly claimed that all concepts *(dharmas)* are pretence by nature (p. 144); from this it follows that the everyday world, which is a network of concepts, is unreal. *Nirvana* alone does not pretend to be what it is not. But how can everything pretend? How can all Cretans be liars? Must there not be something which does the pretending and is not itself pretence? At this point Madhyamika briefly displays its crucial notion, *sunyata* - the absence of being in things and hints at the way in which in later chapters (especially XIII, XIV, XVIII and XIX) it will be introduced to show the way out of the jungle of entangling concepts and theories so far encountered. In this chapter (XII) *sunyata* is said to be 'the exhaustion of all views' that is the dissipation (intransitive) of all views, but not itself another view: nor even a predicate which might be attributed to things.

In the remaining chapters, in what may, very loosely, be called the second phase of the investigation, the term *sunyata* gains increasing importance as Madhyamika thought moves explicitly into the great controversial issues: being and non-being, self and the way things are in truth, the nature of an enlightened being, the relationship of the everyday world and the surpassing truth, the distinction, subtle but fundamental, between nihilism and Madhyamika and, finally, *nirvana.* In these investigations the radical mind of Madhyamika becomes more recognizable, and the ways in which it may possibly throw some light on issues with which Western philosophers are familiar become more testable.

Some general characteristics of Madhyamika thought

At this point in the *Prasannapada,* even before discussion of these major questions, some pervasive characteristics of Madhyamika thought will have become apparent, possibly estranging. Most obvious, probably, will be the formal, not to say rigid, way of proceeding with the analysis of each of the chosen topics. As most of us assume we can find some good sense in our everyday categories, we prefer to search more informally, more openly, somewhat in Aristotle's manner, for aspects or uses of them which are worth retaining; but, as Madhyamika was convinced that the categories of our everyday thinking were lacking in ultimate sense, it proceeds more swiftly and more ruthlessly. The forked stick which they used to destroy every proffered view consists, quite simply, and contrary to certain prejudices, of the Aristotelean principles of contradiction and excluded middle. These principles lie so deep in the minds of Nagarjuna and Candrakirti that, though operative at every turn of their serpentine arguments, they are not explicitly enunciated as principles of method, though they are adduced as reasons in argument. 'As to exist and not to exist are reciprocally contradictory how can they hold of one and the same thing?' Nagarjuna asks (p. 120, 7cd) and Candrakirti adds that this would be 'clearly nonsensical'. Even deeper lies the law of excluded middle. Madhyamika cannot proceed into an enquiry without applying it: an object is either in motion or it is not; an object is either external to perception or it is not; an agent is either in action or he is not; fuel is either burning or it is not; and so on.

These two principles are the bedrock of what is often called the Madhyamika dialectic. The procedure is to dichotomize the possible views on any matter into a formal, and final, either/or: the one in motion is either identical with or entirely other than motion itself; the subject of perception must be either identical with perceiving or wholly other than it; an agent subject must either be identical with his activities or wholly other than them; and so on. Either of the two, mutually exclusive, ways of taking any matter must, Madhyamika insists, be intelligible in itself without reference to its opposite. This contrasts with the everyday way in which sense is sustained by ignoring such a dichotomy, by unknowingly fusing the two possibilities into one workable, if imprecise, concept. Having set up a rigid either/or, Madhyamika then exhibits the untenability of both, either by showing each to be self-contradictory, or contrary to experience or incompatible with the possibility of enlightenment. In the last analysis the endeavor is to convince that the ideas in question are, in rigor, *unthinkable.* Nagarjuna's rampage through the notions of the philosophers is directed at uncovering their ultimate nonsense with a view to releasing men from humiliating bondage to them.

This aspect of the method of Nagarjuna and Candrakirti has been obscured in some modern treatments of the *Prasannapada* by a fascination with a feature of their thought which they speak of explicitly, which is traditionally Buddhist and which holds out some promise of logical novelty. This feature, as old as Buddha himself and no doubt much older, is the insistence that assertions about any matter have four possible forms *catuskoti* (1) that it is; (2) that it is not; (3) that it both-is-and-is-not; (4) that it neither-is-nor-is-not. One may be tempted to see in this recurring thought pattern an alternative logic, a novel evasion of the principles of excluded middle and non-contradiction. It may indeed have some logical 'interest; certainly it is interesting to relate the four types of assertion to one another for their value and force in argument. Whatever one concludes, however, it will have little, virtually no, bearing on Madhyamika method, for, with one egregious exception the *catuskoti* is not used as a means of investigation or of argument throughout the *Prasannapada.* The exception is the enquiry into *nirvana* (Chapter XIX) where the untenable views are rejected in order as they hold that: (1) *nirvana* is something real; (2) is something unreal; (3) is something both-real-and-unreal; (4) is something neither real- nor-unreal. Nagarjuna was surely wise not to have applied this formula more often; it proves in

its *nirvana* application unhelpful and misleading. The first two alternatives make sense; but the third surreptitiously repeats the first; and the fourth (which is in fact a formulation normally reserved by Madhyamika for its own position) is refuted on the, logically, arbitrary ground that no one could possibly know that *nirvana* was neither-real-nor-unreal, a point equally valid against the other three alternatives as well.

Though the *logical* importance of the four alternative assertions may be, and has been, exaggerated, its importance for Madhyamika philosophy of language, and hence ontology, and hence understanding of human freedom, is great. The catuskoti exhausts the ways in which the verb ‘to be’ may be employed in assertions: one may affirm the ‘is’ of something, or affirm the ‘is not’, or ‘both-is-and-is-not’, or ‘neither-is-nor-is-not’. In all four ways language is being used ontologically; the verb ‘is’, in whatever variation, implies the being or nonbeing of what the assertion is about. Nagarjuna and Candrakirti repudiate all of the four alternatives: they repudiate the ontological implications of the verb ‘to be’. They virtually never use the four alternatives as a logical tool, but they introduce them (at times just the first three) in order to make their repudiation of any conceivable implication of the ideas of being or non-being unquestionable and unconditional. How it may be acceptable for them to invalidate the arguments of their opponents by a rigid, non-contradictory logic, and repudiate all ontological assertions, and still speak meaningfully about human bondage and freedom is, obviously, a matter which requires further discussion.

One taking up the *Prasannapada* for the first time must be struck by the seeming perversity of its refusal to enunciate precise theories in opposition to the theories which it so mercilessly denounces. Nagarjuna says: ‘I advance no thesis and so cannot be faulted’ (p. 37). Whatever one thinks about the justification offered for this statement, it is not irresponsible sophistry. Candrakirti’s explanation runs: ‘But the Madhyamika brings no reason or ground *(hetu)* against his adversary; he makes no use of reasons and examples but pursues his own thesis only until the opponent gives up his’ (p. 38). Madhyamika, according to Candrakirti, could not, in good sense, advance arguments claiming to have a ground, for this would imply the ontological basis of logic and language. It is enough, in the interest of freeing the mind from its obstructive lumber, to convince the opponent that his theory entails, by logical consequence *(prasanga).* conclusions which are unacceptable to reason, or to common sense, or to Buddhist axioms. Because of this conception of the function of argument, Candrakirti is accounted a spokesman for the *Prasangika* branch of the Madhyamika school. His rival commentator on Nagarjuna’s *Middle Way Treatise*, Bhavaviveka, because he held that a Madhyamika could and should advance selfcontained, autonomous *(svatantra)* arguments, is regarded as a spokesman for the *svatantrika* branch of Madhyamika.

Candrakirti’s seemingly untenable claim that the negation of an opponent’s point of view does not commit one to the point of view from which the negation was made (pp. 36, 38) must provoke puzzlement and certainly requires some study. It may be understood within the logic of negation with at least partial approval though the Madhyamika understanding of its own procedure is not primarily logical. It presupposes that language is not ontologically bound, that assertions function within a jungle of infinitely articulable conceptions, and serve to promote or hinder the vivial energies latent in these. The attack on concepts, on points of view, is aimed at the vivial energies to which they are wedded, though it must strike the ideas en route. The success of the attack is measured by the lessening of the clutter of ideas which blocks the way to clarity of mind and to a grasp of the way things really are. The *prasangika* understanding of the purpose of thought does not prevent Candrakirti from giving a Madhyamika resolution of the major questions facing Buddhist philosophy. In each case, however, he does decline to offer one more theory in addition to and in competition with, and of the same order as, the theories advanced by other schools. The Madhyamika attitude, when it is given positive expression, never takes the form of a metaphysical theory (which would be a self-contradiction) but is offered as an interpretation of Buddha’s words in the interests of bringing the way of enlightenment closer to listeners and readers. Dependent origination is not a metaphysical theory, nor is the absence of being in particular things, nor is *nirvana* as the coming to repose of the manifold of named things. These resolutions of the crucial Buddhist concerns are not metaphysical theories, but elaborate expressions of the total posture of one on the Buddha’s way. We are today scarcely accustomed to this understanding of philosophy, but this is hardly an argument against it; in any case this is the attitude pervasively implicit and, at times, quite explicit (p. 238, 18) in the *Prasannapada*, I believe.

Before taking up the crucial Madhyamika concerns of the later chapters one further presupposition of their thought, so important as to be nowhere explicitly justified, must be singled out. According to Nagarjuna and Candrakirti, as I have just stated, reasoning is not ontologically bound; yet they proceed, unshakably assuming that what fails the tests of reason -- what is less than utterly intelligible - cannot exist. They fault and reject as untenable, in a ruthless and perhaps intolerant manner, every proffered concept or viewpoint which can be shown to contain even the slightest ambiguity, unclarity or unintelligibility. The two expressions most frequently used throughout the *Prasannapada* are ‘this makes no sense’ *(na yujyate)* and ‘this is logically impossible’, or, ‘this is unintelligible’ *(nopapadyate);* the former being, obviously, more general and less ontological, the latter being the final condemnation of a theory found to

be, in rigor, unthinkable. For thinkers often held to be ‘mystical’, the Madhyamika ,understanding of thinkability is surprisingly narrow and unyielding. Whatever attempts to own incompatible predicates is repudiated as unintelligible; unlike Hegel, Madhyamika will not tolerate the synthesis of opposites. ‘So, to “possess a characteristic” and “not to possess it” are contradictory. But what is contradictory cannot exist’ (p. 105). The expression ‘cannot exist’ *(na sambhavati)* means either or both ‘is not logically possible’ or ‘cannot come to be’; we might say it embraces both the possibilities of thought and of existence, though this distinction is not consistently maintained by Buddhists. The Madhyamika is the most dogmatic rationalist of any tradition. It may seem that if Madhyamika rejects the claim of what *cannot* be clearly thought to be a description of the way things really are, it should hold that what can be clearly thought would be such a description. But Madhyamika will not be committed to the opposite of what it repudiates; it will not, and cannot, agree that the utterly intelligible is the truth; and for a simple reason: there is nothing utterly intelligible. The mind *(buddhi),* is not, like Aristotle’s *nous,* endowed with the ability to know being; far removed from that, its natural activity - conceptualization - is rather an obstruction, albeit a natural obstruction, which is to be calmed and clarified before the truth can be present (p. 172). The truth is not presented to the intellect alone, and, hence is not intelligible; it cannot be present until the intellect has clarified itself by surpassing the demands of intelligibility (p. 177,7). If this can make sense, whether or not it is acceptable, then it becomes understandable how the Madhyamika can be a rigorous rationalist in his negative destruction of all theories about existence, and yet not be bound to the complementary view that existence is rational.

The crucial concerns of Madhyamika

The crucial concerns of Madhyamika thought, the matters it cares about, for which it undertakes the serpentine tasks of philosophy, may now be mentioned against this background of presuppositions and general characteristics. Nagarjuna, supported by Candrakirti, first examined in the early chapters all known attempts to give an account of the world as it presents itself from day to day, and found that none of them made sense; that, consequently, the world, or ‘life’, as we ordinarily experience it, is without any meaning; and so, one might think, has worked himself into a nihilist or at least scepticist, *cut de sac.* But Nagarjuna and Candrakirti do not concede this. They are sure that the destruction of metaphysics is not the end of meaningful life but that it opens new possibilities of finding sense in human existence. It was r:ragarjuna’s historical achievement to give the earliest coherent expression to Mahayana Buddhism, the new way of regarding human affairs in which the immediate awareness of the uncreated truth of all things allowed all things to serve as the occasion of human enlightenment. This non-mediated presence of the truth, a world removed from the personal intuition *(prajna)* of early Buddhism, was known in the religious literature *(sutras)* of Nagarjuna’s time as *prajna paramita* - the surpassing or consummate *prajna.* Though this expression is not used in the *Prasannapada,* it, like the religious thought-world of Mahayana Buddhism in general, is held quietly in the background as a kind of invisible sounding board for the arguments being noisily worked over in the foreground. The scepsis of the *Prasannapada* does, I believe, stand firmly on its own feet as an adventure in rigorous thought; and yet its function is to make it possible to comprehend the *bodhisattva* the enlightened man of Mahayana Buddhism. The *bodhisattva* is a~ enlightened being, and yet embodied - transcendent *and* immanent because, as the absence of being in things is their truth, the everyday world is the locus of *nirvana.*

The thought of the Prasannapada, understood in this way, presents us With the problem of grasping how it moves from a failed attempt to find a tenable account of experience in the conventional terms of causality, subject and attribute, motion, time, space, external objects, perception, passion, agent subject, and so on, as well as in the strictly Buddhist terms of suffering, bondage, freedom, and so on - a failure which could justify scepticism and even nihilism - to a hymneal affirmation of the surpassing worth of the human adventure. By what means does Madhyamika restore meaning to a scene of analytical devastation?

To treat this problem adequately, assuming that one would dare to try, would be a major experiment in thought. At this juncture, with a view to easing the reading of what, for many, must be a strange book, nothing more will be attempted than a pointing up of the crucial turns in the Madhyamika struggle to give an account of human experience commensurate both with its scepsis and the new Mahayana vision. I will suggest some preferred ways of understanding Madhyamika, but will try to avoid closing off what must remain an open and continuing study. As crucial turns I count the following:

1 The enquiry into being, or ‘self-existence’.
2 *Sunyata,* the truth of things.
3 The ‘two truths’.
4 The encounter with the boundaries of language.
5 *Nirvana.*
6 The middle way as resolution of the philosopher’s conundrums.

Self-existence

Nagarjuna’s attack on the idea of self-existence, to which he devotes a separate enquiry (Chapter XIII) may be seen as the hinge of his reformation of Buddhist thinking. Earlier Buddhist metaphysicians had resolved the problem of permanence in seemingly universal flux by the notion of *dharma.* There were thought to be limited numbers of ultimate, irreducible, simple constituents of existence which combined in time, to produce the perishable mental states

and things of the everyday world, without themselves perishing. *Dharmas* were not substances, nor qualities, nor relations, but self-characterizing, simple reals. Nagarjuna, taking the idea of self-existence in full earnest, insists, in Parmenidean fashion, that what is self-existent must be uncreated, imperishable and not dependent on anything else: what *is* in and through itself. Parmenides' solution, however, could never have occurred to a Buddhist for whom the ceaseless arising and perishing of things is the primary given and who must have a world in which meaningful transformation of human existence is possible. Plato's imperishable substances, innocent of temporal and spatial qualification *(dharmas* as *eidoi)* were inconceivable to Nagarjuna as they beg the question of permanence *in* time; and he would have quickly reduced Aristotle's *ousia* theory to mere nominalism. Nagarjuna was committed to rejecting any solution which remained within the bounds of mere theory.

Using the common example of the heat of fire, he argues that nothing in all of experience can meet the demands of the idea of self-existence: everything arises in time from causes. At this point Candrakirti's answer to the question of an opponent constitutes one of the seminal passages in the *Prasannapada.* Solely the unchanging nature of all things throughout all time is self-existent, he expounds (p. 156); this is nothing particular, nothing definable; it is what is common to all *dharmas,* namely, their lack (in the conventional sense) of both self-existence and non· self-existence; it is *sunyata;* and a synonym for *sunyata* is *tathata* - the thus-it-isness, or thusness of things, a common way of speaking of the truth about things. So: the absence of being in things is their being, their self-existence, their truth. In this way Candrakirti turns the problem around. He shows that the term self-existent is unthinkable within everyday experience and yet, far from discarding it, which he might have done, he elevates it to the realm of ultimate truth and *nirvana.* Clearly its original sense must suffer some transformation in this process and not merely by becoming a metaphor. It is more likely that an originally distorted, unintelligible expectation of finding selfexistence in substantial form among ontic existents led, in spite of its falsity, to a search for something uncaused because outside the dimension of causality; to something approachable only as 'self-existent' , yet beyond the dimensions of both conventional existence and conventional selfhood.

Despite the somewhat honorific use of the term self-existence to speak of what for Buddhists is ultimate, that is, enlightenment, it has become clear that nothing within the processes of the everyday can claim to be self-existent. The full weight of this turn of thought becomes evident when it is followed by the statement that if there is no self-existence in things neither can there be non-existence, as the two ideas are only reciprocally meaningful. Buddha's authority is drawn in to clinch the conclusion that both the notion of existence, or isness, and the notion of non-existence or is-notness are false dogmas and make it impossible to comprehend the truth of things in his sense. This sets the problem for the remaining excursions of Madhyamika thought: how to carry on with meaningful talk about the central concerns of a philosophy which believes it can show that the idea of existence, of isness, of being, is empty? Language, without the force of the verb 'to be', would seem to be mere fantasy. The simple sentence 'Enlightenment *is* neither existent nor non-existent' is unintelligible. How can Madhyamika seriously hold such a position?

Sunyata

When we take up the term for which Madhyamika is best known, *Sunyata,* the troubles become more interesting though not fewer. The term *sunyata,* which I translate throughout 'absence of being in things' snakes its way through all Madhyamika thinking, arousing puzzlement, wonder, insight, and despair in those who try to follow its tortuous path. It has often been called the void, sometimes emptiness and at times, after its mathematical meaning, zero. It has been more recently understood as openness, and, in some usages at least, merits the translation 'the truth of things'. It is so utterly novel that we must exercise some patience in attempting to grasp its full significance for Nagarjuna and Candrakirti.

Tactically, Madhyamika found itself attacking the realism of Buddhists who found being in the simple constituents of everyday things *(dharmas)* or of non-Buddhists, who found being in the everyday things themselves. In this sense, in denying that anything ontic has selfexistence, or, has its being in and through itself, *sunyata* means simply *nih-svabhava,* that is, absence of self-existence. This is by far the most frequent use of the term and, understandably, might be taken to be its definitive sense. Candrakirti is, however, very careful to explain at every critical turn (and this could be missed if one read only Nagarjuna's verses) that though everyday things and their constituents are lacking in being, they would be falsely, indeed heretically, understood as non-existent in every sense; neither existence nor non-existence should be predicated of them. The full value of the term *sunyata* then should be given as 'the absence of both being and non-being in things'. That this simply must be so becomes clear when *sunyata* is related to the 'two truths', to the middle way, to Madhyamika theory of language and to its understanding of enlightenment.

The hinge of Nagarjuna's revolution is his re-thinking of the original root concept of Buddhism - dependent origination - as *sunyata.* Early Buddhism, after rejecting the theories of causation current at the time, gave an account of the everyday in terms of the dependence of one thing or ·event on a preceding: the sprout is not *caused* by the seed, but does *depend* on the previous existence of the seed for its own arising. This understanding makes sense only so long as

its terms, 'seed' and 'sprout' are taken as real, as something between which the relation of dependence could be supposed. Nagarjuna retains the expression dependent origination, but, having denied both seed and sprout selfexistence, he must hold that the dependence of the one on the other can no longer be understood in the traditional realistic sense. It becomes rather the non-dependence of non-existents; there is no longer a real origination of anything in dependence on anything else. Candrakirti comments bluntly, 'We interpret dependent origination as *sunyata'* (p. 235). If, in the world which each of us holds together for himself, the causal account is delusory, if, that is, all the things inner and outer which make up a world neither arise nor exist in the realistic, entitative way we naively suppose, then the events and sequences which compose life are analogous to a magician's deception: what truly goes on is made to appear like a series of causally dependent events, but is not. The frequently recurring use of the analogy of magic *(maya)* can be misleading. It does not mean that Nagarjuna and Candrakirti are hallucinationists, that a magic wand will serve to conjure up and to spirit away the everyday world. Their insistence, repeated impressively often, that they are not nihilists, that the dogma of non-existence is as much a heresy as the dogma that everyday things as such are in being, should warn us to look for another understanding of the analogy of the magician's trick. This is a subtle and difficult point. It may suffice at this juncture to remind that the indispensable factor in a magician's trick is the false interpretation placed on the evidence of the senses by the spectator. Coins, cigarettes and rabbits are manipulated by the magician strictly in accord with the laws of motion and gravity that govern all objects. It is the spectator who, due to the shallowness of his imagination, penetrates no deeper than his eyesight and sees these objects passing bewilderingly in and out of nostrils, pockets and top hats. The events making up the trick, the palming of the coin or cigarettes, the collapse of a false bottom in the hat, are not dream, not hallucination, but run of the mill space-time sequences onto which the spectator projects his false expectations.

Sunyata is not only the repudiation of a *causal* account of the everyday, it marks the repudiation of *any* account: it is not a theory about the space-time world. In the enquiry into *sunyata* and the 'two truths' (Chapter XVIII) the opponent's attempt to fix a metaphysics of nihilism on the notion *sunyata* is rejected by distinguishing between the delusive everyday *(samvrti),* where metaphysical theories appear to have their proper locus, and a higher truth *(paramartha).* The thought here is somewhat inexplicit but the way in which the distinction of the two truths is introduced at this point implies that *sunyata* is not one more theory among the many traditional theories offering an account of the factual world; it implies that such theories are delusive shadow boxing: accounts of what is not there, as if one set out to explain the delusive appearances of the magician's tricks strictly in terms of the delusive appearances themselves. Metaphysicians are, as it were, attempting to give a reasoned account of the emergence of rabbits from empty hats or of coins from nostrils. Madhyamika is determined to expose the supposed world of fact as a magician's trick and in this way to render all metaphysics ridiculous. They attempt to show that theoretical explanation is founded on the delusive fiction of entities in being affecting each other causally. Nagarjuna says this sweepingly, *'Sunyata* is the exhaustion of all views' (p. 150, 8) and adds 'Those for whom *sunyata* is itself a theory are incurable.'

The special status of *sunyata* - as not one more delusive view but something not of the nature of a view - is marked out in the chapter 'The Absence of Being in Things'. It is declared that all compound things are not what they pretend to be; that what is not what it pretends to be is unreal; that therefore all compound things are unreal (p. 144,1). This can be taken as a restatement of the magician analogy; but in any case it provokes the natural rejoinder 'If all compound things are unreal, what is it in that case that pretends?' (p. 145, 2). That the answer is *sunyata* tells us much about the use of the term. There is no eternal being, no Absolute as Brahman, nor a real individual entity concealed behind the pretence; there is no pretender; there is simply, if unaccountably, a false imputation of being to particular things. Why *sunyata* is introduced at this point is not easy to comprehend, it is certainly not made explicit, but it may be because it is the preferred understanding of self-existence and hence the source of the pretence everyday things make of being self-existent entities. In any case *sunyata* extricates Madhyamika from a situation very close to the liar's paradox and that can mark for our purposes the transition from *sunyata* as the preferred account of the everyday world to *sunyata* as the way into the Madhyamika understanding of the world of the unborn. I will attempt to trace this often confusing way by considering what Nagarjuna and Candrakirti have to say about the 'two truths', the boundaries of language, *nirvana* and the middle way.

The two truths

Though the notion of 'two truths' *(satyadvaya)* is implicit in Buddhism from the beginning, as it is in Vedanta and, indeed, in any philosophy or religion that holds to a norm distinct from the everyday, Madhyamika alone makes the distinction into its *crucial* thought. The two truths elevate the distinction between the born - the temporal - and the unborn ~ the timeless - of the Buddha's own discourses to the reflective level. The problems which this distinction introduces into reflective thought become explicit and acute for Nagarjuna under the terminology of *samvrti* - the temporal, the everyday - and *paramartha* - the timeless, the truth of enlightenment. Though these terms are used sparingly in the *Prasannapada,* the distinction and its problems are implicit, just barely beneath the surface of discussion, throughout the entire course of the investigation. Candrakirti takes up the problem explicitly in Chapter II. He

argues (pp. 59-60) that neither is the idea of a characteristic apart from what it is a characteristic of intelligible, nor is the idea of what is characterized apart from its characteristics. This reciprocal dependence deprives each term of its claim to exist or to be intelligible in its own right, and that fact, Candrakirti states, is the mark of *samvrti;* it is unintelligibility which distinguishes it from *paramartha* - the higher truth; it is the failure of the concepts 'characteristic' and 'thing' to make sense which tells us they cannot be true ultimately. Candrakirti does not say that the truth of things *is* intelligible. It is the very main hinge of Madhyamika that he does not feel committed to that conclusion. He is searching for an understanding of things without an explicit concept of what would count as the truth and yet confident he has a negative criterion adequate for the detection and rejection of what fails to be what he is searching for. How Madhyamika resolves this conundrum, if it does, is perhaps the most interesting question it can raise for us.

Chapter XVIII, in spite of its title, is about the two truths and their relation to the absence of being in things. Nagarjuna, replying to a critic who has accused him of being a nihilist, of holding the view that the putative entities of the everyday world do not exist in any sense, counters (p. 230, 8) that such a misguided critic is one who does not understand the two truths. It seems clear that he means to contrast the proper understanding of *sunyata,* namely that everyday things neither exist nor do not exist, with the naive view that things are self-existent entities. Candrakirti explains (p. 238) that *sunyata,* properly understood is, itself, the higher truth of everyday things, and nothing else. The distinctions used in *karika* 10 between the transactional world *(samvrti)* , the higher truth *(paramartha)* and *nirvana* support the view that Madhyamika worked with *three* truths, not two, distinguishing between the higher (more true) truth about everyday things *(paramartha),* i.e. that things are *sunya,* and the realization of that truth in enlightenment *(nirvana).* But Nagarjuna and Candrakirti are not consistent on this point; more often *sunyata,* as the truth of things, is not separated from the incorrigible, trans-factual awareness of the way things really are, which is itself enlightenment. In this sense any theory of *sunyata,* however adequate, belongs, by definition, to the ordinary world, because it must perforce, in forming sentences with words, use the concepts of entity, characteristic, the verb to be and all the vocabulary of delusive *samvrti* which Madhyamika rejects as a vocabulary for philosophy. In so far as the higher truth is a theory, it falls, being *verbal* truth, within the lower truth. This ambiguity may be resolved on further study, but for the moment I am content to let it stand. The higher truth is *satya,* both a truth and a reality, both the explanation and the realization of enlightenment.

The limits of language

Such a seemingly clumsy *aporia* was not, of course, left unattended by Nagarjuna and Candrakirti. It is taken up further in terms of the limits of language. Chapter XIV, *karika* 7 makes it clear that language can *refer* only to perishable objects of thought (there are no other), not to the truth of things; and *karika* 9 says that the way things really are cannot be manifested as named things. In his commentary Candrakirti explains that ordinary language ceases to be effective and valid (that is, no longer functions by reference to objects) in the realm of the higher truth. Nagarjuna's scandalous aphorism (p. 262, 24) 'No truth has been taught by a Buddha for anyone, anywhere' appears to strengthen this view. This seems to be a dead end: only wordlessness is appropriate to the higher truth. It is not, however, because Candrakirti adds at once that there is a need to *point out* or to *teach* the higher truth and to do this one must fall back on ordinary language, as one who wants a drink of water makes use of a receptacle to fetch it, but drinks the water. It is clear that there is no special vocabulary or grammar reserved for discussion of the higher truth; in discussion it becomes an integral part of the everyday truth. But then how point to it or teach it at all? How understand the capacity of a wise man to use *words* when helping others toward enlightenment?

This is the crux, and the Madhyamika answer turns on its denial of the cognitive function of language, whether in its ordinary use or in a putatively higher philosophical and religious use. There are, bluntly, no entities to which words *refer.* There is no entity 'person' distinct from an individual psycho-physical history, though we mistakenly think we refer to such; there is no entity corresponding to the word 'chariot' distinct from axles, wheels and so on. In all such cases the noun word functions not by naming, not by furthering cognition, but as a *prajnapti. Prajnapti* becomes, in Madhyamika discussion, a technical term carrying a heavy burden of importance. This is widely recognized though it has not as yet been adequately studied. I understand a *prajnapti* to be a non-cognitive, guiding term which serves to suggest appropriate ways of coping with the putative realities on which it rests for its meaning and to which it lends meaning. 'Person' rests on the putative reality of psycho-physical traits, and 'chariot' presupposes wheels, axle, and so on. There is, in truth, no entity 'person' and none 'chariot' named by these words and hence there is no entity to be cognized. This is a kind of nominalism and yet is much more.

Language is of one piece and does not function differently when used of the higher truth. *Karika* 18 (p. 238) is Nagarjuna's great dictum in this matter. He says that dependent origination is *sunyata* and *'Sunyata* is a guiding, not a cognitive, notion presupposing the everyday.' In this one sentence all of Madhyamika metaphysics is converted to praxis; its two central terms, dependent origination and the absence of both being and non-being in things, are declared to be non-cognitive *(prajnapti)* as 'person' and 'chariot' are. They cannot be offered as descriptive words; to say of a

person or a chariot that it neither is nor is not, cannot *describe* them because the refusal to use the verb 'to be' ontologically precludes the attribution of any descriptive predicates. What function remains to words then, but to suggest or prescribe appropriate ways of *behaving* toward 'things'? This is, of course, a crucial and a most difficult question, but, for my own part, the *Prasannapada* makes sense in a total way only on some such interpretation of its key terms. A *prajnapti* is a guiding notion, a notion which a long tradition of successful teaching finds effective in helping students toward the clarity of mind that marks the wise man. Neither Nagarjuna nor Candrakirti anywhere says this explicitly, but, after the denial of the 'is' of predication, no other interpretation remains credible. When Nagarjuna says that *sunyata* is a *prajnapti* presupposing a base *(upadaya)* as person presupposes psycho-physical traits and 'chariot' axle and wheels, he is saying, I believe, that his own philosophical vocabulary functions only presupposing ordinary, entitative language as its base of meaning; ordinary language is the receptacle that carries the water of wisdom. On this interpretation, the entire, august range of Buddhist notions, enlightenment *(nirvana)*, reality *(tattvam)*, the truth of things *(tathata)*, the quintessence of all things *(dharmata)*, and Buddha himself become *prajnaptis*, serving to lead men toward freedom, but not claiming to describe any reality or convey any ultimate truth. Candrakirti repeatedly avers that no Buddha used words except for the purpose of guiding beings to enlightenment (e.g., pp. 175-7).

That this seemingly heretical view is not a passing aberration is borne out in the chapter devoted to the inquiry into *nirvana*, where, after Nagarjuna's search through the traditional ways of understanding *nirvana*, Candrakirti concludes 'Therefore it has been established that even *nirvana* does not exist' (p. 263). Any attempt to conceive *nirvana* ontologically is undercut by the insistence that it is the utter dissipation of ontologizing thought *(kalpana)* which is *nirvana* (p. 249). To entertain concepts like personal afflictions *(klesa)* or factors of personal existence *(skandha)* (which, Buddhists conventionally hold, must be removed in order to attain *nirvana)* believing either that they are or are not is the very habit which ensures continued bondage. This is not merely an attack on academic theories; it is understood in the radical sense of withdrawing the affirmation of being from all things, inner and outer, without exception. This is formulated in the phrase 'the coming to rest of the manifold of named things' (p. 249) which is, throughout the investigation, among the many paraphrases and explanations of *nirvana*, the most persistent.

Nirvana

Madhyamika may have, at this point, frustrated any attempt at conceiving *Nirvana* in terms of a reality, but one may still wonder if their position is anything more than Schopenhauerian negativism. One need not wonder for long. When the conventional conceptions of *nirvana* have been repudiated, Nagarjuna moves forward to a fresh understanding of Buddhism which radically influenced later developments and which retains a certain perennial appeal. *Nirvana*, in Nagarjuna's understanding, is not the end of life, nor the denial of life; it is a discovery of 'the way things are truly'; it is a return to the world following a radical purification of the 'being' who is to appreciate it; *Nirvana* lets the world become what it is.

This revolutionary understanding is developed in Chapter XIX, the culminating, if philosophically not the most intricate, investigation of the entire treatise. *Karika* 9 (p. 255) may be taken as the aphoristic quintessence of Madhyamika thought: 'That which, taken as causal or dependent, is the process of being born and passing on, is, taken noncausally and beyond all dependence, declared to be *nirvana.' Nirvana* is a radically altered way of taking the process of being born and passing on, that is, the everyday. The everyday is the only 'locus' there is for *Nirvana* to realize itself in. This *karika* sets a conundrum for thought that cannot be brushed aside; and it makes the predominant Western interpretations of *Nirvana*, from Schopenhauer through Nietzsche and Max Muller to Albert Schweitzer seem inadequate, even distorted. Once and for all *nirvana* is declared not to be realized in a locus other than the turmoil of birth and death; once and for all it is declared not to be extinction of life, nor an afterlife, nor a distant realm of being. *Karikas* 19 and 20 (pp. 259-60) make this point even more provocatively; the one saying there is no specifiable difference whatever between *nirvana* and the everyday world *(samsara)* , the other that *nirvana* has no other ontic range than that of the everyday world. What ~ mind-splitting thunderclap this conception must have been to Nagarjuna's contemporaries! At issue is the nature of Buddha, of the truth of Buddhism itself: how to grasp the embodiment of a sense of life that endures in all circumstances. Nagarjuna's great insight is that *nirvana* as an afterlife is unintelligible, because a limit to the illimitable. *Nirvana* is wherever the Buddha-nature prevails: so, as ontic realms ~ and an afterlife is just as much an ontic realm as this life ~ there is no difference between *Nirvana* and *samsara.* To say in English, as the translation does, that the 'ontic range' of *nirvana* is the ontic range of *samsara* is, on the face of it, a gross distortion: *Nirvana* can have no ontic limitations whatsoever as is self-evident. The difficulty is common to all efforts to bring the everyday into touch, by means of everyday language, with what surpasses it. Candrakirti is quite clear about Nagarjuna's meaning. He tells us that both the everyday and *nirvana* are of the same basic nature, are of one essence (p. 260); dependent origination, which is to say non-dependent non-origination, the absence of being in things, the essentially peaceful nature of things, is the truth both of the everyday and of *nirvana.* There is no other existence, no other world, of which *nirvana* is the truth.

In the culminating pulse of the *nirvana* chapter Candrakirti's thought moves to its loftiest height and binds together the main threads of the entire treatise. He comments on Nagarjuna's verse 'Beatitude is the coming to rest of all ways of taking things, the repose of named things' (p. 262, 24) by juxtaposing the crucial ideas of Madhyamika. Beatitude - *nirvana* - is understood in terms of two criteria: (I) the coming to rest of all ways of taking things (or of all ways of perceiving things); (2) the coming to rest of all named things (or of language as a naming activity). These two criteria are in Candrakirti's application virtually one, though the second is the preferred formulation. He expounds by reviewing six essential aspects of the everyday world, the ceasing to function of each of which is an aspect of beatitude or *nirvana.* These six aspects are: (1) assertive verbal statements; (2) discursive thought; (3) the basic afflictions; (4) innate modes of thought *(vasana);* (5) objects of knowledge; (6) knowing. *Nirvana* is not produced by the cessation of these factors; their cessation is *nirvana;* there can be no causal, or other, relationship between *samsara* and *nirvana; nirvana* is not another something to which anything ontic can be related. The cessation of each of these six factors, is said to be the coming to rest, or the repose, of named things. Each cessation is somehow complete in itself, one way of elucidating what the repose of a world supposed to consist of entities with names, might be like. Such a world is not wiped out, or reduced to meaninglessness; the turmoil is drawn out of it so that it becomes transparent to the ever-present Buddha Truth. That is all. As assertions of knowledge have no place in *nirvana* (being inseparable from some interest, however subtle) we need not ask for information about it, nor can we treat it as having being. Candrakirti's final *coup* is 'Therefore it has been established that even *nirvana* does not exist', and he quotes the verse '*Nirvana* is *no-nirvana* the lord of existence taught; a knot tied by infinitude and loosed even by the same' (p. 263).

Western interpretations of Madhyamika

This understanding of *nirvana* was difficult for the classical Indian critics of Madhyamika to comprehend, and has been not less so for modern Western interpreters. Among the many conflicting interpretations, the French and Belgians, from Burnouf to Poussin, have tended to see a profound and unresolved scepticism, perhaps nihilism, in the final position of Madhyamika. This has always been the frustration of those, whether Buddhist, Christian or atheist, who are wedded to realist attitudes, in the face of Madhyamika's denial of being to persons and things. The thinking of the *Prasannapada* is, of course, overwhelmingly critical and negative; but to overlook the way in which it explains enlightenment as hidden in the very obscuring misconceptions which critical thinking clears away is to miss the subtlety and main thrust of Madhyamika thought. Still, the nihilistic interpretation forces us to recognize where the main hinge of Madhyamika is located: namely, at the passage from critical thinking which, like a powerful acid, eats away our stock of everyday beliefs, to an affirmation of the faith which all along was struggling to express itself in the critical thinking.

The greatest Western Madhyamika interpreters of the early twentieth century were Russian and Polish under the strong philosophical influence of Hegel and Kant. Of the many scholars who devoted themselves to Buddhism the writings of Stanislaw Schayer and T. Stcherbatsky are most easily accessible to us. Schayer translates *svabhava,* which I render 'self-existence' as *das absolute Sein,* although 'absolute being' is not an idea likely to be at home in Buddhist thinking. He speaks of the 'ultimate totality of existence - the one reality'; thinks Madhyamika is a 'radical monism'; and holds that the 'presence of the Absolute' is intuited in a mystical act. As a countervailing emphasis to the early nihilist interpretation this had great value, though Schayer continues to use the language of ontology past the point where Madhyamika enjoins us to put it aside. Stcherbatsky was more Kantian than Hegelian and read the *Prasannapada,* which he entitles 'A Treatise on Relativity' in terms of phenomena and the thing in itself which underlay them. He thinks *sunyata* is the relativity of things but that the universe viewed as a whole is the Absolute; Madhyamika is an assertion of the absolute whole, it is a radical monism. Stcherbatsky's translation of two chapters of the *Prasannapada* was an indispensable step in the modern recovery of this ancient school of thought. If one wishes to criticize his interpretation one can point out that it contributes little to our understanding of the relation of a *sunyata* philosophy to the Buddhist faith; he does not make clear how 'universal relativism' supports the middle way.

T. R. V. Murti's book *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* brought Madhyamika thought squarely into the English-speaking world. Though still somewhat under Hegelian and Kantian influence (and of firm Vedantist conviction) Murti avoids both the nihilist interpretations of Burnouf and Poussin and the ontologizing interpretations of Schayer and Stcherbatsky. He treats the work, focusing more on Nagarjuna's verses than on Candrakirti's commentary, as an opus in philosophical dialectics, that is, as a demonstration how each and every philosophical dogma must disintegrate from internal contradiction. Grasping the full implications of this, 'the reflective awareness of the dialectical play of reason', is the fruit of philosophy and leads to an utter clarity of the mind which, as an intuition of the Real, is, though without an object juxtaposed to it, still the Madhyamika Absolute. Murti repeatedly repudiates a nihilistic interpretation of Nagarjuna. His work, emphasizing the critical, analytical, sceptical method of Madhyamika, frees it from the metaphysical interpretations of Schayer and Stcherbatsky and opens the way to an interpretation more in keeping with the problems of Indian philosophy. If there is to be a comment on Murti's book it is that he works from an

epistemological model of enlightenment which still leaves the existential grounding of the Buddhist middle way something of a question mark.

A fresh attempt to convert Nagarjuna into contemporary terms has been made by F. J. Streng, who works with unmistakably religious questions in mind. Streng insists that there is no Absolute in Madhyamika; *sunyata,* which he takes as 'emptiness', stands rather for the openness of the world to personal transformation. *Sunyata* is not metaphysics, nor an object of cognition, it is an aid to the removal of human afflictions. The higher truth is not an absolute, it is a power aiding release from the need of an absolute. This emphasis on the soteriological purpose of Madhyamika thought is, it seems to me, a move in the right direction; I can understand its purpose in no other way. Streng's emphasis, however, does, at times, seem to draw the higher truth down into the ceaseless flux of existence in a way that endangers its status as 'the' Buddhist truth. Dependent origination, understood as the 'flux of existence', becomes, in Streng's account, the primary datum. It is here that my own understanding diverges. Dependent origination is itself *sunya,* neither in being nor not in being, is, indeed, synonymous with *sunyata,* as both Nagarjuna and Candrakirti are careful to explain, and so could not serve as a primary datum against which beliefs must test themselves: in Madhyamika there is and can be no primary datum available to us through concepts.

The middle way

When one feels the full weight of the *Prasannapada* as a whole, neither singling out Nagarjuna's pronouncements nor isolating Candrakirti's comments from them, the impact, so it seems to me, is squarely and crushingly on the idea of being. More times than anyone has counted, the text insists, sometimes quoting early *sutras*, sometimes later ones, sometimes arguing from the unacceptability of pairs of opposites, sometimes demonstrating the unintelligibility of self-existence, that there is no way of thinking the notion 'is'; and if not 'is' then not 'non-is' either nor any combination of the two. Being is unintelligible and hence a misguided attempt to grasp the sense of the human predicament (pp. 154.5, 7). Buddha is singled out for praise because he understood this fully. What follows from this is nothing less than the invalidation of all metaphysics or, more sweepingly, of any understanding of life which is based on the notion being. This, nothing less, is the implication of *sunyata.* If it is delusive to think being, then it is delusive to believe that one can make cognitive assertions about anything.

How are we then to think the things and ideas and people of the everyday world, if not as existing or not existing? Any suggestion involving cognitive claims has already been ruled out; how then to *say* what the true way of things is? The Madhyamika answer, and this is one way of stating the heart of their thinking, would, I believe, go like this: The way the enlightened man deals with things, is the way they are, is their truth. If one adheres strictly to the Madhyamika repudiation of being and so does not attempt to determine the status of chariots and all other nominal entities, either by asserting that a chariot exists (Plato) or that it is merely a name, i.e. does not exist (Berkeley) or that it exists only as an ineffable union of matter and form (Aristotle), what other means of saying anything about things conceivably remain to us? Madhyamika avoids making cognitive assertions about things by holding that the truth of things is what they mean to the enlightened man; this makes no use of the notion of being; it implies that things become themselves only as they become integral to the way of an enlightened being: the middle way.

The middle way is, in my understanding, the beginning and ending of Madhyamika thought. It overcomes the finality of being and the meaninglessness of non-being, not by discovering a third mode of 'to be', somehow suspended between being and non-being, but by moving away from this thought wholly. 'Middle' means a way that, although it can be pointed out only by repudiating the pair of opposites, being and non-being, is itself to be understood in a quite other dimension of thought. A way is neither in being nor is it nothing, even though the verb to be is used in talking about it. Language that is not, even implicitly, ontological (and Madhyamika holds that even ordinary language is only delusively ontological), must be understood in some other way, as exclamatory, or exhortative, or persuasive, or prescriptive, or pragmatic, or some combination of these. In the *Prasannapada* ordinary language is assumed to be all these things, and enlightened language, whose function is to guide beings to enlightenment, is no less so; in neither use is it cognitive or ontological.

What kind of world do we find ourselves in, if words do not name things in being? Certainly it would be as far from Aristotle's world as is conceivable. One could not know anything in the traditional sense of possessing true beliefs about things in being; nothing could, in honesty, be held to exist as conceived. Such a world, if I grasp Madhyamika at all would consist of *seeming* things which in *truth* are not there, though they are most certainly not mere fantasies either. At this point we are very close to the useful limits of language, and indeed Candrakirti often introduces the analogy of the magician's trick when he must say what takes the place of a world based on things in being. No account can be given of such a world because accounts presuppose things in being. No human can do more than commend a *way* of dealing with seeming things and that is just what the middle way is and what Madhyamika does. On the middle way, seeming things, while not accepted, are not scorned; delusion is not replaced by a delusion-proof reality. The middle way is possible only in the face of the untiring insistence of seeming things to be taken as real things and IS

the sovereign, unruffled capacity to see them, respectfully, as doing just that. Underlying and supporting this middle way of coping with the human predicament is of course the historical fact that Nagarjuna and Candrakirti, as Buddhists, were in no doubt that Buddha had lived in the middle way. Buddha's life was all the evidence needed that the middle way of coming to grips with the magician's trick unloosed a universal compassion for all beings suffering in delusion; that, in the middle way, there was freedom from false belief and the promise of human dignity.

So deep and so unaware was this conviction that it takes the place of much explicit argument. Nowhere do Nagarjuna and Candrakirti analyze the middle way as I have attempted to do in these few paragraphs? It was not, for them, a *problem:* after all they could *live* It. For us, who are attempting to understand, in twentieth-century terms, what they lived, it must remain a problem of interpretation. That .the middle way supersedes philosophical theory and moral exhortation, fusing in itself feeling and will and intellect, is offered her: as a contribution to that understanding. This interpretation of Madhyamika must, I presume, lean a little to one side or the other yet it does so as little as I can make it. The text which follows is the touchstone.

Essay: Emptiness —The Philosophy of Nagarjuna

Was Nagarjuna a Philosopher?

According to Anthony Flew and many other philosophers, no philosophy was done east of Athens in pre-modern times. It is important to see that this is not true, and Nagarjuna is a good example to show this. It is true that central to his work is a *religious* purpose: to provide a foundation for how the Buddhist quest for nirvana could work, and to help others on that quest by showing that there is nothing in the phenomenal world to become attached to. (See Streng 1967.) All of Nagarjuna's works are broadly soteriological in nature: he is trying to break the habit of reification that is at the root of grasping and craving and hence all suffering (Garfield 1995: 314). In some passages he brings out the religious implications for the Buddhist way of life (e.g., MK 23.23-25, 24.24-35; VV 54-56, 70). Nagarjuna did not have to argue for the basics of a Buddhist way of life, since his audience was Buddhists — a Buddhist framework was simply assumed by all involved. But philosophy can be in service to a religious end, as with philosophy being the "handmaiden" of theology in the Western Middle Ages. Here, Nagarjuna is trying to show that one way suggested to ground the Buddhist way of life — that of the Abhidharmists' self-existence metaphysics — cannot work. And he is engaged in a type of conceptual analysis of categories by an appeal to reason and everyday experiences shared by all — something that today's philosophers can readily recognize as philosophy, even if they do not agree with his particular analysis.

In sum, one can be a philosopher and still have a religious purpose — it is not either/or (Betty 1983). In fact, Nagarjuna's religious objective is *mystical* — attaining a mindfulness insight through realizing that there is nothing in the phenomenal world that is permanent or ontologically separate to become attached to. Philosophers tend to equate mysticism with irrationality; so if Nagarjuna was rational, he was not a mystic (Garfield & Priest 2003: 9-10). But mystics in general are more rational than is generally believed. (See Jones 1993b.) Mystical writings can also be rational and logical even while requiring a personal mystical experience as necessary to realize that an ultimate truth-claim (*paramartha-sayta*) is in fact true of reality. That is, seeing the phenomenal world as it really is *(tattva)* — i.e., realizing emptiness firsthand — requires a state of consciousness in which all frames of reference are in abeyance, including even emptiness itself. The world does not disappear in this state, as with a depth-mystical experience in Advaita Vedanta. Rather, only a sense of discrete entities disappears. (See Jones 2010 for the two types of mystical experiences.) In this state of mindfulness, there are no reified objects, but there still are sensory phenomena. Sense- consciousness is simply no longer directed by our conceptualizations. And there is nothing inconsistent or irrational in using arguments to aid in attaining a state of consciousness where we see the world differently than in our ordinary state of mind and where we are no longer attached to the objectifications that our mind makes in its ordinary state.

Language and the analysis of concepts figures prominently in Nagarjuna's thought, and he may have been influenced by Indian grammarians. But trying to see him as a modern linguistic philosopher would be a mistake: we would end up placing him in a favored category rather than seeing him in his own terms. Scholars today may see him as a good modern "empiricist" or "pragmatist" or "postmodernist" (as Jay Garfield and C. W. Huntington do), just as scholars in the past saw him as the exemplification of whatever they considered the ideal for a philosopher to he (Tuck 1990). (For the same reason, we should not think of his Buddhist opponents in Western terms such as modern philosophical "realists.")

But Nagarjuna does not fit neatly into any Western category of philosophers. He is not a "nihilist" in either values or ontology. Nor is he a "skeptic" in denying the self-existence of entities (*bhavas*): he claims to have knowledge of the fundamental nature of reality as it really is; he makes ontological claims and is not doubting that something is real or questioning his own metaphysics; nor is he claiming that something real is unknowable or that knowledge in general is impossible. (See Burton 1999:17-43.) Nor is he a relativist who claims that all truth-claims are equal. Nothing suggests that he had an "obvious abhorrence of all definitely stated doctrines' and 'true conclusions' (contra Huntington 2007: 111). We might label him a radical nominalist, but his metaphysics is not one of a plurality of ultimate individual things as with Western nominalists. Indeed, applying any Western label to him will lead a reader to think along certain lines based on the history of Western philosophy, and that would be an instance of perceiving reality through a preconceived lens — precisely the type of practice that Nagarjuna is arguing against.

Nagarjuna's Ontology

The basic Buddhist metaphysics is one of "becoming." It emphasizes change and the interconnectedness of things in the phenomenal world. The fundamental components of this metaphysics are the *dharmas* — momentary "atoms" of experience, not materialistic objects. And, contrary to many commentators, Nagarjuna has a specific ontology based on Buddhist notions of becoming: a metaphysics of emptiness *(shunyata)* that contrasts with a metaphysics of self-existence (*svabhava*) that he ascribes to Abhidharmists. He sees the Abhidharma Buddhists as derailing Buddhist metaphysics by making the *dharmas,* as well as everything else in the phenomenal world, self-existent. According to him, the Abhidharmists' notion of self-existence entails a world that is permanent, unchanging, and disconnected. (Whether Abhidharmists really accept this will be questioned below.) Nothing would arise or cease (Ml< 24.16) or otherwise change. Each thing existing by its own nature must remain the same: if it could change its character, it would not really have its

own nature. 1'his produces a world with no continuity but merely a collection of disjointed entities. Cause-and-effect is impossible (Ml< 24.17). Every thing is a discrete, self-enclosed entity that exists on its own and so cannot interact with anything else. To Nagarjuna, this means that the world of *svabhava* metaphysics would not work. That is, nothing could proceed in the world the way we see that it does if entities, properties, actions, and agents were self-existent because there could be no changes.

Nagarjuna accepts self-existence, lack of change, and permanence as the legitimate criteria for what is ultimately *real* (i.e., has "being [sat]"). This is also the criterion adopted later by Advaita Vedanta. Advaitins conclude that the world is an illusion while a transcendental reality *(atman/brahman)* does satisfy this criterion and so is real. It is important to note that Nagarjuna is only concerned with *the world of everyday phenomena,* not *a transcendental reality* like Advaita's Brahman. Nagarjuna's metaphysics is confined to this world and what we experience in the world. But, as with the Advaitins, Nagarjuna concludes that nothing in the phenomenal world — including ourselves — is *real* by this criterion since we experience constant change. Advaitins contrast the changeless self *(atman)* with the changing phenomenal self *(jiva*), but Nagarjuna sees his opponents committed to a changeless realities within the phenomenal world.

The only alternative to a phenomenal world of *svabhava* metaphysics according to Nagarjuna is a world empty of self-existence — i.e., emptiness *(shunyata).* A world free of any abiding, self-existent parts can proceed the way we see it doing: things constantly changing, interacting, being causally efficacious, arising, and ceasing. What arises from causes and conditions is neither the *same as,* nor *different from,* those causes and conditions. Nothing exists in and of itself. Nothing has a self-given existence or nature. Nothing *real* is involved. There are no real (self-existent) causes or effects; no real persons who are bound or liberated; nothing real that is pure or impure; no real attributes or characteristics to "mark" something; no real actions. Nothing ceases or is eternal (MK 17.7-10). The phenomenal world is a series of impermanent and interconnected parts, and the series itself is also devoid of anything permanent and eternal; hence, it too is not real in that sense. Indeed, from the highest point of view, there is neither permanence nor impermanence since there are no real (self-existent) entities that could be either permanent or impermanent (SS 58). In addition, if there is no "permanence," there is nothing to contrast "impermanence" with, and so there is nothing properly described as "impermanent." Thus, under either metaphysics there is 110 *real change* (including arising or ceasing |e.g., MK 20.17-18, 24.22-23]): under *svabhava* metaphysics, real things are permanent and immutable, and so cannot *change-,* under *shunyata* metaphysics, things are empty of self existence and so there is nothing *real* to change, nor are any changes themselves *real* (MK 13.4).

Being empty of self-existence is how reality truly is (*tattva, yatha-bhutam).* Thus, phenomenal reality's ultimate nature is the absence of any *svabhava-like* nature. It is beyond "is-ness" and "is-not-ness" (R 61-62) since these views are connected to *svabhava.* That is the nature of things — to put it paradoxically, things' nature is "no nature." But to put it that way is still to be thinking in terms of *"nature,"* which remains related to something existing by *svabhava,* and that is to be on the wrong track. Phenomena depend on causes and conditions; they do not exist through their own self-existence, nor are they totally nonexistent, but are something in between. An actor and action are interdependent and thus neither can be established as real (MK 8.12). It is a middle way between eternal permanence and complete annihilation (e.g., MK 8.14; R 46).

The phenomenal world under an emptiness metaphysics is impermanent, constantly changing, and interconnected. It is unarisen and unceasing (MK 18.7) because there are no real entities in the world that could arise or cease. For the same reason, it is neither eternal nor annihilated (MK 18.10). It has no unchanging, self-existent core, and thus is the opposite of anything existing by *svabhava:* it is free of any abiding substance or unchanging "essential" properties. Nor is it constructed out of discrete parts; thus, it is "clear" of differentiations that could be "grasped." It is not dependent upon another, "peaceful" or "still" (since it is free of distinct parts banging into each other), free of conceptual projections or the thoughts that make distinctions, and without the multiplicity of distinct entities (MK 18.9). It is not one, not diverse, not annihilated, and not eternal (MK18.n). Phenomena that arise dependently upon another thing are not identical to that thing, nor are they completely distinct from that thing; thus, they are not something that is either annihilated or eternal (MK 18.10).

As previously noted, phenomenal reality is a series of svabhava-free, momentary parts, and the series itself is not a permanent entity. That is, Nagarjuna is not treating the whole of the natural realm as self-existent: if all its parts are empty of self-existence, then so is the whole. Indeed, he is not endorsing any type of holism: any whole is not a self-existent entity — the whole depends on the parts, and since the parts are empty so too is the totality of the parts, as he discusses concerning series (e.g., MK 17.7; SS 22cd). He imputes self-existence metaphysics to any other way of looking at things. The same holds for any continuum of events we divide into discrete segments with our concepts. For example, if who is born is not dying, then they are born deathless (see MK 13.3-6), and so can never die.

It should also be noted that Nagarjuna's characterization of reality is not totally negative: by equating emptiness with the Buddhist theory of dependent-arising (MK 24.18, W 70 Comm.), he is giving some *substantive characterization of how reality works.* Nagarjuna gives no defense for equating emptiness with dependent-arising. He simply states that the two are the same (MK 24.18). He did not have to defend his equation in works addressed to other Buddhists. Nevertheless his maneuver makes emptiness a substantive metaphysical claim about reality, not merely a general metaphysics of

impermanence and conditionality or a general assertion of the absence of *svabhava.* And if "dependent-arising" here means the full twelve-step formula of MK 26 rather than the general idea of conditionality or the formula "this arises dependent on that," then rebirth and the Buddhist theory of how rebirth occurs become part of "how things really are." But obviously we cannot go simply and directly from his analysis of concepts and his appeal to our observation of *change* to the idea of *rebirth,* let alone the Buddhist *explanation* of how rebirth occurs in the formula of "dependent- arising." It certainly cannot be defended simply by defining "emptiness" to be "dependent-arising."

It is important to note that Nagarjuna is not denying the existence of a reality independent of our consciousness — our consciousness may divide the world up into nonexistent, discrete objects, but there is something there to divide up. Nagarjuna is an *linguistic anti-realist* in the sense that he believes the world does not correspond to the conventional entities we carve out of the phenomenal world through our conceptualizations and language, but he is *not an ontological nihilist* who argues that there is nothing to reality. That is, there is something real (*tattva*) even if we project unreal entities (*bhavas*) onto it, and so Nagarjuna is a realist in that sense. (Also, under his method of analysis one cannot be an *anti-realist* without first establishing *realism.)* He explicitly distinguishes emptiness from annilation *(uccheda)* (e.g., MK 17.20; R 386). But he has been accused of being an ontological nihilist from his own time (R 119) up to today (Wood 1994). Following the same criterion of what is real as Nagarjuna claims, these critics conclude that the lack of self-existence means complete nonexistence. That is, emptiness entails, not simply that all entities are not real in the sense of "self-existent," but that literally nothing exists in reality. Reality consists of nothing but fabrications. Everything is like the nonexistent horns of a rabbit. The basic *dharmas* are not only "insubstantial" but do not exist in reality or even appearance (Wood 1994: 2). (That the Sanskrit word *"shunyata"* is also used for zero in mathematics probably did not help his case: it means *"nothing."* This, incidentally, is behind the classical Greeks' rejection of the zero in mathematics: "zero" means "nonexistence," but if we *use* it in our mathematics then it must exist, and that they saw as a blatant contradiction — how could the nonexistent exist?)

Every agrees Nagarjuna rejects entities (*bhavas)* as self-existent realties, and this can be generalized to the claim that he rejected every possible object of thought as self-existent. But he tries to counter the accusation that he denies any reality at all. For example, in *jewel Garland of Advice* 50 he says that "seeing how causes and effects arise, one does not assert the doctrine of nonexistence but asserts that the nature of the conventional cosmos is born from conceptual projection (*prapancha)."* Not only does he not deny a reality apart from our conceptions *(tattva),* he also does not deny the existence of *everyday entities* in the conventional sense or of underlying *dharmas* — he only denies that they are *self existent realities* rather than *dependently arisen.* That is, there are no self-existent entities, but the phenomena behind our conventions are there. The phenomena are there, but the alleged entities are not "real" in the way Nagarjuna alleges adherents of a self-existence metaphysics believe — their ultimate nature is to be free of self-existence. The notion that they are real arises from our discriminating consciousness and is solidified by language, but conventional entities nevertheless arise dependently and thus are not nonexistent.

If Nagarjuna wanted to deny reality to the world independent of our conceptualizations, he could have called it non-existent (*asat*) or have said that there is no such reality (*na-asti, na bhavati),* but he did not. He could use the standard Indie examples of "the horns of a rabbit" or the son of a barren woman" for alleged entities *(bhavas),* but he never uses these as analogies for what is *empty* or what is *real (tattva).* Instead, for what is empty, he uses analogies that involve some realities — mirages, illusions, reflections, dreams, magical tricks (MK 7.34,17.31-33, 23.8-9; W13 Comm., 23, 65-67; R 52-56; SS 36, 40-41, 56, 66; YS 15-17, 27, 45, 54, 56). In these examples, appearances depend on *something real behind them* — e.g., a reflection must be reflecting some real object, a magical trick is created by a real magician, and the content of a dream is unreal but the dream itself and the dreamer are real. Things are thus dependent on something real.

What ceases with knowledge is *the sense of self-existent entities,* not what is *really there* — sense-experience still occurs, but the enlightened do not structure it in terms of discrete realities. They see reality as it really is *(tattva).* Apprehending things as they really are through knowledge (*vidya)* has replaced their perception deluded by the root-ignorance (*a-vidya).* Whether the analogies Nagarjuna gives are really apropos is debatable. For example, an illusion is corrected through closer examination by another perception, but seeing things as self-existent is not corrected by another perception. Things look the same to the enlightened — even if they see some object plainly and clearly, they do not *see* the absence of self-existence. It is not as if closer empirical inspection would reveal that things are empty of self-existence. Experiencing the world free of all conceptual points of views is more like the conceptual switch from a Ptolemaic to a Copernican point of view: the sun still looks like it is moving, but our knowledge has changed.

Fables and chairs thus are unreal "fictions" but in a different way than a unicorn is. What is empty can have causal effects, just as illusions and nightmares can produce fear in the experiencer. Indeed, nothing in Nagarjuna's accounts requires that he reject objective features and structures to the phenomenal world. In his analysis, there is still the perception, something to be perceived, and the perceiver. That is, the world is not an illusion all the way down, only constructs built upon other constructs. The unenlightened merely misread what is there and the status of appearances. In sum, simply because no entities exist by their own power — "all things are empty" — does not mean that he thinks there is nothing at all. (It should be noted that Advaita

Vedantins use the same analogies for the *unreality of the natural realm* [maya] in favor of the reality of a transcendental one *[brahman],* leaving the status of this realm as neither real [sat] nor unreal [asat] but undefined *[anirvachaniya],* Nagarjuna too calls the world an illusion [maya] [R 109], but he does not address any issue beyond the reality of the phenomenal world [tattva] and the false creations we impose on it.)

"Emptiness" is not a new substance experienced or a new object seen or a new "essence" of things. Rather, the term simply describes the state of phenomena as being devoid of anything that would give them self-existence or a permanent nature. In MK 24.18, Nagarjuna calls the concept "emptiness" an indicator (*prajnaptir*) dependent upon convention (see also MK 22.11); it differs from other ontological terms only in that there is not even a conventional object as its referent. It has no referent of any kind in the world, but again, the unenlightened will be misled simply by the term into thinking some real (self-existent) thing is indicated.

Thus, Nagarjuna treats "emptiness" like any other alleged entity: it too is empty. Thus, the *"emptiness of emptiness"* is not any esoteric, profound secret doctrine, or a paradox, or anything mysterious at all. Nor is it a special topic in any of these works. It is not a new, unique ontological claim or a separate doctrine. It is not referring to the way reality truly is (*tattva)* in a manner that "emptiness" does not. It is simply the statement that "emptiness" is like any other concept — *empty.* In fact, it is an obvious corollary of the basic doctrine. Hence, Nagarjuna does not need to say much about, and he does not. "Emptiness" is a convention as much as any other concept — it does not refer to any self existent entity but is itself empty. It is not a self existent Cosmic Void that is the source of the phenomenal world. It is not some type of new "essence." Indeed, it is not a phenomenon at all — the term simply designates the true stale of the world. To reify the mere *absence* of anything that could produce self-existence into a *reality* of any kind would make emptiness into a type of entity — and according to Nagarjuna, anyone who does this is *incurable (asadhyan)* (MK 13.8). Chandrakirti likens the situation to a man who, when being told by a shopkeeper "I have nothing to sell you," asks the merchant to sell him the "nothing."

Nirvana and Samsara

One consequence of the emptiness of things is that nothing is separate from the rest of the world or is of a different nature than anything else. Only self-existent entities can be either the same or *different,* and since all things are without self-existence, nothing can be either identical to, or different from, another thing. What arises dependent upon something else is *neither the same nor different from* that thing (e.g., MK 18.10). for example, butter coming from milk is neither the same nor different as the milk. A cause and its effect are neither identical nor different (MK 20.19). The Buddha and the aggregates are neither identical nor different (MK 22.1). The "self' of the present and past lives are neither identical nor different (MK 27.8), as are the person committing an act and the person enjoying the fruit (MK 17.28).

This means that even *samsara* (the cycle of rebirth or the entire realm of rebirths) and nirvana are *not different.* It is important to note that Nagarjuna does *not* say that nirvana and *samsara* are the *same* or *identical,* but only that they are *not different in any way* (MK 25.19-20). Scholars routinely say that he asserted that nirvana and *samsara* are *identical* (e.g., Garfield & Priest 2003:11), but he never says that and it is important to see why. Nagarjuna could have equated them by using the formula in MK 24.18, "Whatever is *samsara,* we call 'nirvana.'" Or he could have followed the *Heart Sutra* from the *Prajna-paramita* tradition, and said *"Samsara* is nirvana, nirvana is *samsara."* Or he could have said they were the same (e.g., *samata, ekatva)* or some other plain statement of identity if that is what he meant. But his metaphysics precludes anything like that: only a *truly existing entity* can be the same as, or different from, another *truly existing entity* (e.g., MK 2.21, 6.5; VV 67) — if all this is empty, there are no *such entities* (see MK 16.10, 18.10), and this means that nirvana and *samsara* are *neither different nor the same.* That is, since there is no self-existence, nirvana and *samsara* are not the type of things that could be either different or the same. Indeed, the nature of nirvana is the same nature as all things — unarisen and unceased (MK 18.7). Neither is a real (self existent) entity, and thus neither is found (YS 4-5). Whatever is the self nature (*svabhava)* of the Buddha is the same nature of the world, i.e., lacking any self-existence (MK 22.16). Since the cosmos (*loka*) and nirvana are equally empty of self-existence, how- can there be a real difference between them (R 64)?

Thus, Nagarjuna never *equates* nirvana and *samsara.* It is not as if the concepts mean the same thing or refer to the same thing. The point he is making is that nirvana and *samsara,* like everything else, have the *same nature:* being empty of self-existence. This must be a truth from the ultimate ontological point of view, since conventionally they could not be more different. But pointing out that nirvana and *samsara* are not the same would not be news to Buddhists — it is claiming that they are *not different* that is startling. To treat them as the same would be as much an error as treating them as different since we would still be thinking in terms of "real" (self- existent) entities rather than seeing their correct ontological status from the ultimate point of view. To combine parts of two verses: if all entities are empty, what is identical and what is different (M K 25.22-23)?

Knowing Phenomenal Reality

To Nagarjuna, we misperceive reality by seeing the world populated with distinct and independent objects. We do not merely have a mistaken idea but *see* things incorrectly. To use the common Indie analogy, it is like seeing a rope as a snake — there is something there, but we misperceive it. The snake is *totally unreal* (i.e., there is no real *bhava),* but there is *something real* there that is experienced (the rope). The

empirical basis for rejecting a *svabhava* metaphysics according to Nagarjuna is that we *see change* in the phenomenal world (e.g., MK 13.3-4) — nowhere is an entity found that is not arising and falling (MK 7.21, 7.24, 21.8). (He does say that seeing arising and falling is the result of a *delusion* [MK 21.11], but his metaphysics defuses the apparent inconsistence: no self-existent, real entities arise or fall [see MK 5.8].) And just as there a reality underlying the illusionary snake that can be directly seen, so too there is reality (*tattva*) underlying our misperception of permanence that can be directly experienced. Seeing reality as it really is *(yathabhutam)* requires seeing the change in the world without any recourse to alleged permanent entities or a permanent seer, '['his is not merely accepting the proposition that "all is impermanent" or that "change is constant" — with a little reflection, we may readily agree that all things, including ourselves, are always changing. Rather, we need to replace the active error impeding our vision (*avidya*) with a new way of seeing by removing any conceptualization. Most importantly, this is removing a sense of a separate self, but it also includes any sense of discrete objects in the world. Thus, the correct vision is free of *all* conceptualizing — if one sees someone *as* "free of a sense of self," one still is not seeing correctly (MK 18.3). So too, if we see the phenomenal world *as "empty,"* we are still imposing a viewpoint on reality, i.e., seeing reality through a conceptual prism. In a related way, if we are aware of being free from passion, we are not in the proper emotional state beyond passion and impassion (YS 58).

The change here is not merely intellectual. The difference is between merely accepting the proposition and actually *realizing* that it is true of reality. To use a Buddhist analogy, the difference is between accepting the proposition that water quenches thirst and actually drinking water. Breaking the habit of seeing reality in terms of self-existent parts requires meditation and changes in how we lead our lives. It leads to a "mindfulness" insight into the nature of phenomenal reality, not a "depth-mystical" experience (see Jones 2010: chap. 1): it is an insight into the world of natural phenomena, not realizing an alleged transcendental reality. The ultimate nature of things is "unknowable" in one sense and "knowable" in another: it can be experienced and thus is knowable in that sense; but when seeing the emptiness of things directly, phenomenal reality as it really is has no objects to be grasped by the analytical mind, and thus it is unknowable in that sense. In the words of the Dalai Lama, "we cannot comprehend it as it is known in direct apprehension in meditation" (quoted in Garfield 1995: 325 n. 126).

Seeing reality as it really is creates a state of a person in which, according to Buddhists, one no longer generates the emotional afflictions that in turn generate the type of actions *(karma)* that propel the wheel of rebirth. The "fires" of hatred, greed, and delusion are extinguished, and one has attained the passion-free state of nirvana and is free of rebirths. (Nagarjuna draws the common Mahayana distinction between attaining liberation from the wheel of rebirth *[moksha]* and attaining the full and complete enlightenment of a Buddha *[bodhi*]. Bodhisattvas forego the former to attain the latter and to aid all other sentient beings in attaining liberation.) Nirvana is not an entity (*bhava*) and hence it cannot be the absence of an entity (*abhava)* (R 42, SS 25). To Nagarjuna, nirvana in the end is simply the destruction of the notions of "entities" and "non-entities" (R 42; see also YS 5). Nirvana is not self-existent but arises dependency from what we do, even if the necessary insight cannot be compelled by any action, and thus ultimately it is without conditions and is non-dependent (MK 25.9).

Does Nagarjuna Have a "View" or a "Thesis"?

The final verse of the *Fundamental Verses* presents an issue: "I bow to Gautama the Buddha, who through compassion taught the true doctrine for removing all views (*drishtis*)." (Also see MK 13.8.) So, is Nagarjuna claiming that he himself has no views *(drishtis)?* (See Garfield 1995: 353-59, 1996.) In addition, in *(Overturning the Objections* he claims to have no thesis (*pratijna)* (vv. 29, 59 Comm.; see also R 60, VP 1 Comm., Westerhoff 2009: 183-98). In the *jewel Garland of Advice,* he speaks of propositions *(pakshas)* the same way (v. 104; MK 2.10; YS 50). However, in the same line of the *Karikas* where he speaks of removing all views (27.30), he speaks of the Buddhist *doctrine (dharma).* And in the *Jewel Garland,* he again claims to have no thesis to be defended but proceeds to discuss the Buddhist doctrine (vv. 60, 62).Thus, when he advances what looks like a philosophical thesis ("All this is empty") and then denies he has any thesis, it has the paradoxical feel of someone talking and saying "I am not talking right now." This all suggests that he paradoxically claims to have no views at all. That is, all views, including Nagarjuna's, are relegated to the conventional level: from the ultimate point of view, even the claim "All this is empty" has to be rejected as simply being another view. In the direct experiential realization of the emptiness of things, all conceptual views must be given up — even seeing the world *as empty* — since the mind must be freed of all conceptualizations.

However, in the *Karikas,* Nagarjuna always connects "views" to *"self- existence,"* suggesting that it only these claims qualify as the *"views"* that are to be removed.(E.g., MK 15.10, 21.14, 24.21, 27.1-2; see also YS 14, 23, 43-48, 50- 51; R 104. In the more informal *Jewel Garland of Advice* [43-45, 57-58], Nagarjuna connects "false views" with the idea that karmic causes do not have effects and "right views" with karmic causes having effects, with right knowledge passing beyond both false and even right views. But he also connects propositions with existence and nonexistence [R 46, 50-51, 57-58].) He also explicitly disconnects emptiness from "views" (MK 13.8), and emptiness is not connected to "is" or "is not" (MK 22.11; R 46,104-105).

Under this interpretation (which the Tibetan Geluk tradition endorses), Nagarjuna espoused philosophical positions — i.e., "views" in the nontechnical, everyday sense — starting with the first verse of the *Karikas,* but he had no

views in the technical sense of a position connected to *self-existence.* If he had a proposition *(pakshu),* a counter-proposition would be derivable from it, but both would be false (R 104; YS 50). Nagarjuna is merely "making known" the emptiness of things without being committed to any view; the term is employed merely to inform us of the emptiness of things (MK 22.11, 24.18). He can say he has *established the emptiness of things in detail* while still maintaining that this is not a thesis (VV 59 Comm.) Emptiness cannot be used to refute views (MK 4.8) since it is a conclusion from other refutations, not a premise.

Thus, Nagarjuna can accept a particular ontology without having a "view." It is not a matter of the "ultimate point of view" but simply not having any positions requiring self-existence. He also speaks of another type of seeing coming from the same root as *drishti* when he speaks of *seeing reality as it really is — "tattva-darshana"* (MK 26.10; see also MK 21.14, 27.14) — but he does not connect this to a view. Thus, he can assert a doctrine and dispute another without contradicting himself: he has a teaching or doctrine *(vada*) of emptiness (W 69) and a point of view (*darshana*) and the Buddha had a doctrine *(dharma),* but he has no view *(drishti).* The alternative to holding a thesis is not another thesis but another type of doctrine rejecting all theses. In sum, *drishti* is a term of art for claims of a *svabhava* metaphysics, not any type of "view" in the everyday sense.

It may be that *both senses* are involved: from the conventional point of view, it is only the *false views* that are to be removed; from the ultimate point of view, *all views* are. As the Dalai Lama says, the first interpretation makes more sense from the standpoint of philosophy and for the purpose of characterizing an inferential understanding of emptiness, but the second interpretation is a better expression of the nature of the direct understanding of emptiness that is needed and may be more useful for guiding meditative practice (Garfield 1995: 353 n. 137). This would mean that the truth of Nagarjuna's propositions about the emptiness of reality is not in any way doubted, but to *realize* they are true — to see reality as it really is — all points of view or perspectives must be in abeyance. That is, a *drishti* is a metaphysical point of view that affects our view of things, but we need to be free of all frameworks — including the correct framework of emptiness — to see the world as it really is. Thus, when Nagarjuna says "This world is devoid without self-existence" (MK 22.16), there is no qualifications to suggest that it is anything but the absolute truth from the highest point of view — indeed, it is *false* from a conventional point of view. Or when he gives the characteristics of true reality (*tattva*) (MK 18.9-11), again there is no qualifications, and the characteristics are again false from a conventional point of view. But if *"drishti," "pratijna,"* and "*paksha*" are terms of art connected to *svabhava* and thus *sat,* then propositions such as "All this is empty of self-existence" or "All *dharmas* are empty of self-existence" simply do not qualify as views or theses in Nagarjuna's technical sense.

Either way, Nagarjuna does not reject all philosophical propositions but only those connected to *svabhava* and *sat.* The three important points are first that emptiness is not an entity of any type or its absence and we cannot have a "view" about it. Emptiness is the conclusion reached when *svabhava* has been rejected, and thus is not itself a "thesis" to be defended. Second, we need to get beyond the conceptualizing mind — including the framework of emptiness — to see reality as it truly is. And third, nothing in his works suggests that ultimate truths are in any way false.

The Two Types of Truth

The last point leads to the central role that the two types of truth play in Nagarjuna's arguments. (See MK 24.8-10, MK 24.36, VV 28, SS 1, SS 69-73, YS 30-33.) In the more informal *jewel Garland* 360-365, Nagarjuna contrasts what is "in fact real" or "really the case" *(arthatas)* with what is "worthless" or "pointless" (*vyarthatvam*). The idea has roots in the earlier Buddhist idea of texts of final meaning (*nitartha*) and those of provisional meaning *(neyartha).* Ultimate truths (*parama-arthatas*) are truths about things in this world from the point of view of ultimate ontological status, while conventional truths (*loka-samvriti*) are about what counts as real depending on our conventions. "Conventional truths" are determined by any worldly practices and conventions, not just language. Buddhist insight is into the phenomenal realm, and ultimate truths are about the same phenomenal realm as conventional truths, not about an alleged transcendental reality. Ultimate truth "denotes the way things are independent of convention, or to put it another way, the way things turn out to be when we subject them to analysis with the intention of discovering the nature they have from their own side, as opposed to the characteristics we impute to them" (Garfield 1995: 298).

Ultimate truths are not merely the same as conventional ones but seen correctly — i.e., knowing that there are no self-existent realities involved.

Rather, they state what in the final analysis is the ultimate ontological status of what is being discussed. These truths are not open to any further analysis, while the subjects of conventional truths are open to deeper analysis (Tsering 2009:10). Conventional truths the about the *content* of the world of appearances, while ultimate truths are about the *ontological status* of those appearances. The claim that nirvana and *samsara* are not different in nature (MK 24.19-20) is the quintessential ultimate truth. It conceals nothing. Ultimately, worldly phenomena are void of self-existence and arise dependently — no deeper truth about their status is possible. MK 1.1 on *entities* not arising is a conventional truth (Wayman 1969:149-50) since it is about the relation of entities; the ultimate truth is that there are no real entities. Conventional truths involve our worldly categories. But ultimate truths too depends on our conventions (MK 24.10, VV 28): without recourse to our conventions, these truths could not be taught or even stated.

With this framework, Nagarjuna can maintain both the supremacy of emptiness and all conventional matters. All is empty, but the world is still a world of plants and animals, tables and chairs, even if there are no discrete, self-existent entities. Dependent-arising is affirmed, but according to Nagarjuna it only works if things are empty (SS 71). What is real from a conventional point of view is discrete and permanent (and hence self- existent); from the ultimate point of view, what is real is empty. This leads sometimes to Nagarjuna *affirming* something from a conventional point of view, or assuming some phenomenon to be conventionally real, and elsewhere *denying* the same thing from an ultimate point of view. Some things are not true from either perspective — e.g., from either point of view, there is no real change or arising or ceasing. But the context in which a truth-claim is made is important in most instances, and without the two types of truths he would be contradicting himself.

To Nagarjuna, the phenomenal world is only a matter of conventions (R 114). In the conventional sense, there are entities, properties, relations, and processes. So does a table exist? There are two answers depending on the context. A table exists conventionally but not ultimately (since it is empty of any self-existence). No phenomena exist in the ultimate sense, but the table does exist conventionally in a way that a unicorn does not — there is something there *(tattva).* So too, veridical perceptions see something about reality that delusions and optical illusions do not, even though the former are framed in terms of self-existent entities. We can use conventions to state something true about the world — e.g., "The Hudson River is in the eastern United States." That is true even though there are no "rivers" and no "United States" and "eastern" depends on a convention. But the sentence still says something true about the content of the phenomenal world that the sentence "The Nile River is in the eastern United States" does not. It is misleading (i.e., "false") only in the ultimate metaphysical sense since there are no real referents; thus, a deeper truth about the status of "river" and "United States" is also possible.

Language and Ultimate Truth

Can ultimate truths be stated? Most scholars say "no." When the analytical mind is in play, ultimate truth is impossible. But consider the claim "All this is empty." That is an absolute truth. It is not a conventional truth but an accurate statement about the ultimate state of things and is not open to any further qualification. In fact, the ultimate truth *(paramartha)* consists of the teaching of emptiness (SS 69). It must use our conventions (MK 24.10, VV 28), but it is not thereby reduced to a conventional truth — it still states something ultimately true about the ontological status of things that is not subject to any further revision. Nothing in Nagarjuna's philosophical writings justifies claiming that ultimate truths are unstatable or that from the highest point of view saying "All this is empty" is inadmissible because there are no real referents. True, Nagarjuna would say that words and statements cannot correspond to reality as it really is *(tattva)* because reality is not cut up into distinct object and thus there are no "real" (self- existent) referents for our words. Nagarjuna thus would have rejected a "correspondence theory of truth" for truths from the ultimate point of view since they are no "real" discrete objects in the world for our words to mirror [see VP 73 Comm.], However, what he writes does not justify concluding that he rejects truth-claims. (Nor does the rejection of a correspondence theory of truth mean that he would necessarily have accepted a "coherence theory of truth" simply because all concepts are conventional — he does not advance any theory of truth. In fact, he might have accepted a correspondence theory of truth for conventional truths — he simply did not present anything we would recognize as a modern epistemology.)

And it is true that *realizing* the reality is empty is more than merely understanding and accepting the claim — it requires being free of any framework that would enable us to generate words. But "realizing ultimate truth" should not be conflated with "ultimate truth" — the *experiential insight* that "All this is empty" may be free of conceptualizations, but this does not mean that the statement "All this is empty" is not the *ultimate truth.* That is, stating an ultimate truth is not the experience showing that it is true, but it is still an ultimate truth and it is still statable by recourse to the conventions of language. The analytical mind can comprehend the truths, even if a state beyond the analytical mind is needed to become enlightened. (See Tsering 2008:120-21.) Thus, ultimate truth still involves a conceptual framework but the correct one in terms of emptiness, and to realize the truth we must forego even this conceptual framework. Quenching our thirst with a drink of water is not a linguistic event, but this does not make the claim "Water quenches thirst" in any way untrue.

The problem for Nagarjuna is not language per se, but our mental discriminations (*vikalpa*) and projections (*prapancha)* (MK 18.5,18.9, 22.15, 25.24). Our mental fabrications reflect a false world of multiple entities. But he never gives a blanket condemnation of *all language* while offering emptiness as the way to still the mind of *vikalpa* and *prapancha.* In fact, all Nagarjuna says concerning language relates to three things. First, no real referents exist in the world for words to denote — names and what is named do not exist from the ultimate point of view (VP 73 Comm.). Second, concepts operate by contrasts. And third, all statements are empty of self- existence, but they still can function (e.g., VV 21-22 Comm., VV 57 Comm.).

Because everything is empty, there is a problem even referring to "self- existence" or "emptiness." To have a concept for x, we need something non-x to contrast with it. Nagarjuna would also add that non-x is *derived* from x; so without x there can be no not-x. Without such a contrast, we would never have a reason to make up a concept. For example, if the universe were entirely blue, we would see no contrasting color and so we would have no word "blue" to distinguish the color of the universe from other colors. Arguably, the word "blue" would have no meaning if we could not contrast it with something and thus have something specific to apply it too.

(Hence philosophers' trouble with the concept of "being." See Jones 2009: 25-28.) And since there are no self-existent things, how can there be the opposite (the empty) exist either? Or if nothing is permanent, what could we call impermanent (MK 23.15-16, 27.20)? Or if there is nothing real that is conditioned, there is nothing "unconditioned" either (MK 7.33). Moreover, the terms cannot apply if there is nothing *real.* Thus, if there are no self-existent things, then there is no reality that could be *empty* (nor is there anything self-existent to contrast with it). And even calling what is empty "something" in Nagarjuna's eyes means we are still thinking in terms of self-existence.

This means that what is real is, from the conventional point of view of entities, *inexpressible.* Hence, the Buddha is the "silent one *(muni)"* who did not teach anything real (self-existent) (MK 22.3-4, 25.24) despite all of his discourses. After a passage on *prapancha* and *vikalpa,* Nagarjuna says that when the domain of the discriminating awareness (*citta*) has ceased, then what can be named has ceased and that the nature of all things is unarisen and unceased (MK 18.7). But this means only that there are no real entities in the phenomenal world to name, and reality as it is (*tattva*) is not reflected in language. He is not ending the text there, nor do he ever say that silence is required. The enlightened do not have to abandon language, even though ultimate truths is dependent upon conventions (MK 24.10). They can still use conventional language to state the ultimate truth of emptiness, but they are not misled into thinking that the world is populated with discrete, permanent entities corresponding to our conventional terms. Stating an ultimate truth involves concepts, but it is not a *view* (since no metaphysics of self-existence is involved), and so the enlightened can state it without clinging to a view.

It is the unenlightened who discriminate discrete objects (*vikalpa*) and thereby create a false world: to them, if we have a word for something, there must be a distinct reality to be referred to. Thus, they project categories onto the world, the process that creates a false world of reified entities (see MK 22.15). But language per se does not need to lead to thinking in terms of discrete entities. To use Bertrand Russell's example, just because we say "it is raining," no one thinks there is an "it" that does the raining — there is just the raining. And the enlightened can react to all nouns the same way. Language is like a map: a map makes what is mapped into a flat world of discrete objects with crisp boundaries, while what is mapped is not actually like that. But this does not mean a map is not useful, and the same is true with language. The enlightened can use words referring to themselves without the seeing the world in terms of "I" or "mine" or "selves" (e.g., YS 33). Nor does the enlightened perspective in any way relativize meaning. Labels are not arbitrary: calling a car a "bottle" or a "pen" is not merely "inappropriate" but wrong.

The Buddha expressed reluctance on espousing how things really are. (See Kalupahana 1986: 331-32.) But Nagarjuna does state how things are "from the point of view of reality" (*tattvatas*) — i.e., from the point of view of how things really are, and not merely pragmatically from the point of view for gaining the highest fruit *(parama-artha).* His constant use of *tattvatas* in the *Jewel Garland of Advice* is most plainly seen as meaning that those statements are unqualifiedly true. It is hard to argue that the basic claim "All this is empty" is not an ultimate truth since it is *false* from a conventional point of view — from a conventional point of view, the world is populated with distinct entities that are realities unto themselves. So too, the principle "This arises dependent upon that" is not denied even though what arises dependently lacks self-existence and thus is not real (SS 71). The use of conventions does not transform the claim "All this is empty" into a conventional truth. The statement involves our conventions (*vyavahara*), as Nagarjuna says is necessary (MK 24.10, W 28 Comm.), but the truth about phenomena being empty is a final, unqualified, and eminently statable truth. "Emptiness" is only an indicator (*prajnaptir*) (MK 22.11, 24.18). There is no real, self-existent entity in the world called "emptiness," but the concept can be used to point out something true about reality.

Realizing the truth that all is indeed empty is difficult; meditation is required to see that all phenomena in the world are in fact impermanent and conditioned. Only part can be pointed out in words (W 70 Comm.) since an experiential insight is needed. This may require a state of consciousness where our linguistic abilities are temporarily in abeyance. But even if *realizing or apprehending* the final truth is "beyond language" and "ineffable," *stating* the final truth is possible (contra Garfield 1995; 252) — the truth is not in some sense ineffable simply because all referents are by definition conventional (contra ibid.: 275). Scholars may want to see all Indie philosophy and religion in terms of ineffability and silence, but nothing in Nagarjuna's writings suggests the enlightened are reduced literally to silence or that silence is the "highest truth." We cannot conclude from what Nagarjuna actually writes that "the ultimate truth is that there is no ultimate truth" or that "all truths are merely conventional" or that "there is no such thing as ultimate truth" or that "ultimately, one is left with only conventional truth" or that "the conception of truth supported by the way things really are presents a subtle object of clinging" (contra Garfield & Priest 2003: 10; Westerhoff 2009: 220, 224). What is ultimately real seems "inexpressible" from a *conventional* point of view since we think in terms of discrete entities and in fact there are none. But from an *ultimate* point of view, this is not a problem: the enlightened know there are no entities and can resort to language without projecting a statement onto reality and creating a false world of multiple entities. The ultimate nature of things may be *unknowable* in the sense that we cannot *know* it the way we know *objects* in ordinary consciousness — i.e., by making an object out of what is real that we can grasp. But this does not change the fact that some of the ultimate nature of things can be stated: the world's phenomena are empty of anything giving them self-existence.

Indeed, if the ultimate truth is not statable, what does Nagarjuna mean when he says that ultimate truth relies on the conventional? If he had said *realizing* the ultimate truth relies on conventions, then we could say conventional truths only direct our attention to the ultimate unstable truth, but MK 24.10 states that nirvana cannot be attained without understanding from the ultimate point of view. That is, there are *three* things mentioned in the passage: conventional truth, ultimate truth, and realizing enlightenment. Thus, he is distinguishing *attaining enlightenment* from *what is a category of truth (satya*, 24.8). Even if realizing enlightenment requires a wordless experience of the phenomenal world, this leaves the statements of ultimate truths untouched: he never says ultimate truths cannot be spoken.

Is Nagarjuna Illogical?

Scholars have studied the logical structure of Nagarjuna's arguments and have been across the board on how they see his relation to logic — he is seen as everything from not understanding logic to denying logic altogether to advancing a new three-valued logic. Was he "obviously and profoundly distrustful of logic (Huntington 2007:111)"? Did he reject the law of the excluded middle (Staal 1975: 39)? Doesn't the denial of one position logically commit Nagarjuna to holding the opposite (which he also denies)? Did he "use logic to destroy logic"? Was he simply inconsistent or irrational — e.g., at some places he affirms entities and at others he denies them, or he claims that what is dependently arisen is unarisen (YS 48), or he contradicts himself by resorting to a view to destroy all views (Betty 1983: 128). Many of these alleged inconsistencies disappear through his use of "two truths" and "views." Thus, we must pay attention to the total context of a remark. Nor does he write anything in any of these works that suggests that he is relegating rationality to the conventional level of truths or introducing a new multivalued logic. In fact, it appears that Nagarjuna does not violate any of the usual laws of logic nor is he in any other way irrational.

Consider two basic laws of logic: the law of the excluded middle (everything is either x or non-x), and the law of non-contradiction (nothing can be both x and non-x). We believe these laws apply to all thought — e.g., how can someone believe that a statement is both true and false? How can a statement be intelligible with them? (But see Priest 2004.) And if we examine Nagarjuna's arguments, we see that he implicitly relies on both. Not that he ever mentions such laws. In fact, he never discussed logic — theories of what is a valid inference or deduction — or why these laws should be accepted. And it is important to note that, unlike Western philosophers, Nagarjuna speaks of a conflict of *properties,* not *statements* — i.e., he says that something cannot be or have x and non-x or that x and non-x cannot be in the same place at the same time, not anything about the relation of statements. His focus is on the world, not the logic of statements.

Many of Nagarjuna's arguments proceed on the basis that x and not-x are *mutually exclusive* and that there is no *third possibility.* For example, the law of the non-contradiction in MK 8.7 (also see MK 7.30, 21.3, 25.17, 25.25-27; R 4): "'real' and 'unreal' are opposed to each other — how could they exist together simultaneously?" Obviously, an entity (*bhava*) and its absence *(abhava*) cannot exist together (MK 25.14). So too, he implicitly utilizes the law of the excluded middle in MK 2.15 (see also MK 1.4, 2.8, 3.6, 4.6, 6.10, 8.1, 21.14; VP 50, 58, 59): "A mover is not stationary, just as a non-mover is not stationary. And other than a mover or a non-mover, what third possibility is stationary?" Indeed, Nagarjuna's basic method of arguing can proceed only if the contrast between x and not-x is exclusive and exhaustive.

However, not all cases of x and not-x in Nagarjuna's works are like that. In some instances, x and not-x are connected and not exhaustive — in particular, *"bhava"* and *"abhava."* An *abhava* results from a *bhava,* and something can neither a *bhava* or an *abhava* — e.g., nirvana (R 42, SS 25). Thus, denying the existence of a *bhava* in no way logically requires affirming an *abhava.* So too, the contrast between "existence *(sat)"* and "nonexistence *(asat)"* as he defines the terms is not exhaustive but only shows extremes: existence is eternal existence (and hence unceasing), and nonexistence is total nonexistence (and hence unarisen) — thus, something that comes into existence or did exist but comes to an end does not fall into either category. But what he wants from this is the fact that we see things arise eliminates "nonexistence" and the fact that we see things cease eliminates "existence." That is, he wants a third category between eternal existence and total nonexistence — what is "empty."

Nagarjuna also employs the simplest form of an inference, recognized in the West as modus ponens (e.g., MK 19.6):

(1) If A, then B;

(2) A;

(3) Therefore, B.

He also uses the more complex modus tollens (e.g., MK 24.24, 27.7):

(1) If A, then B;

(2) Not B;

(3) Therefore, not A.

For example, if (A) there were self-existence, then (B) there would be no change (since change of any kind is impossible for what is permanent); but we see change (not B); and so, there is no self-existence (not A). Such reasoning is valid and is a standard feature of Western philosophy and logic.

But Richard Robinson thinks that Nagarjuna violated one law of logic (1957: 297). Verse 13.7 of the *Karikas* reads: "If there were anything at all that is not empty, then there would exist something we can call 'empty.' However, there exists nothing non-empty — how then can there be the 'empty'?" This and other verses of the same form (MK 10.7, 7.17) can be interpreted as violating a law of logic — the *law of*

contraposition or the *fallacy of the antecedent.* It has this logical form:

(1) If A, then B;

(2) Not A;

(3) Therefore, not B.

It has the same logical form as "If it is sunny today, it is not raining; it is not sunny today; therefore, it must be raining." Obviously this is wrong — it can be cloudy but not raining. However, Nagarjuna's verse can also be given a reading that does not violate logic: the concept of "emptiness" is tied to the concept of "a self-existent entity" — i.e., the one idea is *dependent upon* the other. Thus, if and only if the latter reality does not exist (i.e., if there is nothing that is self-existent), then the former cannot exist either (i.e., there is nothing empty), then there is no reality that can be empty. In short, the verse is only about the *interconnection of concepts.* It has nothing to do with the fallacious type of inference and does not violate any law of reasoning.

Nagarjuna also uses a form of inference to make a point (MK 4.4, 13.4, 15.9, 20.1-2, 20.21, 21.9, 25.1-2, 27.21, 27.23-24). The form is:

(1) If A, then not B.

(2) If not A, then not B.

The point he is making that whether A or not A, there is no B — e.g., whether or not self-existence exists, change is not possible. He also uses this to reply to his opponent — i.e., the opponent speaks the first line, and Nagarjuna replies with the second (e.g., MK 20.16, 25.1-2).

Nagarjuna also employs what is known as the "tetralemma (catuh-skoti)," although he never uses the word in his writings (MK 12.1,18.8, 22.11-12, 25.15-18, 25.22-23, 27.13, 27.20; see R 106,115). Here he denies four options:

(1) A exists;

(2) A does not exist;

(3) A both exists and does not exist;

(4) A neither exists nor does not exist.

It is not a fixed form — sometimes we have to put a number of verses together to get all four options (MK 25.4, 7,11, and 15); often there are only the first three (MK 1.7, 2.24-25, 5.6, 8.9-11, 21.13, 23.20; R 37; SS 4, 44; VP 4, 51, 56, 73); and once there are five options (W 51 Comm.). Indeed, the very first verse of the Karikas can be seen as the four options since "no cause" can be most easily interpreted to mean "neither self-caused nor caused by another" (see also W 51).

Philosophers have expended a lot of ink applying symbolic logic to these denials to try to see how they are not paradoxical. Doesn't the denial of the first option logically commit the holder to the second? How can someone deny that something neither exists nor does not exist? Is the negative the "contrary" of the positive rather than its "contradiction" (thereby allowing more options in between)? The denial of the fourth option makes Nagarjuna look as if he is denying the basic law of non-contradiction.

But the efforts to apply symbolic logic to the four options to save Nagarjuna make him too sophisticated. (This is not to say that we cannot employ modern logic to show that his conclusions are correct. [See Jones 1993a: 260-61 n. 6.] But doing this is not the same as claiming that this is how Nagarjuna actually reasoned.) More importantly, such arguments miss the point: Nagarjuna is trying to state that we cannot think of anything in terms of self-existence. He uses the form of the four options simply to try to cover *all* positive and negative possibilities — i.e., he is saying there are no other options. He wants to cover all possibilities so that all claims involving *svabhava* in different contexts are eliminated, and thus only emptiness remains.

And it can be shown easily enough without resorting to technical rules that the "four options" approach is not logically contradictory. For example, if someone asks what color the number 4 is, we might say "It is not blue, not a color other than blue, not both blue and another color, nor neither blue nor another color." All four denials are true and consistent since numbers do not have color. The denial of any option does not logically commit someone to any other position on the color of four. We might think that the last option applies — "neither blue nor another color" — but in Nagarjuna's framework, as long as we are thinking in *terms of color* we are on the wrong track regarding the nature of *numbers.* So too, with the four options regarding whether something "exists": to Nagarjuna, only something that is self-existent can exist or not exist, and so as long as we are thinking of phenomena in terms of "self-existence," we do not understand the true nature of reality but are thinking along conventional lines and thus in terms that cannot apply. To expand Bertrand Russell's example of "The present King of France is bald": it is wrong to answer "yes" or "no" or that "he is both bald and not bald" or that "he is neither bald nor not bald" since he does not exist. To use the Buddhist analogy, it is like asking what direction a flame goes when a Fire goes out — any answer shows that we are thinking along the wrong lines (that the flame still exists). So too, the denial of all four options is consistent if there are no self-existent realities. For Nagarjuna, only an entity existing by self-existence could the subject of the four options.

In sum, all Nagarjuna is saying is that the subject to each option does not exist. In addition, he treats the fourth alternative as a type of *thing* — if nirvana is neither an entity nor a non-entity, then it cannot be a "neither-an- entity-or-a-non-entity" (MK 25.16). Such an entity is the kind of an entity that contrasts with the third option: if we can establish something that is "x- and-non-x," then we can establish what contrasts with it — something that is "neither-x-nor-non-x" (e.g., MK 27.18, 27.28).

In fact, Nagarjuna's *interrelation of concepts* explains it all: if we cannot establish x as real, then we cannot establish

its absence (i.e., a not-x) or a conjunction of the two (x-and-not-x) or the denial of both (not-x-and-not- x). The third option can be established only if the first two can be (MK 5.6, 12.9), and the fourth could be established only if we could establish the third alternative (MK 25.15, 27.18, 27.28). Thus, since x is not real to begin with, the whole process fails: none of the other options are possible. In addition, Nagarjuna would add that we must reject the third option because x-and- not-x would be a composite of opposites but opposites cannot exist together in the same place (e.g., light and dark [MK 25.14]). Thus, nothing more is needed to explain the four options than general Nagarjuna's method of interconnecting terms. Indeed, by focusing on possible logical problems with the four options, philosophers are missing how the arguments actually proceed — in short, they miss Nagarjuna's actual *reasoning* entirely.

Note that in MK 18.8, the four options are not negated. Nagarjuna says: "Everything is real, and everything is unreal; everything is both real and unreal; everything is neither real nor unreal." The third option appears to violate the law of the non-contradiction and the fourth the law of the excluded middle. One way to make this consistent (following the later Madhyamika Chandrakirti) is to invoke the "two truths" doctrine: "Every entity is real from the conventional point of view (MK 7.24), and every entity is unreal from the ultimate point of view (MK 15.4); every entity is both conventionally real and ultimately unreal; every entity is neither ultimately real nor conventionally unreal." Entities are not real from the point of view of ultimate truth, but they do exist in the conventional sense, and so Nagarjuna is not irrational in affirming both claims — the rope/snake is indeed both *real* (the rope) and *totally unreal* (the snake) at the same time. This removes any suggestion of paradox — indeed, it makes it obviously true from the Buddhist point of view.

Certainly we should not immediate jump to the conclusion that a thinker from another culture and era is irrational simply from the form of his writings. Nor should we ascribe to him the state of the art in logical thinking from our culture and era. The question is not whether a given verse is contradictory *in form,* but whether Nagarjuna's *thought behind it* is consistent or not. That is, can we paraphrase what Nagarjuna says consistently without doing violence to his thought? If so, then the fact that the idea can also be stated illogically is irrelevant. For example, if 1 am standing in a doorway between two rooms with one foot in each room, I can state this paradoxically: "I am in this room and not in this room" or "I am in two rooms at once." (See Priest 2004: 28.) But I can also state the situation more completely without paradox: "I am partially in one room and partially in the other." Paradox occurs only if I say "I am entirely in both rooms." But this statement is not only paradoxical but *false* and no one *believes* that — the correct situation can be stated consistently. And the same applies to the situation with Nagarjuna's controversial passages: we do not have to torture what he says to see that he is being logical within his framework of beliefs.

Nagarjuna's Method

The analysis via the interconnection of concepts (e.g. "entity" and "non entity" in the four options) is one of Nagarjuna's primary means of argumentation. (It should also be noted that Nagarjuna's questions did not come out of the blue. That what is conditioned is only an indicator *[prajnapti]* was advanced by the earlier Mahasamghika. And the Abhidharma set many of the issues scholars usually attribute to Nagarjuna — e.g., whether something arises unarisen [see Frauwallner 1995:197-98].) A second means is to point out that there is a conflict between our everyday experience of change in the world and the alleged permanence of the *svabhava* metaphysics (e.g., MK 13.3-4). This is not a scientific analysis of how things work but simply an appeal to obvious, everyday experiences. A third means involves interconnection of phenomena (e.g., "cause" and "effect," "fire" and "fuel," or "moving" and "a mover") or the relation between an entity and its properties (e.g., an "impassioned person" and "passion"). According to Nagarjuna, if concepts are connected then so is what they conceptualize (e.g., M K 6.1-2), and so the first and third means are not always distinguishable.

His overall method is a *reductio ad absurdum:* he starts with what he sees as his opponents' tenets concerning self-existence and then shows how these premises lead to contradictions with either our experiences or the concepts involved. For example, he claims that what exists by self-existence can only be either identical to something else real or totally distinct; hence, if the oneness of two entities or their absolute difference is not possible (e.g., a cause and its effect [MK 20.19]) because we see otherwise, then the entities are empty of self-existence and not real. Thus, the initial premise — self- existence — must be wrong. Emptiness then follows automatically. That is, he does not argue *for* emptiness, but in a case of x or non-x he shows that the only alternative he sees — self-existence — must be *rejected.* Thus, he does not present positive arguments for a thesis or use emptiness as a reason but only presents problems with its alternative. In short, he does not argue *for shunyata* but only *against svabhava.* (This is not to say that his arguments are perfect — e.g., he often states a claim without arguing for it, as with MK 1. We have to find the reasons elsewhere in the texts. Or, to take another example: simply because we cannot see the beginning or the middle of something's existence, it does not mean we cannot see the end; nor is that grounds to conclude something does not exist [contra VP 27].) In short, emptiness is a conclusion that follows from the failure of a *svabhava* argument, not a reason or premise (thesis) in its own right.

Argument based on the interconnection of concepts proceed in that manner. Our conceptualizing mind operates by making distinctions, and hence if an entity being referred to does not exist then neither does its opposite and so there is no real distinction to be drawn. For example, if there is no self-existent mover, then there is no mover who could rest; but since there is no mover, there can be no *non-mover* either who could rest (MK 2.15) since the very idea of a "non-mover" depends upon there being a real "mover." What is

“unpleasant” depends upon what is “pleasant” for its label and vice versa; so no real entities are involved (MK 23.10-11). So too, if there is no self, there is no non-self, and so forth. In particular, if there is nothing that is *not empty,* then there is nothing *empty* to contrast it with (MK 13.7).

His argument in the abstract is simple. Whatever topic we are talking about is either real or unreal. If it is real (i.e., self-existent), then it is eternal and unchanging and cannot *do anything* — it cannot be a cause or effect, cannot be produced or cease, cannot move or change, cannot have conditions, and so forth. On the hand, if it is unreal, then it is *not a reality* that can be a cause, have a characteristic, and so forth. There is no third possibility. Thus, the field is cleared of alleged “entities,” and only emptiness remains. Reality as it truly is (*tattva)* has no alleged real parts and so can work precisely the way we see the phenomenal world working.

Overturning the Objections shows how hard it must have been for Nagarjuna to convince his Buddhist opponents that something could *exist or work* even if it was not *self-existent.* The opponents apparently could not accept any other criterion for what is real. To them, the lack of self-existence is the lack of existence period — if something was empty of self-existence, it was totally nonexistent and powerless to achieve anything. They saw everything in terms of self-existent entities alone being real and capable of doing anything, and they saw Nagarjuna as actually having to be committed to them too just to make any arguments.

As argued above, Nagarjuna does advocate propositions and has a metaphysics, even if these are not “views” or “theses” in his technical sense. But he did not employ them in his arguments. That is, Nagarjuna advances no propositions or counter-metaphysics to his opponents’ that he has to defend. Rather, he simply employs the *reductio ad absurdum* approach to show that errors follow from their metaphysical beliefs. This does not compel him to accept a counter-proposition: he need not defend any alternative if he only shows that there are flaws in another’s position. And one can point out problems in someone else’s position without defending a counter-position. For example, you could point out an error in my adding a column of numbers without advancing what you think is the correct sum. But it must be reiterated that this does not mean that Nagarjuna did not himself hold metaphysical beliefs connected to emptiness and the steps of dependent-arising — it merely means that he did not employ his conclusion of emptiness as a reason against his opponents. Also, he did not merely appeal to logic, conceptual analysis, and everyday experiences. He used the changes involved in dependent-arising as a reason to reject self-existence (W 20 Comm.); that would be uncontroversial for his Buddhist opponents who also accept dependent-arising, but in arguments against other traditions this would have to be established independently.

Is Nagarjuna Attacking a Straw Figure?

One nagging question about Nagarjuna’s method needs to be discussed. Many of his conclusions do follow logically from his premises, but some commentators argue that there is something wrong with Nagarjuna’s method (Robinson 1972, Jones 1986, Hayes 1994, Huntington 2007; contra Garfield 2008). The place to begin to see the problem is with the beliefs he ascribes to his opponents, the Abhidharma Buddhists.

The problem is that Nagarjuna is not identifying some obscure logical implication deduced from Abhidharma metaphysics that the Abhidharmists did not see. Rather, he claims to have found an immediate and blatant conflict between one of their basic premises and everyday experience or simple logical inferences. But obviously, Abhidharmists were as aware of change, decay, interaction, causation, and mirages as Nagarjuna was, and yet they still adhered to their tenets. If Abhidharma beliefs were as he claims, why would they accept them, especially when Buddhists emphasize impermanence and change? In fact, how could anyone believe what Nagarjuna claims the Abhidharmists do when it so obviously conflicts with ordinary experience? Zeno may have concluded from his paradoxes that motion is an illusion, but at least he was not telling other people what they believed. Moreover, Abhidharmists would have no explanation for the appearance of change and causation if they believed what Nagarjuna says they believe. When Leibniz and other monadists argue that substances are isolated and do not interact or affect each other, they at least had a ready explanation for the appearance of interaction: God set up a pre-established harmony or coordination of events. So too, medieval Muslim “occasional-ists,” who believed that nature is not an autonomous order but a succession of individual divine decrees and that there is no “secondary” causes, saw God as the real cause and all events as individual acts of God. Nothing within the Buddhist framework would permit such a move, and, more importantly for the issue at hand, Abhidharmists saw no need for any such explanation.

It appears instead that Nagarjuna is mischaracterizing the Abhidharma concept of *“svabhava.”* He believes that nothing can be done with what is self-existent and the world would not change (MK 24.33, ²4-38), but it is not at all obvious that Abhidharmists believe this. In particular, he seems to have introduced the idea that *dharmas* are self-existent and independent. To Abhidharmists, *dharmas* are the ultimately real constituents of the experienced world, while conventional objects are only our mental constructs. Configurations are impermanent: wholes such as persons and material objects do change, even though their momentary parts have an unchanging self-nature. The most prominent Abhidharma tradition in India and in Central and East Asia was the Sarvastivada. (Their name means “the doctrine that all exists.”) They distinguish the *nature* of the nuggets of experience (1*dharmas*) that do not change through time from their impermanent *activity (karitra*). That is, the *dharmas* have an “own-nature” (*svabhava*) that cannot change and lasts through the past, present, and future, but they still have causal activity and changing properties and characteristics (*lakshanas)* in their different states *(bhavas).* Moreover, the

composite entities of our everyday experience lack any such own-nature and exist only as mental indicators *(prajnapti).* The Sarvastivadins had trouble explaining how *dharmas'* "own-nature" and "activity" were related — they had to say that they were both "different and not different," as Nagarjuna says of what is conditioned.(See Cox 1995, 2004; Frauwallner 1995:197-202; Willemen 2004.)

The Sarvastivadins used their doctrine of *dharmas* to deal with the Buddhist problem of impermanence: how can karmic fruit arise much later after its cause expires — perhaps in another lifetime — and how can dependent-arising (along with causal effectiveness and conditioning in general) occur for events having no duration? They see a continuum *(santana*) without permanence. But all Abhidharmists who claimed that *dharmas* are eternal argued that their mode of being (*dharma-bhava*) did *change.* (And Nagarjuna does raise the legitimate point that if something is permanent and eternal then it cannot rely on causes and conditions [MK 1.6].) Even if these Buddhists did not specify what the momentary *dharmas* are flashes *of* and spoke of permanent potentialities (Potter 1999:13-14), the actual events are still only temporary. For all Abhidharmists, *"svabhava"* only meant a characteristic that distinguishes one *dharma* from another, and this does not lead to the absurd conclusion that there is no change.

Thus, it appears that Nagarjuna's version of Abhidharmist metaphysics is only a straw figure. Whether his own metaphysics warped his vision or whether he knew he was mischaracterizing his opponent, we cannot tell. But it certainly is a historical fact that the Abhidharma traditions in India did not simply wither away under his scathing assault, or even modify their doctrines. If his arguments were so powerful, why would that be the case?

Also consider a few examples of a basic problem with his reasoning about the interconnection of concepts: he relies on an ambiguity between *conceptual or physical dependence.* Again, for Nagarjuna, if concepts are interrelated, then what they *refer to* must be *ontologically interrelated.* However, this is not so. The concepts "straight" and "curved" are interconnected, but this does not mean that what is straight is in any way physically dependent upon something curved. Nor are the concepts rendered meaningless because of their interconnections; nor, as Nagarjuna realizes, are concepts rendered useless for designating impermanent things in the world.

Consider the central concept of "causation." We call something a "cause" only once it has caused something. Therefore, the *attribute* "cause" is indeed dependent upon the effect. But does not mean that the thing that is the cause is in any way *physically* dependent upon the effect. That is, "cause" and "effect" are indeed conceptually interconnected, but what is labeled "the cause" certainly can physically exist before the conceptual rearrangement involved in the process it enters into when it become "the cause." For Nagarjuna this is not a matter only of efficient causation but of origins, e.g., butter coming from milk. Consider the birth of John's first child Bobby. John gains the label "father" by Bobby being born (see VV 49; SS 13). So John's "fatherhood" is indeed dependent on Bobby's birth. And Bobby is physically dependent on John, his wife, and other causes and conditions. However, this situation is not reciprocal: John is not in any way dependent upon Bobby physically. Only by mixing the physical and conceptual dependence together in can Nagarjuna make the cause and effect mutually dependent. In fact, a cause can *materially* exist both before and after the act by which the cause becomes label "the cause of x" — here, John existed before Bobby and independently of the act of conceiving Bobby, and John goes on living after the cause has produced the effect. So too, a causal act need not in some way be permanent or eternal to be a cause. However, in Nagarjuna's version of things, "Something that is not producing an effect has no causal effectiveness. When there is no causal effectiveness, of what will the effect be?" (MK 20.22). But something can in fact have causal effectiveness even if it is not producing anything at the moment: the potential for John being a father is there even if he is not producing a child at the moment. And according to Abhidharmists, a self-existent entity can have causal effectiveness too: what is self-existent cannot change its *nature,* but it can *act* and *change* in that way. There are no mysteries here except those Nagarjuna artificially creates.

Any "actor" and "action" situation can be analyzed the same way. One needs to move to gain the label "mover," but "the one who moves" existed prior to that event and will continue to exist after that event ceases. That is, there can be more to a mover than simply the attribute "the one who moves." The labels "mover" and "the one who moves" have the same referent, but they do not have the same meaning, and Nagarjuna cannot proceed as if they did. But his arguments collapse if "mover" is defined as other than "one who is currently in the process of moving." Only under his restrictive definition is the claim "the one who was moving is now not moving" (MK2.16) not absurd.

More generally, despite Nagarjuna's arguments against a "prior entity" (MK 9), something can exist before gaining the attribute that comes from a change. The person with passions exists prior to becoming impassioned — the person may be called *"impassioned"* only once passion arises, but this does not change the fact that the person already existed. So too with the wood that becomes label "fuel" (MK 10): the concepts of "fire" and "fuel" are indeed interlocked: the idea of "fuel" depends on the idea of "fire" (contra MK 10.12c), and the idea of "fire" depends on the idea of something that is burnable, i.e., "fuel" (contra MK 10.12b). But Nagarjuna cannot conclude from this connection that is *fuel itself is dependent upon fire:* fire is physically dependent some fuel (contra MK 10.12a), but fuel is not physically dependent upon a fire for its existence (contra MK 10.12d) — only gaining the conceptual label "fuel" for the material is. That is, the material that becomes labeled "fuel" physically exists independently of fire and being burned. The logs sitting by my fireplace are "fuel" prior to being lit or put into a fire; indeed, even if they are never burned, they still have the attribute of being "fuel." And,

physically, they remain just wood, regardless of whether they ever gained the attribute of "fuel" or not — they would be what they are even if fire never existed. Only by the sleight of hand of mixing both the conceptual and physical senses of "dependence" can Nagarjuna make MK 10.12 true.

Other types of interdependence are involved in other situations and the result is the same. For example, death is not part of birth, but this does not mean that someone being born is *deathless* (MK 11.3). A "person who is young" does grow old (MK 13.5; R 67) — granted, the attribute "young man" is lost, but the person who had the attribute does grow old. The composite being — the "person" — does not self-exist and so can change his or her attributes, even if his or her parts exist by *svabhava.* But in all these cases.

the way Nagarjuna sets the problems means that those who accept self- existence see the world as sliced up into distinct unchanging objects distinct from their attributes, and so any change is not possible. This way of looking at things also means that we would somehow have to look at any *actions* an actor undertakes as being self-existent and therefore eternal — the action occurs permanently (MK 17.22, SS 35). Nagarjuna discusses it in the context of suffering never ending and thus nirvana being unachievable (SS 43), but it would apply more broadly: any action or event would somehow be eternally occurring and its effect would never accrue — you hit a home run and the ball never comes down and you never finish the swing. A perception of a mirage would be irremovable (VV 67) — this patently absurd, and how could anyone actually believe it?

Indeed, verse 27 of the *Seventy Verses on Emptiness* makes establishing emptiness absurdly easy: "A defining characteristic *(lakshana)* cannot exist without what it characterizes, and what is characterized cannot exist without the characteristic. Thus, they are both conditioned, and neither is real (i.e., self-existent)." Everything must have some characteristics (whether self-existent or not), but this means to Nagarjuna that by definition it cannot be self-existent. So too, every attribute gained simply by any comparison to something else or fitting in some category — "one" or "many" (e.g., SS 7), "long" or "short" (e.g., R 48-49, 95) — means to Nagarjuna that everything is *dependent* and hence nothing is self-existent but empty. Merely being *"other"* is enough to make something dependent and devoid of self-existence (MK 14.5-7). However, proving that something is not *self-existent* cannot come simply by declaring a characteristic to be a separate entity from what embodies it and hence dependency must be involved. We may agree with his general conclusion that there is nothing permanent in the phenomenal world and that "loose and separate" concepts cannot mirror a world free of discrete parts, but we can still see some of his arguments as sophistry.

Overall, there is an undeniable artificiality to Nagarjuna's arguments: by taking his opponents' terms and giving them new definitions, he fabricates a world that obviously conflicts with our everyday experience and thus is a world no one would accept. In light of this, it is not surprising that the Abhidharma schools survived in India for hundreds of years after Nagarjuna, no matter how impressed the Madhyamikas were with his line of reasoning. The Madhyamaka tradition apparently remained relatively small in India. Indeed, the epistemology tradition established by the Buddhist logicians Dignaga and Dharmakirti after Nagarjuna had more influence within Indian Buddhism and did not even respond to him. Nagarjuna's thought, however, became very influential in Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism.

Twelve Key Sanskrit Terms for Understanding Nagarjuna

Svabhava — self-existence

For Nagarjuna, *svabhava* is whatever would give something the power to exist and have the properties or capacities it has. Translators render it variously as "self-existing,""self-causing," "self-generating," "own-being," "own-becoming," "own-source," "own-cause," "own-nature," "inherent nature,""essential nature," "essence," or "inherent being." Something "existing by its own intrinsic nature" is in no way produced by causes and conditions (MK 24.16, W 22 Comm.) or derived from something else that is real (MK 15.1-2); thus, it is permanent (W 55). A self-existent entity is a being *"in se et per* se," absolutely independent, and existing in its own right (Tola & Dragonetti 1998:159). In Tibetan Buddhism, it is characterized as what "exists from its own side." It is the source of its own "essence" and is self-maintaining. Such a power would also make each entity exist distinct from all other entities — no self-existent thing could be in any way dependent upon any other thing, and thus it would be self-contained.

Self-existence is necessary for anything of any type (*bhava*) to be real. What exists by *svabhava* has being (sot) and cannot be created (MK 24.33) or come to be (MK 24.23) or cease to exist or be eliminated (MK 22.24, VV 67) or otherwise be affected by any action (MK 24.33). What is self-existent cannot change (MK 15.8). Thus, any entity existing by its own nature would be eternal. All things that exist through self-existence would be permanent (eternal) because they would have no cause and what is without a cause is permanent (W 55). Something that does not exist by self-existence cannot be a cause (SS 12). The only possible relationships between things existing by self-existence are *total identity* and *complete disconnection* (e.g., MK 2.21, 6.5,18.10; W 21).

"Other-existence (*para-bhava*)" is simply the self-existence of something else. Thus, if there is no self-existence, there can be no "other- existence" (MK 1.3, 15.3, 22.9). This is different from otherwise-existence *(anyatha-bhava*), which would be a change in an existent with *svabhava,* which is impossible (MK 13.6).

Aristotle's concept of *"substance"* as an essence is the closest in Western philosophy to Nagarjuna's idea. Substance is what remains when all experienced, changing properties are removed. (That modern empiricists question the very notion

of "substance" — in John Locke's phrase, a "something we know not what" — should be noted.) But *"svabhava"* denotes both self-existence and some *inherent property* — it is not a featureless reality distinct from the properties or attributes that sustains those properties. Nor should it be confused for *matter.* Buddhists have another concept for matter *(rupa).* In modern philosophy, the closest is Leibniz's idea of simple "monads," each being the source of its own powers and properties (but not its own being) and all existing in a harmoniously working, coordinated universe (although Nagarjuna does not have this latter component).

Nor do different entities necessarily share any other characteristics simply because they exist by "self-existence" — the "own-nature" of each thing distinguishes it from anything that does not possess its particular properties. Thus, some translators prefer the idea of "inherent nature" rather than the idea of "self-existence." Nagarjuna uses the word in both the sense of "substance" and "own-nature." *("Svabhava"* can also mean simply "by its own nature" in a non-philosophical sense, just as Nagarjuna can use *"atman"* [MK 10.15, 22.16, 27.4] without a commitment to a metaphysics of an eternal, unchanging soul.) Nor does the "substance" he intends involve mass or solidity. In short, *svabhava* is a metaphysical power that gives a thing is both its existence and its characteristics.

Asti / Nasti — "It is" / "It is not"

"It is" or "There is . . . *(asti)"* and "It is not" or "There is not. . . (*na-asti)"* also become technical terms for Nagarjuna since only what exists through *svabhava* is real and only something real can be destroyed and not exist (MK 5.8,11.12,15.7-8,15.10-11, 23.3, 25.14). "Is" and "is not" are not opposites, as in eternalism versus total non-being (*asat*). That is, *asti* and *na-asti* do not simply contrast what exists permanently real because of *svabhava (sat)* and total nonexistence *(asat).* Rather, for Nagarjuna, "is not" is a *change* in "is" — the destruction of something that was an "is." Thus, "It is not" depends on there first being an "It is" (R 72). Something that never existed, e.g., Santa Claus or the horns of a rabbit, cannot be said to "not exist" since they never existed in the first place. To Chandrakirti, the idea of" a son of a barren woman" is "mere words," and denying that such sons exist is not a real negation but merely the denial of the possibility of imagining them as real. To say that "There is nirvana, but it lacks self-existence" or "It is real, but it does not exist by self-existence" would simply be a meaningless contradiction in terms for Nagarjuna.

What is empty of *svabhava* neither "is" nor is absolutely unreal, like the horns of a rabbit. This means that reality as it truly is *(tattva)* neither "is" nor is any change resulting in "is not." Saying that what exists through emptiness neither "is" nor "is not" is not a paradox but is Nagarjuna's way of saying that the thing neither has self-existence nor is the destruction of something with self-existence — it is a denial of the eternalism of "it is" and the annihilationism of "it is not." Thus, dependent-arising is a "middle way" between "is" and "is not." So too, those whose awareness has gone beyond "it is" and "it is not" do not grasp any entities *(bhavas)(*YS 1).

Bhava — an entity

A *bhava* is any "thing." To be real, it must have self-existence (MK 13.3). It is then an "existent" (MK 15.4). It can be any kind of self-existent being, capacity, attribute, or object in the widest possible sense — it is anything in the phenomenal world that we think can be an object. (This is not the same as *dharmas,* as discussed below.) But a *bhava* can be real *(sat, sadbhutam)* only if it exists through self-existence. Without self-existence, it is not real and does not exist (MK 1.10,13.3) except conventionally.

Since to be real a *bhava* must exist through self-existence, and since there is in fact no self-existence, there are no real *bhavas.* From the ultimate point of view, conventional *bhavas* are impermanent in nature (YS 25). Thus, Nagarjuna is not denying entities altogether but arguing that the idea that they really are self-existent arises only from the root-ignorance *(avidya)(*YS 26). He is disputing their nature, not their existence in the ordinary sense.

Abhava — the absence of a bhava

An *abhava* is the *denial* of an existing *bhava,* i.e., the absence of a *bhava.* Under the self-existence metaphysics Nagarjuna ascribes to his opponent, an *abhava* is a type of thing — an absent entity. If there are no *bhavas,* no *abhavas* can be found (e.g., MK 25.7). Thus, it can exist only if it had been a *bhava* first (MK 15.5). And since real *bhavas* exist by *svabhava* (MK 15.4), an *abhava* is not something that does not exist *(asat).* That is, *abhava* are not *nonexistent* in the sense of the nonexistence of a married bachelor or Santa Claus. Only what allegedly exists by self-existence and cannot currently be directly apprehended can be an *abhava.* But the existence of an *abhava* can be *inferred.* (See Tsering 2008: 56-57.) However, if self-existence is impossible, a *real bhava* is not possible, and hence a *real abhava* is also not possible.

Thus, according to Nagarjuna, under a self-existence metaphysics an *abhava* is some *thing* that is real (i.e., self-existent) and is only absent from the place under discussion. It is still a type of reality and not nonexistent. The usual translation — "non-entity" — does not capture this.

Dharmas — basic phenomena of the experienced world

These are the "factors of the experienced world" according to the Buddhist analysis of reality. They are not eternal in nature but last only momentarily. They are not the same as *bhavas: bhavas* are conventional entities; *dharmas* are the ultimate components of what we experience. Buddhists analyze the phenomenal world, like Westerners, assuming that the ultimate parts are real in a way that the composite entities we see in the everyday world are not. But while Westerners have looked for the ultimate units of objective *matter,* the Buddhists have looked for the ultimate units remaining within the realm of what is *experienced* — hence, matter (*rupa,* consisting of earth, water, fire, and air) becomes

only a minor category in the Abhidharmists' catalogs of components. The Sarvastivadins had an elaborate taxonomy of seventy-five *dharmas* of which matter was only one (see Willemen 2004: 220-23).

It should be noted that the Abhidharma analyses of *dharmas* were done for a soteriological purpose (Cox 2004: 5) — to explain how the Buddhist praxis could work — and so it was philosophy for a religious end. And Nagarjuna does not dispute the *dharma* approach, nor was he interested in the particular delineations: the big divide between Nagarjuna and his Abhidharmist opponents is ontological, not epistemic — i.e., over whether these ultimate components of the experienced world are self-existent or empty.

Drishti — view

This term comes from a root meaning "to see" — it is a way of *seeing* the world. A *drishti* is a "point of view," but it is not merely an experiential perspective: it also a way of understanding what is seen — a metaphysical view. But to Nagarjuna, it is not any metaphysical or speculative view: only views based on the metaphysics of *self-existence* qualify as a *"drishti."* Nagarjuna always connects *drishtis* to *svabhava* (MK 13.3,13.8, 15.10, 21.14, 24.21, 27.1-2, 27.13-14, 27.29-30; R 43-46; YS 23; YS 43-54) or the reality connected to *svabhava (sat)* (SS 21). Thus, anyone who treats *emptiness* as a *drishti* is incurable (MK 13.8) — i.e., to treat emptiness as a *view* would make it the very poison that the concept is advanced to cure.

Prapancha — conceptual projection

Prapancha is projecting onto what is truly real *(tattva)* the conceptual differentiations we ourselves devise, and thereby seeing reality in terms of discrete entities. Translators have rendered the term "objectification," "projection of plurality," "conceptual construction," "hypostatization," "reification," and "superimposition." It makes our subjective mental discriminations into an "objective" reality. In this way, we create a false world of differentiated, isolated objects corresponding to our conceptual creations. The nature of the conventional world is born from *prapancha* (R 50).

In effect, we see objects in the real world mirroring our concepts. In other words, it is seeing our concepts as instantiated in the real world. Thereby, we create the conventional world. But conceptions of independent entities never converge with reality as it really is. (This includes even the distinction between experiencer and what is experienced.) The very discrimination of distinct entities *(vikalpa)* is the result of projecting our conceptual distinctions onto reality (MK 18.5). We thereby distort reality by seeing it as a collection of unconnected entities corresponding to the discrete concepts our mind has devised. Such discriminations cause karmic acts and the resulting afflictions (MK 18.5).

To be enlightened is to "still" the mind and to be free of this projection, not to be free of perceptions and concepts per se. Thus, the enlightened need not do away with concepts — they can still use whatever concepts their culture uses to navigate in the world and to teach, but they do not project the categories they are using onto the world (MK 22.15). Thereby, the enlightened preserve both the language of conventional life and seeing reality as it really is *(tattva).*

Shunya — empty, void

Something that is *shunya* is empty *of* something — *svabhava.* It does not concern being empty of matter — it is a *metaphysical* emptiness of anything that gives something the power to be, not a space empty of all material things. Nothing is self-created or self-contained. In effect, it is a metaphysical expansion of the Buddhist idea of no-self (*anatman*) more broadly to all things. (Hence, Nagarjuna discusses the emptiness of a person or a self [MK 18] just like any other phenomenon.) The idea has roots in the Pali canon (see Velez 2005: 508-13.) There is no eternal, permanent "self' to a person or anything corresponding to a "self' in other things that would give anything self-existence. But "emptiness" is not merely a negative conclusion — Nagarjuna does give *substantive characterizations* of how reality truly is (see *tattva),* and he equates emptiness with the Buddhist metaphysics of dependent-arising (MK 24.18).

The noun *"shunyata"* is the abstraction "emptiness," but this does not make emptiness into a metaphysical source or any other type of reality. That is, emptiness is not an "essence" by which things exist or a "mode of existence" in place of self-existence. It is not a new special power. The term merely describes the true state of things — everything is empty of any power to make anything self-existent. What is conditioned is not one or many, or being *(sat)* or nonbeing *(asat)* (SS 32). Prom the point of view of reality, there is no being *(sat)* or nonbeing (SS 1). Thus, the true state of things is that everything is essenceless — contingent, impermanent, changing, and dependent upon other things. Entities have the status of dreams or magical illusions — i.e., dependent on other things, arising from other things, and without any self-existent substance. (Also see the discussions of the "emptiness of emptiness" in the Commentary on MK 22.11 and 24.18.)

Nagarjuna used the adjective "*shunya*" more than the noun *"shunyata"* in the *Karikas,* and perhaps it is better to avoid the abstract noun, since anyone who reifies emptiness and makes it into a cosmic Void or a new "essence" giving things their reality or any type of reality similar in any way to *svabhava* is simply incurable *(asadhyan)* (MK 13.8) — they are hopelessly seeing the world in terms of self-existent entities.

Tattva — reality as it truly is

"Tattva" is literally the "that-ness *(tat-tva)"* of things (MK 15.6, 22.8, 24.9). "*Yatha-bhutam"* (R 28) and *"dharmata"* (MK 18.7) convey the idea of the true nature of things. *Tattva* is not a transcendental reality, but the phenomenal world as it really is — empty of any *svabhava.* Thus, is-ness [asti-ta] is not a synonym, and we must pass beyond "is-ness" and "is-not-ness" (R 61) to see what is truly real. "The characteristic of what is actually real is this: not dependent upon another, peaceful, free of being projected upon by conceptual

projections, free of thoughts that make distinctions, and without multiplicity. Whatever arises dependently upon another thing is not that thing, nor is it different from that thing. Therefore, it is neither annihilated nor eternal. Not one, not diverse, not annihilated, not eternal (MK 18.9-11)." *Tattva* is free of any discrete parts that we normally cut the world up into — it does not have the sharp, artificial borders that our conceptual differentiations suggest. Nagarjuna is a *realist* in the sense of affirming a reality independent of our individual minds, although reality is not cut up into the entities we conceptualize, while his opponents are realists with regard to discrete entities (*dharmas* or *bhavas).*

Tattva could be called "empirical reality," although Nagarjuna would reject dividing it up into illusory discrete objects. (Thus, Nagarjuna would reject any correspondence theory of truth for claims from the ultimate point of view.) Nor does Nagarjuna reject "empirical experience" (i.e., sense-experience of the phenomenal world) as insightful — he simply wants to correct our experience to see what is really there.

Those who see reality (*tattva-darshana*) do not form the dispositions that propel the cycling of rebirth (MK 26.10), and they thus do not perform actions that continue the cycling of rebirth — i.e., they are liberated.

Satya (also sadbhutam) — truth/reality

Classical Indians did not differentiate "truth" and "reality" — whatever has the power to bring about effects or to be affected is true/real. Nagarjuna says the Abhidharmists are committed by the concept of *"svabhava"* to the position that what is real or has being *(sat)* is permanent, unchanging, and unconnected to other real things. But, according to Nagarjuna, nothing in the phenomenal world in fact has "being *(sat)"* (SS 1-4).

Paramartha-satya — ultimate truth

"Truths from the highest point of view" are the means of gaining the highest fruit (*parama-artha*), i.e., liberation from the cycling of rebirth and full enlightenment. They are truths from the point of view that gives the ultimate ontological status of things — i.e., no further analysis would correct these truths. Thus, ultimate truths are truths about the phenomena of the world from the point of view of how things really are free of our concepts *(tattvatas).*

But expressing ultimate truths depends on our conventions (MK 24.10): they are truths that can be stated with our concepts about how things really are — in particular, "All this is empty." And without reaching the truth from the highest point of view, nirvana cannot be achieved (MK 24.10). Thus, *realizing* that an ultimate truth is in fact true of reality as it really is requires an experience, but this does not change the fact that the truth is *statable.* (And words still have a fixed meaning even if they arise conventionally as our inventions and are free of self-existence.)

The ultimate truth is "beyond words" only in the sense that the Buddha was a "silent one *(muni)"* who did not teach anything real (self-existent) (MK 25.17) despite being a teacher who spoke and taught a specific doctrine. However, the enlightened can appeal to conventional language to teach the way to liberation. That is, without relying upon worldly conventions, the truth from the highest point of view cannot be taught (MK 24.10). Thus, the Buddha could use "I" and first-person verbs without being committed to a metaphysics with a self-existent self.

Samvyavahara (vyavahara-satya, loka-samvriti) — *conventional truth*

Conventional truths are truths about what we take to be conventionally real — i.e., truths about the content of the phenomenal world in terms of discrete entities. They are part of the more encompassing "conventional practices" of the world.

One meaning of *"samvriti"* involves "concealing," "hiding," or "obscuring." So Tibetan Buddhists see "conventional truths" as *"concealer truths"* cloaking the way reality truly is and obstructing ultimate truth. Thus, conventional truths are true but are "deceptive truths." (See Tsering 2008: 105-109.) However, they are only "deceptive" in not giving the ultimate ontological analysis of the subject of the truth — they still reveal something true about the content of the phenomenal world. To Nagarjuna, conventional truths are still true, but they reflect our unenlightened way of looking at the world — what is "real" in the everyday sense (i.e., distinct entities), not the way reality really is *(tattva).* That is, we are still seeing reality through a conceptual prism not involving emptiness: we cut up reality according to our concepts, and we accept as real depends on our conventions.

KALUPAHANA

(GENERAL INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL & NAGARJUNA OVERVIEW)

ABBREVIATIONS

A *Anguttara-nikaya**, ed. R. Morris and E. Hardy, 5 volumes, London:PTS, 1885-1900.

AA *Manorathapurani*, [Anguttara-atthakatha*]*, ed. M. Walleser, London: PTS, 1973.

Abhvt *Abhidbammatthavibhavini-tika**, ed. D. Pannasara and P. Vimaladhamma, Columbo: Mahabodhi Press, 1933.

AD *Abhidharmadipa**, see *Adv.*

Adv *Abhidharmadipa* with Vibhasaprabhavrtti**, ed. P.S. Jaini, Patna: K. P Jayaswal Research Institute, 1959.

AK *Abhidharmakosa**, see *Akb.*

Akb *Abhidhanmakosa-bhasa**, ed. Pralhad *Pradhan, Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1967.*

Ch'ang *Ch'ang A-ban Ching* (*Dirghagama*)*, tr. Buddhayasas**, Taisho** No. 1.

Chung *Chung A-han Ching* (*Madhyamagama*)*, tr. Gautama Samghadeva* and* Samgharaksa*, *Taisho* No.26.*

D *Digha-nikaya**, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and J. E. Carpenter, 3 volumes, London: PTS, 1890-1911.

Dh *Dhammapada,* ed. V. Fausboll, London: Luzac, 1900.

DhsA *Atthasalini*, Dhammasangani-atthakatha**, ed. E. Muller, London: PTS, 1897.

DhsT *Abhidhammamulatika* [Tika* on Dhammasangani-atthakatha**], ed. D. Pannasara and P. Wimaladhamma, Colombo: Mahabodhi Press, 1938.

It *Itivuttaka*, ed. E. Windish, London: PTS, 1889. *Karika**See *MKV(P), MKV(V).*

Kp *Kasyapaparivarta* of the Ratnakuta-sutra**, ed. A. Stael-Holstein, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1926.

*Kvu Kathavatthu **, ed. A. C. Taylor, 2 volumes, London: PTS, 1894- 1897.

M *Majjhima-nikaya**, ed. V. Trenckner and R. Chalmers, 3 volumes, London: PTS, 1887-1901.

Miln *Milindapañho*, ed. V. Trenckner, London: PTS, 1962.

MKV(P) *Madhyamikavrtti* (Madhyamakarikas*),* ed. L. de la Vallée Poussin, *Bibliotheca Buddhica* 4, St. Petersburg: The Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1903-1913.

MKV(V) *Madhyamakasastra* of Nagarjuna* with the commentary; Prasannapada* by Candrakirti**, ed. P. L. Vaidya, Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1960.

PEW *Philosophy East and West*, ed. Eliot Deutsch, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii.

PTS The Pali Text Society, London

S *Samutta-nikaya**, ed. L. Feet, 5 volumes, London: PTS, 1884-1904.

Sakv *Sphutarthabhidharmakosa-vyakhya**, ed. U. Wogihara, Tokyo: The Publication Association of Abhidharmakosavyakhya*, 1932-1936.

Sdmp *Saddharmapundarika-sutra**, ed. H. Kern and B. Nanjio, St. Petersburg: The Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1912.

Sn *Sutta-nipata**, ed. D. Anderson and H. Smith, London: PTS, 1913. *Taisho* Taisho* Shinshu* Daizokyo**, ed. J. Takakusu and K. Watanabe, Tokyo: Daizo Shuppan Company, 1924-1934.

Thag *Thera-theri-gatha**, ed. H. Oldenberg and R. Pischel, London: PTS, 1883.

Thig See *Thag.*

Tsa *Tsa A-han Ching* (*Samyuktagama*)*, tr. Gunabhadra, *Taisho** No.99.

Tseng *Tseng-i A-han thing* (*Ekottaragama*)*, tr. Gautama Samghadeva*, *Taisho** No. 125.

Ud *Udana**, ed. P. Steinthal, London: PTS, 1948.

VbhA *Sammohavinodani*, Vibhangatthakatha**, ed. A. P. Buddhadatta, London: PTS, 1923.

Vin *Vinaya Pitaka **, ed. H. Oldenberg, 5 volumes, London: PTS, 1879-1883.

Vism *The Visuddhi-magga of Buddhaghosa*, ed. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, London: PTS, 1975.

PREFACE

Almost ten years ago, I undertook a new translation of Candrakirti's * encyclopaedic work the *Prasannapada**, a commentary on Nagarjuna's* primary philosophical treatise, the *Mulamadhyamakakarika**. After I had completed neatly ten chapters, I learned through one of my students about a similar attempt by Professor Marvin Sprung. I was about to give up my project, when my student, who had previously studied under Professor Sprung, shared with me a copy of Professor Sprung's translation of the lust chapter. Comparing his and my translations, I discovered that Professor Sprung's translation was to some extent influenced by Stcherbatsky's work (*The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana*,

1927). I felt then that my effort would not be in vain, especially because I had expressed strong disagreement with Stcherbatsky's interpretation of the Buddhist philosophical tradition (see my *Causality, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, 1975).

To my surprise, Professor Sprung's translation, consisting of only seventeen chapters (including an incomplete rendering of Chapter I), appeared in 1979. As I plodded along through my own laborious work, I began to realize how Candrakirti* was gradually leading me away from Nagarjuna's philosophical standpoint. My suspicions were strengthened in 1981 when I visited India on a Smithsonian grant. Meeting with some scholars who were brought up in the Vedantic tradition, I found them to be extremely comfortable with Nagarjuna* as interpreted by Candrakirti* and less impressed- by the teachings of early Buddhism as recorded in the Nikayas* and the Agamas*. My suspicion that Nagarjuna* and Candrakirti* were upholding two different philosophical standpoints compelled me to take a fresh look at Kumarajiva's* *Chung-lun,* which is at least two centuries prior to Candrakirti*. Translating the entire *Chung-lun* into English and comparing it with Nagarjuna's* original Sanskrit text, I was pleasantly surprized by their similaries. I found no justification whatsoever in looking at Nagarjuna* through Candrakirti's* eyes when there was a more faithful and closer disciple of Nagarjuna* in Kumarajiva*. This discovery diminished my enthusiasm for cleaning up my English rendering of the *Prasannapada** for possible publication.

After translating both the Sanskrit and the Chinese versions of Nagarjuna's* treatise, I proceeded to annotate both according to my understanding of early Buddhism as well as later Buddhist traditions before Nagarjuna*. The annotation of the Sanskrit text alone turned out to be more extensive than anticipated. Furthermore, considering the difficulties that might arise in publishing this work with Sanskrit and Chinese texts side by side, and also with the Chinese characters in the body of the annotation, I decided once again to modify my project. The Sanskrit text is here presented with annotation and introduction. The Chinese text with commentary will appear subsequently as a companion volume.

I am not unaware of the controversy this work may engender. Hoping that it will be a healthy one, I intend to raise one major question regarding Nagarjuna *, especially in the light of the more recent research in the history of Buddhism. Professor Hajime Nakamura's monumental work, *Indian Buddhism* (1980), has provided more information regarding the history of Buddhist literature than any other work published so far. This carefully executed work not only deals with the contents and authorship as well as the chronology of most of the Buddhist texts, but also compares the different versions available in Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, Tibetan, and Japanese. After a careful reading of this work, I cannot help recognizing an earlier stratum of literature that has so far been lumped together with all the literature that came to be called Mahayanistic*. This includes two famous pieces, the *Kasyapaparivarta** and the *Vajracchedika-prajnaparamita** (see Nakamura, p. 159). I wonder whether the original versions of these texts can be approriately called Mahayanistic*, even though they were preserved by the Mahayana* schools. This objection, indeed, is not very difficult from that raised against considering the Nikayas* and Agamas* to be Hinayanistic* because they were preserved by the Theravadins*, the Sarvastivadins*, or any other later tradition.

The major question that can be raised is: "Where would a philosopher like Nagarjuna* go in order to discover the Buddha's teachings?" This historical question has, to my knowledge, neither been raised nor answered. The *Saddharmapundarika-sutra** that highlights the Hinayana-Mahayana* controversy was not yet written. That does not mean that the controversy was not known before Nagarjuna*. Even if the controversy had preceded Nagarjuna*, what were the canonical texts, embodying the pure Mahayana* philosophical standpoint, that Nagarjuna* could have utilized in order to explain the Buddha's message?

A careful reading of Nakamura's work shows it to be futile to attempt to discover a pure Mahayana* text that Nagarjuna* might have been able to depend upon. Before the compilation of the *Saddharmapundarika*,* one can hardly expect to find a carefully executed treatise that would explicate the Mahayana* philosophy as it is presented by modern scholars. Since such sohisticated Mahayana* sutras were not available to Nagarjuna*, he could not help moving on to the early discourses in the Nikayas* and the Agamas* in search of the Bud- dha's teachings, especially at a time when he realized that the problems were created not only by metaphysicians like the Sarvastivadins * and the Sautrantikas*, but also by more popular religious teachers like Asvaghosa*, who over-emphasised the function of "faith" in the emerging belief in a transcendent Buddha. A careful reading of Nagarjuna's* treatise will reveal that he was critical of both these trends. If Buddhaghosa were to be considered the model of a Theravadin* and Candrakirti* or Santideva* were to be looked upon as ideal Mahayanists*, neither the Buddha, nor Moggaliputta-tissa*, nor Nagarjuna* would fit into their shoes.

The present work may come as a surprise to many who are familiar with my previous publications, especially because it repudiates many things that I have said about Nagarjuna*. In those earlier works, my major endeavor was to show how the Buddhism of the Buddha differed from both Sthaviravada* and Mahayana*, and the latter included philosophers like Nagarjuna*. My main contention with scholars like Stcherbatsky and Mufti has been in regard to the manner in which the former equated Sarvastivada* with early Buddhism and the latter portrayed the Buddha as a half-hearted metaphysician introducing a theory of elements that came to be rejected by Nagarjuna*. I was prepared to accept Murti's interpretation of Nagarjuna*, while struggling to find ways in which that interpretation could be justified without sacrificing the empiricism of the Buddha. A more detailed study of both Magarjuna* and Candrakirti* has convinced me that the former still remains faithful to the Buddha, while the latter has moved more towards a Vedantic* interpretation, thereby initiating a process that culminated in the disappearance of Buddhism as a distinct ideology from the Indian scene a few centuries later.

INTRODUCTION

The Middle Path

Myths of huge proportions have developed around the spiritual and philosophical stature of various personalities in almost every school of Buddhism. Often these myths were inflated by sectarian rivalries that continued to plague the history of Buddhism, especially the rivalry between the two major schools, Theravada * and Mahayana*. These prejudices tended to polarize the philosophical teachings of these two traditions though, in fact, they are similar if not identical. They are similar in being faithful to the basic teachings of the Buddha; they are also comparable in the way in which they rejected certain metaphysical ideas that continued to creep into the teachings.

The two aspects of the Buddha's teachings, the philosophical and the practical, which are mutually dependent, are clearly enunciated in two discourses, the *Kaccayanagotta-sutta**1 and the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*,2 both of which are held in high esteem by almost all the schools of Buddhism in spite of their sectarian rivalries. The *Kaccayanagotta-sutta**, quoted by almost all the major schools of Buddhism, deals with the philosophical "middle path", placed against the backdrop of two absolutistic theories in Indian philosophy, namely, permanent existence (*atthita**) propounded in the early Upanisads* and nihilistic non-existence (*natthita**) suggested by the Materialists. The middle position is explained as "dependent arising" (paticcasamuppada*) which, when utilized to explain the nature of the human personality and the world of experience, appears in a formula consisting of twelve factors (*dvadasanga**). The practical middle path is enunciated in the equally famous *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, respected by most Buddhists as the first sermon delivered by the Buddha. Here the middle path is between the two extremes of self-indulgence (*kamasukhallikanuyoga**) and selfmortification *(attakilamathanyoga*)* and consists of the noble eightfold path (*ariyo atthangiko* maggo*) leading to freedom and happiness.

Throughout the history of Buddhism, Buddhists have endeavored to remain faithful to the doctrines enunciated in these two discourses, in spite of unfortunate divisions into Theravada* and Mahayana* and in the face of enormous pressures, either from inside or from outside, either social or political, that forced them occasionally to deviated from the original message. For example, in the sphere of philosophical speculations, one of the sects belonging to the so-called Sthaviravada*, namely, Sarvastivada*, presented a theory of "self-nature" or "substance" (*svabhava**) and some of the Mahayanists* admitted a conception of "inherent thought of enlightenment" (*bodhi-citta*), both of which, as may be indicated in the following discussions, are theories contrary to the fundamental philosophical tenet of the Buddha, namely, "dependent arising" (*paticcasamuppada* *).

The practical middle path as enunciated in the famous *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, which is complementary to or based upon the philosophical middle path referred to above, was more susceptible to variations. The analysis of the wide variety of religous practices that emerged in the two traditions, Theravada* and Mahayana*, which appear to be contrary to the middle path enunciated in the above discourse may require a separate volume. The present treatment will therefore be confined to the philosophical middle path and its survival, in spite of the heretical interpretations that occasionally appeared in the Buddhist tradition. The survival of that middle position in philosophy can be attributed to reformers like Moggaliputta-tissa (little known among the Western scholars of Buddhism, in spite of the important role he played in the Buddhist council held during the reign of the Emperor Asoka of India) and Nagarjuna*. Such personalities have emerged from time to time and they have been responsible for the continuation of the Buddha's message. The activities of such reformers have either been ignored, as in the case of Moggaliputta-tissa, or exaggerated, as in the case of Nagarjuna*.

The present essay is not intended as an attempt to highlight the contributions of the less known figureslike Moggaliputta-tissa*, whose famous treatise, "The Points of

Controversy" (*Kathavatthu**),3 awaits a careful and sympathetic treatment by Buddhologists. On the contrary, this will be an attempt to put into perspective the philosophical and spiritual stature of Nagarjuna*, which has been exaggerated beyond limits, more by modern scholars than by the classical Buddhists.

Nagarjuna*: The Myth

Nagarguna* has been considered the second Buddha and has occupied a second position in the line of patriarchs in almost all schools of Mahayana* Buddhism, primarily because the adherents of these schools refused to recognize the spiritual status of thousands of Buddha's immediate disciples who, according to the Buddha's own recognition, had attained the same knowledge and understanding (*nana-dassana**) as well as the moral and spiritual perfection attained by the Buddha. While the intellectual and spiritual attainments of the immediate disciples are clearly portrayed in texts like the Theragatha* and the Therigatha*, no such information is available to us about Nagarjuna's* spiritual attainments except the account of his conversion to Buddhism and his scholastic activities referred to in a biographical account translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva *.4 Nagarjuna's* stature as the second Buddha derives, therefore, from his basic writings, which are generally looked upon as philosophical interpretations of the Mahayana* sutras.

Kenneth Inada, who presented one of the most sympathetic analyses of Nagarjuna's* thought, has admitted that the veneration of Nagarjuna* "at times reached such ridiculous heights that his name was sanctified and stamped everywhere with reckless abandon even for purposes of frauding scriptural authority."5 He was probably referring to the attempt on the part of some of the later Tantric writers to seek authority and sanctity for their ideas, which were undoubtedly influenced by some later Indian religious practices. Even if one were to ignore such excesses, it is possible to maintain that the exalted position accorded to Nagarjuna* yet reflects an uncritical and dogmatic attitude of some of the later Buddhists toward the spiritual ideal of early Buddhism. Such an attitude is reflected not only in some of the Mahayana* texts but also in some of the Theravada* commentaries. For example, in the later Theravada* commentarial literature, an exalted status is accorded to the Abhidhamma in relation to the discourses, so much so that the Buddha had to ascend to the world of deities (*devaloka*) and preach the Abhidhamma to his "mother" who was residing there.6 Such an admission, though intended to provide authority and sanctity to a body of literature that emerged long after the passing away of the Buddha, undoubtedly carried the implication that the Buddha's immediate disciples were not capable of understanding its contents. However, even though such an implication was there, the Theravadins* did not elaborate this story in such a way that it would lead to the devaluation of the early ideal of an *arahant.* Yet, when a similar need was felt by the Mahayanists* to provide authority and sanctity to some of the later Mahayana* texts such as the *Prajnaparamita* sutras**, which were obviously later than the Abhidharma treatises, they were not satisfied with merely saying that they were "great discourses" (*vaipulya-sutra**), greater than those included in the Nikayas* and the Agamas*. They, in fact, proceeded to condemn the very ideal of an *arahant* embodied in those discourses and to criticize the spiritual attainments of the early disciples of the Buddha.

In this particular movement, the *Saddharmapundarika-sutra** leads the field.7 The motivation or even the final goal of this movement may have been very noble. It was, in fact, one of the earliest attempts to unify all the conflicting ideas and ideals that were creating enormous rifts among the Buddhist community. Yet, the manner in which such unification was carried out led to increasing conflicts rather than to their reconciliation or appeasement.

Even a superficial glance at the history of Buddhism would reveal the existence of "monks" (*bhiksu**) who deviated from the ideal and who falsely claim- ed spiritual attainments while leading a form of life inferior to that of ordinary lay people. Such monks were reported even from the time of the Buddha. The *Vinaya-pitaka *8*as well as the *Kasyapararivarta*9*generate no sympathy for such miscreant monks, the latter branding them as a pack of dogs fighting each other for a morsel of food thrown at them.

Such selfish and dishonorable behavior on the part of certain monks may have been counter productive. Self-sacrifice and absolute altruism could emerge as noble ideals in such a context. However, such actions and reactions need not be a reason for condemning even the immediate disciples of the Buddha, *arahants* like Sariputta*, Moggallana*, and Kassapa, as people of "low aspirations" (*hinabhirata**),10 and forcing them to disclaim their attainments in order to accept a new ideal, an ideal certainly contrary to the "middle path" enunciated by the Buddha in his very first discourse to the world. It is by following a "middle path" avoiding the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-destruction that the disciples of the Buddha attained the state of freedom called "the appeasement of dispositions" (*sankhara-samatha**) and continued to work for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Very authentic records available in the *Thera-* and *Theri-gathas** bear ample testimony to the ideal of the

early disciples, and it is also an ideal recognized byNagarjuna*, the champion of the "middle way" (XVII.1).

While the Theravadins* elevated the Abhidhamma to an exalted position without devaluing the ideas embodied in the early discourses, the *Saddharmapundarika** appears to have gone much further in dealing with this entire Buddhist philosophical and religious tradition beginning with the Buddha himself. It is responsible not only for condemning the early disciples, but also for down-playing the value of the early discourses. The discourses included in the Nikayas* and the Agamas* were considered to be inferior in content. The argument presented is that because the immediate disciples could not understand the deeper doctrine the Buddha had to preach an inferior and unsatisfactory doctrine to suit their intellectual capacity. Such a statement, however, has a hidden implication, namely, that the Buddha lacked the capacity to teach the deeper doctrines in a way that would be intelligible to the people who were in his presence. In the Mahayana* tradition, the stage was thus made ready for a philosopher like Nagarjuna*, who is supposed to have best expounded the doctrine, to be elevated to the level of a second Buddha, nay, even to the status of a supreme Buddha more exalted than Sakyamuni*. Thus, it is not surprizing to find some modern commentators proclaiming the view that the lotus bud that appeared in the world with the birth of the Buddha grew up and blossomed forth with the appearance of Nagarjuna*. In fact, a scholar like T. R. V. Mufti has maintained that the Buddha even suggested a "theory of elements" (*dharma*), which came to be be rejected by Nagarjuna* when the latter presented his theory of "emptiness" (*sunyata* *).11 This undoubtedly places Nagarjuna* in a more exalted position than that occupied by the Buddha. Most classical and some modern scholars have thus created an atmosphere where the interpretation of Nagarjuna's* philosophy will have to assume a historical development and unfolding of doctrines that were merely suggested, not taught, by the historical Buddha. Some writers on Buddhism, intoxicated by this conception of the evolution of thought, have shown reluctance to recognize the sophistication with which philosophical ideas were presented by the Buddha 2500 years ago. Having miserably failed to perceive the philosophical ingenuity of the Buddha as reflected in theNikayas* and the Agamas*, as well as the subsequent degeneration of that system in the later commentarial tradition, followed by a revival of the earlier system by philosophers like Moggaliputta-tissa and Nagarjuna*, these writers are insisting upon a gradual sophistication in Buddhist thought comparable to what one can find in the Western philosophical tradition.12

Nagarjuna*: The Philosopher and Grand Commentator

In the following pages, an attempt will be made to present Nagarjuna* merely as a grand commentator on the Buddha-word and to show that he did not try to improve upon the teachings of the Buddha. His work will be explained as an attempt to destroy the weeds that had grown around the Buddha's teachings as a result of some of the ideas expressed by philosophers of both the Sthaviravada* and the Mahayana* traditions. It will be shown that the *Mula-madhyamakakarika** (hereafter abbreviated as *Karika**) is a superb commentary on the Buddha's own *Kaccayanagotta-sutta**, a commentary in which Nagarjuna* upholds every statement made by the Buddha in that discourse, bringing together more material from the other discourses as well, and then clearing the water muddled by the speculations of some of the metaphysicians of the later Buddhist tradition.

The continuation of certain sectarian prejudices among the faithful adherents of Theravada* and Mahayana* may be understandable. Critical scholarship, on the contrary, has a responsibility to remain unsmeared by such sectarian prejudices. Modern scholarship in Buddhism, which began with the recognition of this sectarian rivalry as representing a major split in Buddhist philosophical and religious ideology, has come a long way in asserting its untenability. However, scholars are now beginning to realize that the Theravada/Mahayana* distinction is an exaggeration and that the fundamental teaching of the Buddha has remained intact throughout the centuries. Now it is time to exorcize the terms Theravada * and Mahayana* from our vocabulary. A major obstacle to the elimination of this distinction is the manner in which Nagarjuna's* philosophy has come to be expounded by a majority of modern scholars. The present translation of Nagarjuna's* *Karika** and commentary upon each of the verses therein are intended as a corrective to this interpretation.

A careful study of the doctrines in the extensive corpus of Buddhist literature indicates very clearly how certain fundamental ideas have survived, in spite of the occasional appearance of concepts that conflict with the basic teachings of the Buddha and thus produce controversies among the Buddhist thinkers. Without undertaking a careful study of such instances, scholars have rather uncritically lumped together the early discourses of the Buddha and the summaries of their contents that came to be preserved in the so-called Abhidharma, together with all the interpretive texts compiled by some of the later commentators, either in the form of *vibhasa** or *atthakatha**, and criticized this whole corpus as being representative of Theravada* or Hinayana*. The same is done with some of the Mahayana* discourses (*sutra**) and

the treatises (*sastra**). The contents of the discourses as well as of the Abhidharma literature are examined only in the light of such commentarial explanations and not independent of them. Modern scholarship has thus failed to extricate itself from commentarial traditions. There seems to be no justification for considering the discourses and even the early Abhidharma literature as sectarian works of the so-called Theravada*. Theravada* or Sthaviravada* in general, and Sarvastivada* and Sautrantika* in particular, may be considered sectarian, but their sectarian views are found not in the discourses and the Abhidharma but in the commentaries that came to be compiled on these two bodies of literature. The elevation of the Abhidharma to the level of a supreme body of literature, more exalted than the discourses, is the work of these later commentators and not of the compilers of those Abhidharma texts. The Mahayanists* themselves, bothered by the substantialist thought of the Sarvastivada* and Sautrantika* schools, endeavored to preserve the early teachings by emphasizing the negative aspect of the Buddha's doctrine, especially the doctrine of emptiness (*sunyata**). The *Kasyapaparivarta** as well as the early Prajnaparamita* literature represent this reaction to the substantialism of later Buddhism and this literature should be dissociated from the sectarianism that emerged as a result of the attempt at unification in treatises like the *Saddharmapundarika**.

An attempt will be made in the following pages to show that even some of the more prominent philosophers of Mahayana* were really trying to overcome such sectarian interpretations and go back to the non-sectarian form of Buddhism as embodied in the early discourses, without rejecting either the canonical Abhidharma texts that embody positive teachings or the early Mahayana* sutras that emphasized the negative aspect of the Buddha's doctrine.

The present analysis will be confined to the work of Nagarjuna * in India. Once Nagarjuna's* philosophy is critically and objectively analysed, it will be possible to see whether there is any substance to the rivalry between the two major philosophical traditions, Madhyamika* and Yogacara*. That project has to be postponed to a later occasion.

A.K. Warder was one of the first to raise the question whether Nagarjuna* was a Mahayanist*.13 His reason for raising that question was that in the *Karika**, which undoubtedly was Nagarjuna's* most significant work, no reference whatsoever is made to any one of the major discourses of the Mahayana* tradition, not even to the famous *Prajnaparamita-sutras**. Warder believed that the discourse in the Samyukta served as a source for Nagarjuna's* treatise, even though he did not specify them. The only discourse referred to by name is Katyayanavavada*,14 a discourse found both in the Pali Nikayas*15 and the Chinese Agamas*.16 This single most important fact has often been overlooked by most of the leading scholars who have written about Nagarjuna*.

Even where this fact has been noted, scholars have assumed that Nagarjuna* was merely referring to the Buddha's rejection of the two extremes of existence (*atthita**) and non-existence (*natthita**) in that discourse and that was all. So far, no published work on Buddhism (available to the present author) has treated the contents of the Buddha's discourse to Kaccayana* in detail before proceeding to analyse Nagarjuna's* thought.

Assuming that Nagarjuna* was a Mahayanist* and, therefore, must have rejected any literature that came to be preserved by the Sthaviravadins*, these scholars have proceeded to analyze the *Karika** in the light of their own prejudiced understanding of Madhyamika* philosophy. The ultimate result is bafflement and confusion. Not only are they reluctant to accept certain positive statements of Nagarjuna* in the *Karika**, they are also ready to abandon some of the most important chapters in that work either as later interpolations or as having no relevance to Nagarjuna's* thesis.

To assume that Nagarjuna* was a philosophyer who would merely pick out from the Buddha's statements only those that would support or fit in with his own preconceived notions is to do him great injustice. If he was rejecting a theory of elements suggested by the Buddha (as Mufti seems to think), Nagarjuan*, who was one of the most fearless critics of metaphysical views, would have certainly said so. Nor is there any evidence to support the hypothesis that the "Admonition to Katyayana*" (*Katyayanavavada**) that Nagarjuna* was referring to was a version different from the *Kaccayanagotta-sutta** found in Pali and Chinese. The *Kasyapaparivarta** of the *Ratnakuta** contains two discourses, both of which were addressed to Kasyapa* and which deal with the middle path. One of them refers to the middle path and explains it in terms of the twelve factors of the human personality (*dvadasanga**),17 while the other explains the middle path in negative terms as "non-ceasing, nonarising, etc."18 This latter version is not found in the Nikayas * and the Agamas*. Nagarjuna* was probably aware of the existence of both these versions and he understood their implications. His *Karika** was an attempt to explain the doctrine without rejecting the contents of any one of them. However, his reference to Katyayana*, instead of Kasyapa*, is extremely significant, in that he was conversant with not only the contents of the *Ratnakuta** versions but also the version included in the Nikayas* and

the Agamas*. For this reason the analysis of Nagarjuna's* philosophy as embodied in the *Karika** will be undertaken with a view to locating the sources of those ideas that are accepted by him and those that are criticized and rejected by him.

It is anticipated that an analysis of the *Karika** in relation to the "Discourse to Katyayana*" as well as other discourses included in the Nikayas* and the Agamas* will lead to a better understanding of the Buddha's philosophy without exaggerating the so-called Hinayana-Mahayana* distinction.

Nagarjuna* and Kumarajiva*

Recent scholarship in the history of Buddhist thought has emphasized a distinction between Indian and Chinese forms of Buddhism. Indian Buddhism is explained as an attempt to deal with causation through karma, while Sinitic Mahayana* is seen as advocating causation through *dharma-dhatu*.19*Early Buddhism, according to the proponents of this thesis, underwent a radical change when it was introduced into China. In order to deal with this question of transition, it would be necessary to provide a complete English translation of Kumarajiva's* rendition of Nagarjuna's* *Karika** into Chinese. Richard Robinson made the first systematic attempt to deal with this problem of transition.20 However, that was done on the basis of an inadequate examination of the first chapter of Nagarjuna* and Kumarajiva*. A careful scrutiny of Kumarajiva's* work has convinced me that the form of Buddhism introduced into China by him was not at all different from that of Nagarjuna*. Thus, if my contention that Nagarjuna's* philosophy is a mere restatement of the empiricist and pragmatic philosophy of the Buddha, the form of Buddhism introduced into China would also be the same as the original teachings of the Buddha with no paradigm changes. And this may account for the survival of Buddhism along side of the equally pragmatic philosophy of Confucianism, whereas it failed to survive in India in the face of a very strong idealistic tradition. The prevalent viewthat Buddhism, because of its idealistic character, got absorbed into the idealistic tradition in India and failed to remain as a separate entity needs careful scrutiny, especially when a leading philosopher like Nagarjuna * is not seen to advocate such an idealistic view. This calls for a detailed treatment of the Yogacara* tradition in Buddhism that has not yet been attempted.

Nagarjuna's* Buddha

Nagarjuna's* Buddha was no doubt Gautama (see *Karika** XXVII.30), the prince from the Sakyan* country (presently part of Nepal) who attained enlightenment and turned out to be the most formidable opponent of almost every major philosophical idea that came to be presented by the Indians. In fact, as will be explained below, the philosophical atmosphere was so confused during the Buddha's day that sometimes he was forced to coin new terms to express his thoughts.

Two of the major philosophical theories that dominated the Indian scene during this time were (1) existence (*sat, astitva*), proposed and developed for centuries by Indian thinkers since the time of the early Vedas, and (2) nonexistence (*asat, nastitva**), presented by the Materialists reacting against the traditional metaphysics. Existence or *astitva* was no ordinary empirical existence but the existence of a permanent and eternal substratum in man as well as in all aspects of nature. In man, it was the immutable self (*atman**) that remained in bondage to the impermanent psychophysical personality and which returns to its ultimate abode, the universal self (*Atman**), once it is freed from that bondage and reaches its ultimate moral status (*Brahman*). Attempting to explain the origin of this reality in man as well as in nature, some of the traditional philosophers settled for a conception of a creator god. As it is, this may not have generated much protest from the Buddha. However, the Indian philosophers were not satisfied with the simple notion of a creator god. At a very early stage, they asserted that this self (*atman**) was created by a god or gods who determined that it belongs to one or the other of the four social classes: the priestly (*brahmana**), the warrior (*ksatriya**), the merchant (*vaisya**), and the servant (*sudra**).21 Thus, each individual's status was predetermined and unchangeable. It was this particular idea of creation that elicited the most vehement criticism both from the Materialists as well as from the Buddha.

Denying such a metaphysical self, the Materialists moved to the other extreme of advocating the annihilation of the human personality after death, and then also denied any moral responsiblity for human actions. Instead, they propounded a theory of the indestructibility of matter.22

Kaccayanagotta-Sutta *

The Buddha's discourse to Kaccayana*, a discourse whose authority was recognized by almost all the major philosophical schools of Buddhism, becomes meaningful only in the context of the philosophical views mentioned above. Following is the complete text of the discourse as reported by Ananda*:

Thus have I heard: The Blessed one was once living at Savatthi*, in the monastery of Anathapindika*, in Jeta's Grove. At that time the venerable Kaccayana* of that clan

came to visit him, and saluting him, sat down at one side. So seated, he questioned the Exalted one: "Sir [people] speak of 'right view, right view.' To what extent is there a right view?"

"This world, Kaccayana*, is generally inclined towards two [views]: existence and non-existence.

To him who perceives with right wisdom the uprising of the world as it has come to be, the notion of non-existence in the world does not occur. Kaccayana*, to him who perceives with right wisdom the ceasing of the world as it has come to be, the notion of existence in the world does not occur.

The world, for the most part, Kaccayana*, is bound by approach, grasping and inclination. And he who does not follow that approach and grasping, that determination of mind, that inclination and disposition, who does not cling to or adhere to a view: 'This is my self,' who thinks: 'suffering that is subject to arising arises; suffering that is subject to ceasing, ceases,' such a person does not doubt, is not perplexed. Herein, his knowledge is not other-dependent. Thus far, Kaccayana*, there is 'right view.'

'Everything exists,'this, Kaccayana*, is one extreme.

'Everything does not exist,'this, Kaccayana*, is the second extreme.

Kaccayana*, without approaching either extreme, the Tathagata* teaches you a doctrine by the middle.

Dependent upon ignorance arise dispositions; dependent upon dispositions arise consciousness; dependent upon consciousness arises the psychophysical personality; dependent upon the psychophysical personality arise the six senses; dependent upon the six senses arises contact; dependent upon contact arises feeling; dependent upon feeling arises craving; dependent upon craving arises grasping; dependent upon grasping arises becoming; dependent upon becoming arises birth; dependent upon birth arise old age and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and dispair. Thus arises this entire mass of suffering. However, from the utter fading away and ceasing of ignorance, there is ceasing of dispositions; from the ceasing of dispositions, there is ceasing of consciousness; from the ceasing of consciousness, there is ceasing of the psychophysical personality; from the ceasing of the psychophysical personality, there is ceasing of the six senses; from the ceasing of the six senses, there is ceasing of contact; from the ceasing of contact, there is ceasing of feeling; from the ceasing of feeling, there is ceasing of craving; from the ceasing of craving, there is ceasing of grasping; from the ceasing of grasping, there is ceasing of becoming; from the ceasing of becoming, there is ceasing of birth; from the ceasing of birth, there is ceasing of old age and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and dispair. And thus there is the ceasing of this entire mass of suffering." 23

Analysis of the Kaccayanagotta-sutta*

The discourse is delivered in response to a fundamental question in epistemology: "What is a right view (*sammaditthi**)?" The Brahmajala-suttanta* refers to sixty-two varieties of views prevalent during the Buddha's day.24 After his enlightenment, the Buddha realized that none of these were satisfactory. He was not willing to subscribe to any one of them. For this reason, many scholars of Buddhism have assumed that the Buddha did not have a view to present. For them, he had no sixty-third view to propound. If that was the case, the Buddha could have admonished Kaccayana* not to be bothered by any view, whether it was right or wrong, true or false. However, that was not the case.

The Buddha proceeds to enumerate two basic views that are prevalent in the world. The sixty-two views referred to in the *Brahmajala-suttanta** represent, in one way or another, a proliferation of these two basic views of permanent existence (*atthita**, Sk. *astitva*) and non-existence (*n'atthita*, Sk nastitva**). He then provides reasons for rejecting both these views. The reasons are epistemological and therefore deserve detailed examination. "For him, who perceives with tight knowledge, the uprising of the world as it has come to be, whatever view that is in the world about non-existence will not be acceptable."

The two terms of great epistemological significance that occur in the above statement are (1) "perceives" (*passati*) and (2)"right knowledge" (*sammap-panna**). There could be no mystery associated with the implications of the first of these two terms. *Passati* or "perceives" refers to simple, ordinary sense perception, *for* what is perceived is not something that is mysterious but simply the arising and ceasing of various phenomena in the world. It does not, at least in this instance, refer to a special or unique form of insight not shared by the ordinary people. What makes the difference is "right knowledge" (*sammap-panna* *, or simply *panna**), and that difference is then explained in the next paragraph.

The perceptions or sense experience of the ordinary person in the world are generally "bound by approach, grasping and inclination" (*upaya-upadana-abhinivesa-vinibandha**). They are colored by one's prejudices, by one's likes and dislikes. If a person is able to avoid such approach, grasping and inclination, if he does not follow his dispositions, then that person would not take a determined

stand and say: "This is my [permanent] self." He would perceive phenomena in the world as arising and ceasing.

The perception of arising and ceasing of phenomena conditioned by various factors is available even to ordinary people who have not been able to completely free themselves from prejudices. Thus, there is a common denominator between the perceptions of an ordinary person and those of the enlightened one. However, the ordinary person continues to worry about a permanent and eternal substance behind phenomena or about a supreme being who is the author of all that happens in the world. He is assailed by doubts about what he perceives. One way of overcoming such doubts is to confine oneself to what is given, that is the causal dependence of phenomena, without trying to look for something mysterious. The Buddha realized that "When phenomena (*dhamma**) appear before the brahman who is ardent and contemplative, his doubts disappear, as he sees their causal nature."25

According to the *Kaccayanagotta-sutta**, if a person does not make up his mind that there is a permanent and eternal self and continue to look for it, but, instead, merely understands things as they have come to be (*yathabhutam**), as for example, understands suffering *(dukkha*) as something that arises depending upon conditions, then he does not fall into doubt. In other words, instead of looking for mysterious causes one should start with whatever causes one can discover that are contributory to each situation. Of course, in most cases, past experiences are a good index. Thus, in order to attain such knowledge one does not have to go around looking for a teacher who would transmit that knowledge in a secret session or in some mysterious way. His knowledge would, in that case, not be other-dependent (*apara-paccaya* nanam* ev 'assa ettha hoti*).

On the basis of such knowledge and experience, one is said to have "right view" (*samma-ditttht**). "Right view" in early Buddhism is contrasted with "wrong view" *(miccha-ditthi**). These two are not contrasted in the way truth and falsehood are contrasted in the pre-Buddhist tradition. In the latter case, what is true is considered to be what exists (*sat*). Whatever exists, is real, and by definition whatever is real cannot be otherwise. According to this *a priori* definition, "truth" has to be something that exists *always.* Yet, what is given to the sense experiences is not available always. Hence it was assumed that what is true is something other than what is given to the sense experiences, and that remains always (*sassata*) and in everything. It is the ontological truth (*atman* *) as well as the moral truth (*brahman*) in everything.

As mentioned earlier, a theory of existence or a theory that says "everything exists' (*sabbam* atthi*) is wrong, not because it can be proved to be false, but only in the sense that it does not take into consideration the empirically given fact of cessation (*nirodha*). Hence, it is characterized as "confusion" (*musa*, Sk. mrsa**), not as "non-existent" or "un-truth" or "falsehood" (*a-satya*).

Avoidance of the theory that "everything exists" does not, according to the Buddha, make the opposite view, namely "everything does not exist" (*sabbam* n 'atthi*), any more true. The reason for this is that this latter theory implies much more than a *simple denial* of a permanent and eternal substance in man (*atman**) or in the universe (*brahman*). It implies complete discontinuity in phenomena or their annihilation (*uccheda*), and this too is a wrong view, not because, like the former, it can be proved to be false, but because it is partial in that some aspects of experience like arising (*samudaya*) cannot be accounted for by such a view.

The Buddha did not worry about discovering strictly logical arguments to reject any one of these views. He merely avoided these two theories in his explanation of existence. Hence his statement: "Without approaching either extreme, the Tathagata* teaches you the doctrine by the middle" (*ete te ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathagato* dhammam* deseti*).

The Buddha clearly distinguished his philosophy from that of his contemporary, Sanñjaya Bellatthiputta*, who refused to make any pronouncements through fear that he would be found fault with.26 It makes no sense to assume that the Buddha, after criticizing the two extreme views, avoided propounding any view or observed complete silence. Such an assumption would undermine the authenticity of almost all the doctrines attributed to the Buddha and would stand in the way of appreciating the greatness of this philosopher and spiritual leader whose message did not fade into oblivion, as in the case of the skeptic Sañjaya Bellatthiputta*, but instead became a formidable world-view throughout the last twenty-five centuries. For this reason, the final conclusion of the *Kaccayangotta-sutta** can in no way be ignored as a later interpolation by the so-called Theravadins.

In this final statement, the Buddha was attempting to explain the human personality as well as its experiences in the world in terms of the principle of dependence, without resorting to the two extreme views that he criticized earlier. In the first part of that explanation, he was describing the personality in bondage, as it evolves conditioned by "approach, grasping and inclination." This is the twelvefold formula (*dvadasanga**) presented in positive terms,

describing the functions of ignorance, dispositions, and behavior prompted by such dispositions in the matter of propelling human beings into states of unhappiness and suffering as well as continued process of births and deaths. The negative statement explains how, as a result of the elimination of that ignorance and the development of insight, one comes to pacify one's dispositions and thereby eliminate suffering as well as the continued cycle of births and deaths. Such is the conclusion of the *Kaccayanagotta-sutta* *.

The *Kaccayanagotta-sutta**, though brief, lays down in no unclear terms the basic teachings of the Buddha. Further elaboration of this philosophy is available in the huge collection of discourses of the Nikayas* and the Agamas*. Although denying existence and non-existence conceived of in such a metaphysical manner, the Buddha recognized existence and non-existence in a more empirical sense, such existence and non-existence being understood in terms of the experience of consequences or effects (*attha,* Sk. *artha*). Thus, while being aware of the metaphysical implications of the nominalized forms: "exist-ence" (*atthi-ta**) and "non-exist-ence" (*n' atthi-ta**), the Buddha continued to use the verbal forms "exists" (*atthi*) and "does not exist" (*n 'atthi*) to explain his view of existence.27

The existence of things as well as their arising and passing away are clearly expressed in the famous formula: When that exists, this comes to be; on the arising of that, this arises. When that does not exist, this does not come to be; on the cessation of that, this ceases (*Imasmim* sati idam* hoti, imassa uppada* idam* uppajjati. Imasmim* asati idam* na hoti, imassa nirodha* idam* nirujjhati*).28

Yet the linguistic conventions of his day did not provide the Buddha with technical terms to express this idea. The notion of self-causation (*sayam* katam*, Sk. svayam* krtam**) was prevalent in the tradition of his day, but unfortunately it carried with it the implication of a metaphysical self (*atman**), permanent and eternal (*sassata*), which he wanted to avoid.29 The idea of external causation (*param* katam**, Sk. *para-krtam**) was not different from the Materialist view of annihilation, especially in its denial of moral responsibility.30 A combination of these two views was also not satisfactory, for the Buddha was probably aware of the implications of the Jaina theory of causation that attempted to combine both.31 Under such circumstances, it was almost impossible for him to express his understanding of existence. This may also have contributed to his initial reluctance to exlain his ideas after this enlightenment. However, he was equal to the task.

An attempt to explain the manner in which a phenomenon gives rise to or produces another phenomenon, how a cause gives rise to an effect, would have involved him not only in the task of unravelling the essence or substance in a cause that produces the effect but also in the job of predicting the effect arising from a cause with absolute certainty, a job for which he did not have the necessary empirical means. The Buddha decided to explain this process in terms of "dependence." He was thus led to speak of an event that has occurred (*samuppanna*) by tracing it back to a condition or set of conditions upon which it depended (*paticca* *). Having analysed the process of becoming (*bhava*) in this manner, he laid down a principle that would explain future occurrences. Thus, from observing "dependently arisen" (*paticca-samuppanna**) phenomena, he asserted the principle of "dependent arising" (*paticca-samuppada**). That terminology is indeed conspicuous by its absence in the pre-Buddhist Indian literature.

The old Indian term *dharma* was retained by the Buddha to refer to phenomena or things. However, he was always careful to define this *dharma* as "dependently arisen phenomena" (*paticca-samuppanna-dhamma**). Most of the controversies of the later Buddhists centered on this conception of *dharma*, and therefore the various uses of the term in the Buddha's discourses may be appropriately examined here.

The term *dhamma* (Sk. *dharma*) has four related uses in the early discourses.

(1) *Dhamma** (in the plural) meaning phenomena or things.32 These are the dependently arisen phenomena referred to earlier. They may also be described as elements of experience.

(2) *Dhammo* (in the singular) meaning the uniformity of phenomena or things as represented by the principle of dependence (*paticca-samuppada**).33

(3) *Dhamma** (in the plural) referring to things or phenomena evaluated as good or bad in an ethical sense.34 While good is often designated *dhamma**, the notion of bad is expressed by its negation, *a-dhamma*.*

(4) *Dhammo* (in the singular) expressing the uniformity of moral phenomena, which also represented the ideal or the standard of morality derived from the moral perfection attained by the saint. Hence, *nibbana** or freedom is also called *dhammo*.35

In order to distinguish this notion of *dhamma* from the Indian conception where the term *dharma* meant reality (*atman**), in an ontological sense, the Buddha utilized the conception of result or consequence or fruit (*attha,* Sk.

artha) to bring out the pragmatic meaning of *dhamma.* For the Buddha, whatever is true or real (*bhuta *, taccha*) is also what produces result (*attha-samhita**).36 This pragmatic definition of truth or reality was more often used in explaining moral phenomena. Hence the reference to the three types of results or consequences or fruits:

1) bad, evil*an-attha,* corresponding to *a-dhamma.*

2) good, beneficial*attha,* corresponding to *dhamma*, and

3) ultimate good, ultimate fruit*param' attha,* corresponding to *nibbana**.37

Buddha's Conception of Language and Truth

While the term *dharma,* in the four contexts referred to above, may be taken as implying empirical truths, a more comprehensive use of the term is also available. In this case, the *dharma* (or *sad-dharma)* expresses the notion of "true doctrine," and without any hesitation this may be explained as a "true statement," a use that may be most appealing to the modern linguistic philosopher who is generally averse to metaphysics and insists that "truth" pertains to statements. The use of the term *dharma* in this sense at once renders futile any attempt to speak of a linguistically transcendent truth or reality in the Buddhist context.

Dependent arising is the middle path presented by the Buddha between the extremes of eternalism and annihilationism, of strict determinism and chaotic indeterminism, of absolute reality and nihilistic unreality, of permanent identity and absolute difference. Considering the manner in which he explained the middle position between these extremes, no one could maintain that this middle position is beyond linguistic description or transcends any form of verbal expression. In fact, the two terms that are generally utilized in the absolutistic systems of Indian thought to present such a standpoint, namely "indescribable" (*avacya**) and "indefinable" (*anirvacaniya**), do not occur in the early discourses of the Buddha. The term "undeclared" or "unexplained" (*avyakata**) occurs, but it is used to refer to problems such as the duration and extent of the universe, the identity of or the difference between the soul and the body, as well as the status of the *tathagata* after* deaththese being problems that could not be explained on the basis of any empirical evidence.38 For the Buddha, whatever is empirically given is also describable or definable without having to assume metaphysical standpoints.

Thus in the Buddha's view language is not, in itself, an inadequate means of expressing what is empirically given. Yet modern intepreters of Buddhism seem to assume that the Buddha considered language inadequate to express the truth about existence that he discovered. The evidence for such an interpretation is rather dubious. No attempt is made to examine the Buddha's own statements about his enlightenment, as recorded in such discourses as "The Noble Quest" (*Ariyapariyesana*). 39 Most books on Buddhism published in the modern world will attribute to the Buddha, as well as to his early disciples and even to the later ones like Nagarjuna*, a distinction between *sammuti* and *paramattha. Sammuti* (Sk. *samvrti**) is explained by Candrakirti as language40 and *paramattha* (Sk. *paramartha*) as ultimate reality or absolute truth.41 The terms *sammuti* as well as *vohara** occur in the early discourses.42 *Sammuti,* (derived from *sam + man* "to think") literally means "agreement" and therefore, "convention". *Vohara** (Sk. *vyavahara**) means "usage." A rather lopsided interpretation of these two terms as implying "language" only has caused havoc in the explanation of the teachings of the Buddha as well as of Nagarjuna*. There seems to be no justification for confining the meanings of these two terms to language only.

Conventions (*sammuti*) are of various typeslinguistic, social, political, moral or ethical, or even religious. Even a superficial glance at pre-Buddhist literary traditions would reveal the manner in which the Indians elevated linguistic, social, political, moral, and religious conventions to the level of absolute realities, permanent and eternal. The language of the Vedas became the absolute language, possessing miraculous powers. In spite of the existence of such languages as Dravidian and Chinese, which have nothing to do with the Vedic language, some educated Indian scholars still believe the Vedic is the mother of all languages. Therefore not a single syllable of it is to be tampered with. Another convention, the social order consisting of four castes, came to be considered absolute. Punishment awaited those who violated it or ignored it. Arjuna was to be rewarded for maintaining that social order. Political conventions derived their absoluteness from the absoluteness of the social order. A rules (*ksatriya**) who ignores the advice of the spiritual leader and guide (*brahmana**) was doomed to failure, since he was thereby ignoring the law (*dharma*). The absoluteness of the moral and ethical conventions was equally recognized. No other form of morality except that which contributes to the preservation of the social system was permissible. Religious duties were specific and unalterable.

When, in the *Sutta-nipata**, the Buddha spoke of *sammuti,* he was referring to all these different kinds of conventions.43 According to him, these conventions have come to be depending upon specific conditions (*puthujja**).

They were not absolute and ultimate; they were not universally binding. The Buddha realized that when these conventions were considered to be absolute and ultimate (*paramam* *) they contributed to the worst form of dogmatism (ditthi*), which eventually led to all the conflicts (*kalaha, viggaha*) in the world.44 These constituted the worst forms of obsession, obstruction, constraint, or bondage. Therefore, the Buddha claimed that a wise man (*vidva**) does not approach (*na upeti*) such conventions.45 This does not mean that he ignores all conventions. Instead, he understands their conditionality and as well as their fruitfulness without elevating them to the level of ultimate realities, thereby making them absolute, or simply ignoring them as absolutely unreal and therefore useless.

Freedom (*nibbana**) could then be interpreted more appropriately as freedom from obsessions, obsessions *for* as well as *against* such conventions. The elimination of such obsessions or constraints (*papañca*) turned out to be more difficult than abandoning pleasures of sense, for if by freedom was meant only the latter, the Buddha could have attained enlightenment during the time he was practicing self-mortification.

Here again, the difficulty lies in adopting a middle path without accepting conventions as being ultimate or rejecting them as being useless. The uniqueness of the Buddha's philosophy lies in the manner in which a middle path can be adopted with regard to any convention, whether it be linguistic, social, political, moral, or religious. Since the present analysis of the Buddha's philosophy is undertaken only as a prelude to the examination of Nagarjuna's* thought, and since the latter was more concerned with the basic doctrines of the Buddha, our attention at this point will be focussed only on the way in which the Buddha adopted the middle path in dealing with linguistic conventions.

As pointed out above, the term *sammuti* was used in the early discourses to refer to all kinds of conventions. However, there were two terms that were very specifically employed to refer to linguistic conventions. They are *nirutti-patha* (the way of etymology) and *adhivacana-patha* (the way of definition). The *Samyutta-nikaya** contains an important discourse dealing with linguistic conventions, which are neither to be clung to as absolute truths, nor to be ignored as mere conventions. The discourse called *Nirutti-patha* runs thus: There are these three linguistic conventions or usages of words or terms, which are distinct, have been distinct in the past, are distinct in the present and will be distinct in the future and which are not ignored by the wise brahmans and recluses. Whatever material form (*rupa**) that has been, which has ceased to be, which is past and has changed, is called, reckoned and termed 'has been' (*ahosi*) and it is not reckoned as 'it exists' (*atthi*) or as 'it will be' (*bhavissati*).... [This is repeated for the other four aggregates: feeling, perception, dispositions and consciousness.] Whatever material form has not arisen nor come to be, is called, reckoned or termed 'it will be' (*bhavssati*) and it is not reckoned as 'it exists (*atthi*) or as 'it has been' (*ahosi*).... Whatever material form has arisen, and has manifested itself, is called, reckoned, or termed 'it exists' (*atthi*), and it is not reckoned as 'it has been' (*ahosi*) nor as 'it will be' (*bhavissati*). 46

The Buddha advised his disciples "not to cling to dialectical usage nor go beyond the limits of linguistic convention" (*janapada-niruttim* nabhiniveseyya* samannam* natidhaveyya**).47 Such being the middle position adopted by the Buddha regarding linguistic convention, it would be an extreme position to maintain that language is either ultimately real (as it was the case with the Indians who made *vac* a supreme god) or that it is useless when it comes to expressing ultimate reality.

For the Buddha, language derives its "meaning" (*attha*) when it is able to produce results (*attha*), and thus what is true (*bhuta*, taccha*) is that which bears results (*attha-samhita**).48 The Buddha did not recognize anything that is false to be productive of results. Truth in this sense can be equated with "meaningful" language. Thus, linguistic expressions that imply permanence and annihilation would be "meaningless" (*an-attha*) in that they do not communicate anything that is given in experience (*dhamma*), where experience is understood in terms of the felt results (*attha*) rather than in terms of an indefinable ultimate reality.

Having thus rejected the two views, namely, the traditional Indian view that the human personality consists of a permanent and eternal spiritual entity (*atman**) and the Materialist view the denied such a spiritual entity and recognized matter (body) to be the only reality, the Buddha continued to speak of the psychophysical personality (*nama-rupa**), referring to it with such terms as "I" (*aham**) and "you" (*tvam**) and even the term "self" (*atta*) when speaking of that personality.

With the emergence of Buddhism as a formidable philosophical and spiritual movement that undermined the very foundations of the traditional Indian philosophy and religion, Indian thinkers reformulated their substantialist world-view, presenting it in a more subtle and appealing form in the *Bhagavadgita*. The notion of dharma* embodied in this text may be analysed in terms of the three Buddhist categories presented above, namely, *an-artha, artha* and *paramartha**. Instead of the pragmatic definitions of the

Buddhists, the Indian thinkers were presenting a more substantialist interpretation where,

1) *an-artha* = the psychophysical personality (*nama-rupa**) which is unreal and which is contrasted with the real self (*atman**).

2) *artha* = the permanent and eternal self (*atman* *) in man, the so-called *dehin* (the dweller in the body), which is in bondage because of attachment to the psychophysical personality, and

3) *paramartha* = paramatman**, which is the ultimate reality, the universal self identified with God.

Thus was inaugurated an enormous controversy between Buddhists and Indian philosophers that continued to rage for several centuries until Buddhism completely disappeared from the Indian soil as a philosophical and spiritual force around the seventh and eighty centuries, only to survive and flourish in the countries south and southeast of India as well as in the Far East.

The Pfrior of the Sravakas*

The survival of a pragmatic philosophy in the face of an extremely absolutistic tradition such as the one embodied in the *Bhagavadgita** was not easy. One of the ways in which the Buddhists responded to that philosophy was by compiling the now famous Buddhist classic, the *Dhammapada.* As the title indicates, it was an attempt to counter the Indian absolutist and substantialist definition of *dhamma.* The Buddhist philosophers, confronted by the onslaught of Indian thinkers asserting the reality of the self (*atman**), spent most of their time analysing what they called *dhamma* in order to show that there was no permanent and eternal self. As Kenneth Inada has rightly remarked, this represented "the most active, highly vibrant and competitive age in Buddhist history known as the Abhidharma period.... If there are high watermarks to be considered in Buddhist history, the Abhidharma period certainly rates a very high level, a level of great fermentation and flourishment of Buddhist thought. Ideologically speaking, no other period in Buddhist history, whether of the Theravada or Mahayana, or even national Buddhist developments such as in T'ang Dynasty China, could ever match, or come up to the level of activity as recorded during this period."49

Two complete sets of Abhidharma texts compiled during this period are available to us. One is preserved by the Theravadins* consisting of the following texts:

1. *Dhammasangani*,*

2. *Vighanga*,*

3. *Dhatukatha *,*

4. *Puggalapnnatti*,*

5. *Kathavatthu**,

6. *Yamaka*, and

7. *Patthana*.*

The other version was preserved by the Sarvastivada* school and comprises one major work and six ancillary texts. They are as follows;

1. *Jnanaprasthana** (attributed to Katyayaniputra*),

2. *Sangitiparyaya** (attr. Maha* Kausthila/Sariputra*),

3. *Prakaranapada** (attr. Vasumitra),

4. *Vijnanakaya** (attr. Devasarman*),

5. *Dhatukaya** (attr. Purna* or Vasumitra*),

6. *Dharmaskandha* (attr. Sariputra/Maudgalyayana*),

7. *Prajnaptisastra** (attr. Maudgalyayana*).

That the Theravada* and Sarvastivada* schools preserved these two bodies of literature does not make them sectarian, any more than the discourses, preserved by any school, could be branded as such. Although the treatment of subject-matter in these two sets of works differs widely, the subject-matter is practically the same. Both deal with the categories into which the human personality as well as human experience came to be analysed in the early discourses where they receive a more discursive treatment. The analysis of human experience into aggregates, elements, and faculties, all of which were considered to be *dharmas* or elements of existence, seems to be the first and foremost concern of the Abhidharmikas*. Undoubtedly, the purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate the absence of a self or substance in these phenomena. Exhaustive analyses of the various types of relations that obtain among them were also undertaken, providing a sort of scholastic advancement in the study of such phenomena, but still not deviating from the fundamental teachings of early Buddhism. Examination reveals that these two processes in some way represent an attempt to deal with the same issues that the Buddha was concerned with, namely, "dependently arisen phenomena" (*paticcasamuppanna-dhamma**) and "dependent arising" (*paticcasamuppada**). The knowledge of these two processes was looked upon as right understanding, which ultimately leads to the attainment of freedom (*nirvana*).*

Unfortunately, two of the schools that were involved in this Abhidharmic* enterprise were driven too far in their academic study of the *dharmas*, probably by the unrelenting criticisms levelled against Buddhism by the traditional schools of Indian philosophy. These schools

came to be known as Sarvastivada * and Sautrantika*. \The Sarvastivada* concluded their analysis of *dharmas* with the recognition of ultimate discrete atomic elements which they were unable to put together even with a theory of four basic relations. The result was that they were compelled to admit a singularly metaphysical conception of "self-nature" (*svabhava**) to account for the experienced continuity of such discrete phenomena.50 This self-nature could not be looked upon as something impermanent and changing, for that would be to defeat the very purpose for which it was formulated in the first place. Therefore they insisted that this self-nature (*svabhava**, *dravya*) of *dharmas* remain during all three periods of time, the past, the present and the future. No other conception could be more heretical in the eyes of the Buddhists who were avowed non-substantialists (*anatmavadi*).*

The view that *dharmas* have self-nature had its impact on the conception of "dependent arising" (*pratiyasamutpada**), the central conception in early Buddhism as well as in the early Abhidharma. Henceforward, "dependence" came to be explained on the basis of self-nature. It turned out to be no more different from the identity theory of causation *(satkarya-vada**) formulated with such precision, using logical arguments, by the Sankhya* school of thought.51 The relationship between these two schools of thought is so close that one can hardly discount mutual influences and borrowings.

One of the schools that reacted against this conception of "self-nature", other than the tradition represented by Moggaliputtatissa* referred to earlier, was the Sautrantaka* school of Buddhism. As its name implies, this school was openly antagonistic to the "treatises" (*sastra**) and insisted upon returning to the "discourses" (*sutranta**) as sources for the study of the Buddha-word.52 It considered the notion of "self-nature" as a theory of "self" (*atma-vada**) in disguise. However, for some inexplicable reasons they failed to realize that neither a theory of atoms (*paramanu**) nor a conception of moments (*ksana**) was part of the early Buddhist teachings, either in the discourses or in the Abhidharma treatises. On the one hand, they probably assumed that these two conceptions were not .the root cause of all the confusion among the Sarvastivadins*. On the other hand, they felt that these two conceptions were, after all, not incompatible with the doctrine of impermanence (*anicca,* Sk. *anitya*) in the early discourses. Without abandoning atomism and momentariness, the Sautrantikas* proceeded to explain "dependence" and ended up recognizing a sort of non-identity theory of causation (*asatkarya-vada**) comparable to the one proposed by the Vaisesika* school of Indian philosophy.53

Even though the Sautrantikas* were openly critical of the substantialist conception of *dharma* advocated by the Sarvastivadins*, their reluctance to abandon the theory of moments (*ksana**) left them with the difficult task of explaining the experienced continuity in the individual person. The emergence of schools like "personalists" (*pudgala-vada **) and "transmigrationists" (*samkranti-vada**),54 closely related to and sometimes identical with the Sautrantikas*, is indicative of the solutions that this school had to offer in order to overcome the difficulties arising from the acceptance of a theory of moments.

The Sarvastivada* and Sautrantika* schools thus presented a rather complicated set of theories, all contributing to philosophical confusion. The former perceived a "self-nature" (*svabhava**) in the cause and emphasized the identity (*ekatva*) of cause and effect, while the latter, seeing no such "self-nature" but merely perceiving "othernature" (*para-bhava**), insisted upon the difference (*nanatva**) between cause and effect. The Sarvastivada* conception of self-nature (*svabhava**) was extended to all phenomena, including the human personality, while the Sautrantikas*, denying self-nature in phenomena, surreptitiously introduced a conception of self or person (*atman**, *pudgala*) in a human personality.

Moggaliputtatissa*: The First Reformer

The Russian Buddhist scholar Th. Stcherbatsky was one of the fast among Western scholars to ignore the very significant differences between early Buddhism and Abhidharma on the one hand, and Sarvastivada* and Sautrantika* interpretations of the "discourses" and Abhidharma on the other. For him, Sarvastivada* was not only an *interpretation* of Abhidharma but *was* Abhidhama, and the early Buddhism of the discourses as well.55 However, there was at least one disciple of the Buddha who was not willing to accept either the Sarvastivada* or the Sautrantika* as the correct interpretation of Buddhism. This was Moggaliputtatissa*. Critical scholarship unfortunately has blindly dismissed his views without much serious consideration, even though they are presented with clarity and logical acumen.

Almost 250 years after the Buddha and 300 years before Nagarjuna*, Moggaliputtatissa* was responsible for the "great purge" in the Buddhist tradition. The Indian emperor Asoka, as he declared in his Minor Rock Edicts, was actually instrumental in unifying the Buddhist Order (*samgha**) by expelling the miscreant and schismatist monks and getting them to don white (lay) garments. Yet, the background for this great purge was prepared by Moggaliputtatissa* when in his famous "Points of Controversy" (*Kathavatthu**) he refuted the ideas

presented by almost seventeen heterodox schools of Buddhism. "Moggaliputtatissa* is said to have followed the method of discourse adopted by the Buddha*satthara* dinna-naya-vasena*at the time he established the *matika *, 'topics' of the K*[*atha**]*v*[*atthu*].56 This monumental work is an attempt to go back to the early teachings, and in doing so the author, for the first time in Buddhist history, utilizes even abstract logic. Whether the use of such abstract logic is appropriate is not a matter that concerns us here. What is important is that Moggaliputtatissa* was critical of certain ideas which were incompatible with the Buddha's philosophy. The metaphysical theory of a person (*pudgala*), propounded by the Sautrantikas* and their allies, was the first of the metaphysical views to be taken up for criticism in the *Kathavatthu**.57 With great ingenuity and logical precision, Moggaliputtatissa* destroyed the concept of a person propounded by the Sautrantikas* and established what may be called the non-substantiality of the human personality (*pudgala-nairatmya*).*

With equally cogent arguments, he annihilated the Sarvastivada* doctrine of *dharma* that implied substantial and eternal existence (*sabbam* sabbada* atthi**)58 and established the non-substantiality of all dharmas (*dharma-nairatmya*]*. These two uncontroverted achievements, recorded in one of the most authentic texts, have been completely ignored by those who attributed a substantialist theory of elements to the early Buddhist tradition.

Early Mahayana*: The Second Reform Movement

The same text highlights another controversy that was beginning to ruffle the minds of Buddhist thinkers during the third century BC and which became the topic of a heated debate during the first and second centuries AD. This pertained to the question whether the Buddha is transcendent (*lokuttara*). Moggaliputtatissa* rejected the view, gradually gaining ground in the Buddhist tradition, which favored transcendence.59 The biographies of the Buddha, like the *Mahavastu*,* were probably not yet written. Mahayana*, with its conception of a completely transcendent Buddha, had not come into existence by that time. The *Saddharmapundarika**, which is responsible for condemning the miscreant monks (*bhiksu**) as well as the ideal of a saint (*arhant*) in early Buddhism, indicates a gradual growth with the final version assigned to the third century AD. In the earliest versions of some of the early Mahayana* *sutras**, such as *Vajracchedika-prajnaparamita** and the *Kasyapaparivarta*,* there is no mention of a bodhisattva.60

What sort of Mahayana* can there be without the conception of a transcendent Buddha and the notion of a *bodhisattva*? It certainly ought to be different from the kind of Mahayana* that one comes across in the available versions of the *Saddharmapundarika ** and other texts that include a condemnation of the early *arhant*-ideal. Indeed the *Kasyapa-parivarta**, even in the Sanskrit version which is not the earliest, will enable us to understand what that original Mahayana* was. It was not the Mahayana* that came to be deeply prejudiced against early Buddhism as well as Theravada*, for, as pointed out earlier, even though we find a strong criticism of the monk (*bhiksu**), a criticism that may be accepted even by the Buddha and his disciples like Moggaliputtatissa*, this criticism is not extended to the early ideal of the "worthy one" (*arhant*). One of the most important series of discourses or instruction (*dharma-paryaya*) referred to in the *Kasyapaparivarta** as "the great pinacle of gems" (*maha-ratna-kuta**), pertains to the "middle path" (*madhyamapratipat**). 61 Here we find a long list of middle paths, most of which are described in negative terms.

However, side by side with the negative descriptions, one also discovers a positive description of the middle path in terms of the twelve factors of the human personality (*dvadasanga**). It is indeed an abbreviation of the *Kaccayanagotta-sutta**, with Kasyapa* as the interlocutor or the person to whom the discourse is addressed. The need for negative descriptions, especially at a time when Buddhahood was not yet looked upon as a transcendent state or as an Absolute, calls for an explanation. Available historical records indicate that some of the canonical texts that emphasized the doctrine of non-substantiality (*nairatmya**), and which included the work of Moggaliputtatissa*, found a haven in Sri Lanka and other South East Asian countries after the third century BC. However, some of the early discourses as well as some of the Abhidharma texts were still circulating in India and came to be preserved in a Prakrit, slightly different from Pali. Yet, what came to be popular after the third century were the interpretations of the Buddhist metaphysicians, like the Sarvastivadins* and the Sautrantikas*. The early Mahayana* that did not include either the concept of "transcendence" as applied to the Buddha or a notion of *bodhisattva,* but which emphasized a negative doctrine while at the same time preserving the positive assertions of early Buddhism, was therefore a response to the Sarvastivada* and Sautrantika metaphysics, rather than a reaction to the early Buddhism of the "discourses" or the Abhidharma.

[The "Overview" of the whole text included above ("Nagarjuna's Mission" & "The Structure of the Karika") comes at this point in Kalupahana's introduction.]

Nagarjuna's Philosophical Enterprise

The above analysis of the contents of Nagarjuna's *Karika* and the annotation of individual verses that follow provide ample evidence to support the view that his primary objective was to reject the substantialist or essentialist thought that emerged in the Buddhist philosophical tradition as a result of the speculations of the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas. The fact that he depended upon the teachings embodied in the early discourses, or the fact that the *Karika* is here looked upon as a grand commentary on the *Kaccayanagotta - sutta,* in no way minimize his contribution to the history of Buddhist thought. What is most significant is the manner in which he proceeded to examine the subtle and complex metaphysical issues that blinded the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas in a background in which speculative philosophy had reached a high watermark, both among the Buddhists and the traditional Indian philosophers. Nagarjuna probed into almost every aspect of their speculations, whether relating to epistemology, ontology, moral philosophy, or philosophy of language. He linked disjointed concepts and dissolved the hardened and the solidified. Concepts of identity and difference, substance and quality, self-nature and other-nature, permanence and annihilation, even in their most subtle and imperceptible forms, never escaped his penetrating intellect. It seems as if he had read the Buddhist discourses, manuals, and commentaries, examining every sentence, every word, and every syllable. Even if one cannot discover any tangible evidence to provide that he was a "freed one", a *nirvrta, the Karika*, indeed, bears ample testimony to his supreme intellectual stature.

Epistemological Investigations

Nagarjuna was an empiricist *par excellence.* However, the fundamental metaphysical assertion of most rationalists, and even the empiricists during his day, was the *cogito,* the *atman* that sees itself before it comes to perceive anything else. Nagarjuna had no hesitation in demolishing this metaphysical idea at the very outset. "Seeing oneself' (*svatmanam darsanam*) is rejected, not on the basis of any dialectical argument, but simply on the grounds of its non-availability (III.2). Comparable to the manner in which David Hume refused to accept the notion of a *cogito,* Nagarjuna proceeds to show that the so-called process of "seeing oneself" is no more than "the arising of consciousness depending upon the eye and visible form" (*caksu-rupe pratityaivam ukto vijnana-sambhavah*), III.7), that is, a perception of some color, shape, etc. However, Nagarjuna differs from Hume in not recognizing these perceptions as momentary and discrete impressions on the basis of which we construct our world-view. Momentariness, along with its philosophically unacceptable consequences, was rejected, especially in his treatment of "motion" (*gatagata,* II) and "time" (*kala*, XIX).

That Nagarjuna was rejecting sense experience *in favor of* a special intuition is not at all evident from his treatment of sense experience in Chapter III. His relentless criticism of a metaphysical *cogito* does not mean that he was evading the problem. On the contrary, he was quoting a statement from the Buddha to show what a non-metaphysical description of sense experience could be. That description in terms of "dependence" is further elaborated in Chapter XXVI where he presented a quite positive explanation of the human personality as well as its experiences.

Indeed, if "emptiness" (*sunyata*) were to be an "ultimate reality," there was no reason why Nagarjuna should not have devoted at least one chapter of his work solely to explicate this conception and provide information regarding its epistemological basis. At least a chapter on "wisdom" (*jnana*), explaining how it penetrates into the ineffable ultimate truth, abolishing all linguistic conventions in the process, would have established the basic philosophical standpoint attributed to the Mahayana schools by most classical and modern scholars. No such attempt is made in the *Karika*. On the contrary, the term that he most frequently uses is *pasyati*, meaning "perceives." He uses it in the same sense in which the Buddha utilized it in the ''Discourse to Katyayana.'' Often what he claims not to perceive (*na pasyati*) is self-nature or substance (*svabhava*) or permanent existence (*bhava*, *astitva*). What he claims to perceive (*pasyati*) is dependently arisen phenomena as well as dependent arising. Such perceptions are not presented as the results of a special intuition, but primarily of the absence of ignorance (*avidya*) or confusion (*mrsa*) created by one's dispositions or inclinations for the extremes of substantial existence and nihilistic nonexistence.

Picking up the most important epistemological theme from the Buddha's discourse to Katyayana, Nagarjuna is insisting that when one perceives through widsom (*jñana*) the arising and ceasing of phenomena, one abandons the two metaphysical explanations of that experience. Indeed, the theme that is emphasized is not the *perception* of a non-arising and non-ceasing ultimate truth, but rather the *non-perception* of a metaphysical entity that is non-arising and non-ceasing. Thus, for Nagarjuna, sense experience, explained as a process of dependence, serves as the foundation of human knowledge. Concentrating his attention on this foundation of human knowledge and understanding, Nagarjuna not only leaves out any discussion of special intuitions not related to sense experience, but also avoids any reference to the so-called

"extraordinary perceptions" (*abhijna*), probably because such perceptions had by this time come to be considered absolutely independent of sensory experience, even though this was not the way in which the Buddha perceived them. 136 Nagarjuna may have been aware that, even according to the Buddha, human beings whose six sensory faculties are not functioning properly could not develop such perceptions. For example, in the early discourses, one cannot come across any reference to someone who is blind by birth developing "clairvoyance" (*dibba-cakkhu*) or one who is deaf evolving the capacity for "clairaudience'" (*dibbasota*).

Furthermore, Nagarjuna seems to have directed his attention more to the fundamental problems that generated metaphysical theories. And the problem of sense experience, indeed, was at the very top of that list. As reiterated in the above analysis of the *Karika* as well as in the annotation of the text that follows, the empiricist Nagarjuna continued to insist upon evidence from experience for any idea before it is accepted. The repeated us of the phrasses: *na vidyata* (meaning "not evident," "not known," "not perceived," etc.) and *nopalabhyate* (implying "not obtained'' or "not available'') bears ample testimony to his predominantly empiricist attitude. In the absence of any positive evidence that Nagarjuna rejected sense experience and accepted a higher "intuition," there is no reason to doubt that he was calling for *evidence* that is provided by sense experience. In fact, whenever the phrase *na upapadyate* ("is not proper," "not appropriate") is used to describe a situation, it would often follow a statement implying that it is not evident (*na vidyata*). This means that rational or logical arguments attempting to draw implications need to be strongly grounded on empirically verified permises. A thesis had to be first found fault with before its antithesis is faulted. "Serf-nature is not evident" (*na hi svabhavo... vidyate*), not because "other-nature" (*parabhava*) is not evident, as would seem to be the case if Nagarjuna were to merely utilize the method of *reductio ad absurdum* (*prasanga*). Serfnature (*svabhava*) is not evident, because it is not available in experience. It is only after such a straightforward empirical statement that Nagarjuna proceeds to reject "other-nature" (*parabhava*), for this latter would make no sense without the conception of "self-nature." Indeed, it is the unknowability of selfnature (*avidyamane svabhave*) that destroys the very conception of other-nature (I.3), not simply the relativity of the two differentiated concepts.

Ontology

Just as much as the assertion of a *cogito* led to the belief in a substantial agent, a *pudgala,* the lop-sided attempt to dissolve that concept insisting that it is dependent upon the elements of experience (*dharma*) led to a substantialist view releating to the objective world. The conception of a person was replaced by a substantial world. The Buddha had spoken of obsession (*prapañca*) as the reason for such world-views. Hence his emphasis on the "appeasement of obsessions" (*prapancopasama*) as a means of overcoming metaphysics. Looking at the philosophical background in which the objective world had replaced the *cogito* as an ultimate reality, Nagarjuna was more specific in insisting upon the "appeasement of the object" (*drastavyopasama*) as a means to attaining true knowledge (V.8).

In fact, the Sarvastivadins and Sautrantikas, while denying the substantiality of the human person (*pudgala*), had moved to the other extreme of admitting the substantiality of elements (*dharma*). This problem being foremost in Nagarjuna's mind, he devoted the second part of his treatise to its refutation. In this case, he realized that even critical philosophy had fallen prey to the ordinary human search for security and absolute certainty when philosophers, compelled to give up something that provided them with some sort of certainty (and in this case the *cogito*), were clinging like leeches to an objective world as an ultimate reality. If Nagarjuna were to be an empiricist like the Buddha, he could not confine himself to a world of abstract ideas. He knew that the Buddha was a "verificationist" (*ehipassika*) and that this involved concrete "identification" (to use a term popular in modern philosophy).137 Thus, the conception of a person begins with an identifiable and re-identifiable "form'' (*rupa*). While the Buddha recognized the possibility of experiencing formless (*arupa*) states, it is not very clear whether he had accepted "formless" persons. However, unlike some modern philosophers who would consider the "body" or material form to be fundamental and, therefore, ultimately real, leaving all other constituents as being secondary, the Buddha would merely look upon the ''body" as a necessary but not sufficient part of the human person. For him, feeling (*vedana*), perception (*sanna*), dispositions (*sankhara*), and consciousness (*vinnana*) were as important as the material body in making any identification or re-identification. Thus, the elimination of the *cogito* by explaining it as something that is dependently arisen (*paticcasamuppanna*) did not mean the recognition of the ultimate reality of these conditions upon which it depended. Hence the Buddha's famous dictum: "All things are non-substantial" (*sabbe dhamma anatta*).

For this reason, Nagarjuna's first major enterprise in the *Karika* is to establish the non-substantiality of the elements (*dharma-nairatmya*). This called for a critique of the Sarvastivada conception of substance (*svabhava*). As mentioned earlier, the epistemological method by which he

tried to achieve this was "appeal to experience". In other words, he was calling for *identification* of substance, which none of his opponents were able to do.

However, Nagarjuna believed that an identification of an event can be made on the basis of "fruit" or "effect" (*artha*), for, according to him, in the absence of a fruit, one cannot speak of a condition or non-condition (I.14). This is a pragmatic theory of truth or reality. However, if his substantialist opponents were to insist that the substance can be identified through its fruit or effect, Nagarjuna's immediate response is that the fruit or effect is dependent upon a condition (or a set of conditions), whereas substance is not. The definition of substance (*svabhava*) as "having its own (*svo*) existence (*bhavo*)'' stood in the way of Nagarjuna accepting his opponent's explanation. "How can a substance be conditioned?" (*svabhavah krtako nama bhavisyati punah katham, XV.2*) grumbled Nagarjuna. For him, the conception of a ''dependent substance" was no more than a self-contradiction (XV.1).

Having criticized the substantialist theory of elements (*dharma*), Nagarjuna had to return once again to the conception of a person, even though he had begun his treatment of the non-substantiality of elements by rejecting a substantialist conception of a person (Chapter III). The reason for this is not far to seek. The Sautrantikas, who had themselves rejected the Sarvastivada conception of substance (*svabhava*), were surreptitiously introducing a subtle personality (*pudgala*) to account for human behavior, moral responsibility, bondage, and freedom. Chapters XVI-XXVI were, therefore, devoted to the explanation of the human personality without falling into the substantialist trap.

Unlike some of his predecessors and most of his modern day admirers, Nagarjuna was indeed cognisant of the possible dangers involved in a "non-substantialist discourse." He was aware that the idea of non-substantiality could eliminate even the empirical conception of a person (*pudgala*) and of elements (*dharma*) and enthrone itself as the ultimate truth or reality. Hence his rather bold declaration: "Those who are possessed of the view of emptiness are said to be incorrigible." (XIII.8)

An absolutistic view of emptiness would certainly contradict his empiricist method that calls for identification as a test of truth or reality. "Non-substantiality" (*nairatmya*) or "emptiness" (*sunyata*), taken in themselves, would be as abstract and unidentifiable as a substance (*svabhava*). Indeed, as pointed out earlier, the notion of a substance was rejected because it could not be identified with anything in experience. Therefore, there was no excuse whatsoever for replacing "substance" with an equally undefinable or unidentifiable conception of "emptiness" or "nothingness." "Emptiness" (*sunyata*) distinguished from "the empty" (*sunya*), "nonsubstantiality" (*nairatmya*) separated from "the non-substantial" (*nairatmya -dharma*) or "dependent arising" (*pratityasamutpada*) differenciated from "the dependently arisen" (*pratityasamutpanna -dharma*) would be as unidentifiable and therefore nonsensical as any other metaphysical conception that Nagarjuna was endeavoring to refute.

Thus, for Nagarjuna, emptiness (*sunyata*) was *no more* than what is implied in the statement: "All this is empty" (*sarvam idam sunyam*). The statement, "All this is empty," is not identical with the statement, "All is empty," (*sarvam sunyam*). In fact, as pointed out in the annotation, nowhere in the Karika can one come across an absolute statement such as "All is empty." It is indeed significant that even when making a universalized statement Nagarjuna retains the demonstrative ''this" (*idam*) in order to eliminate the absolutist sting.

The question whether one can speak of "emptiness" (*sunyata*) of "emptiness" (*sunyata*) is often raised in discussions of Nagarjuna's "middle way." For example, one could maintain that "emptiness" itself is an identifiable particular on the basis of which a universal "emptiness'' could be identified. The language utlized by Nagarjuna does not permit such a flight into the realm of the Absolute. His conception of "the empty" (*sunya*) is a particular. Yet this particular is not equivalent to a particular "emptiness" (*sunyata*) abstracted from a concrete situation. To move from "the empty" to "emptiness" is an altogether different process. The former is grounded in an experienced situation of an event with a characteristic, while the later begins with a characteristic *sans* the event.

This careful avoidance of any absolutism or substantialism in relation to the conception of "dependent arising" (*pratityasamutpada*) as well as "emptiness" (*sunyata*) was declared by Nagarjuna as the "middle path" (*pratipat saiva madhyama,* XXIV. 18). That "emptiness" is a "dependent convention" (*upadaya prajñapti*), for it is dependent upon and, therefore, identifiable in terms of, "the empty" (*sunya*). Nagarjuna asserts that "emptiness" so identified would eliminate any dogmatism or obsession (*adhilaya*) and, along with it, any erroneous views (*dosa-prasanga,* XXIV. 13).

This, undoubtedly, is a beautiful restoration of the Buddha's conception of "non-substantiality" (*anatta*). However, the modern interpretation of Nagarjuna seems to move in a totally different directon. Modern scholars, favoring an interpretation by Candrakiti made known to them by T. R. V. Mufti, insist that Nagarjuna had no thesis

of his own (*svapaksa*) to present. This Vedantic interpretation presents Nagarjuna as a critical or analytical philosopher whose sole funciton was to criticize or analyse (*vigraha*) views presented by others without having to recognize or uphold a view of his own. Such an interpretation has led to two more related theories being attributed to Nagarjuna. The first is the admission of the inadequacy of conceptual thinking, and therefore of language, to express the ultimate truth. The second is the attribution of a concept of ultimate truth in the form of "absolute emptiness" or "absolute nothingness" inexpressible through ordinary human linguistic apparatus. Thus, we are led to one of the most troublesome questions relating to Nagarjuna's philosophical enterprise.

In the annotation of the dedicatory verses of the *Karika*, we have suggested a different reading which would make it possible for Nagarjuna to make the claim that he is presenting a right view (*samyag-drsti*) when refuting the inappropriate views advocated by his opponents. Furthermore, Nagarjuna clearly indicates that philosophical enterprise consists not only of analysis (*vigraha*) but also explanation (*vyakhyana*) (IV.9). This would provide legitimation for the most positive explanation of the Buddha's view in Chapter XXVI, in addition to other positive statements made by Nagarjuna elsewhere (e.g., Chapter XVII).

However, the two most troublesome questions regarding ultimate reality and the inadequcy of language still remain, primarily because of the manner in which the Vedantic scholars interpreted three related terms utilized by Nagarjuna. These are *pramartha, nirvikalpa,* and *samvrti*.

For most scholars who have been nurtured in a predominantly substantialist philosophical or religious tradition, *paramartha* means "ultimate reality," *nirvikalpa* implied "the non-conceptual," and *samvrti* stood for "language." In understanding these three terms in this manner, did modern translators and interpreters impose their own substantialist outlook on Nagarjuna's thought? The lust test of the validity of such translations would be a comparison of the implications of these three translations with the Buddha's own conceptions of "dependent arising" (*pratityasamutpada*) and "non-substantiality" *(anatman*), all of which Nagarjuna accepted with reverence.

Philosophy of Language

The term *samvrti* (Pali, *sammuti*) was never used in the early discourses to refer exclusively to language. Analysing the Buddha's philosophy on the basis of the early discourses, it was pointed out that *sammuti, vohara*, and *paññatti* were terms used to refer to any convention, not merely linguistic convention. The specific terms used by the Buddha to refer to language are *nirutti* (etymology) and *adhivacana* (definition or semantics). Nagarjuna's use of the term *abhidheya,* meaning "that which is to be designated," (XVIII.7) would provide us with a term that he may have used if he had a need for referring to language. Such a term would be *adhidhana* and would not be semantically much different from the term *adhivacana* used by the Buddha. However, for Nagarjuna, the *abhidheya* or "that which is to be designated" ceases with the cessation of *cittagocara* ("the ojbect of thought"). Thus, anything that is not the object of thought, that is non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa*), is also not describable. If so, Nagarjuna had no reason to compose more than four hundred verses trying to explain the indescribable. It would be a fruitless attempt on the part of any philosopher, let alone one who is extolled as an "enlightened one" (*buddha*).

If Nagarjuna was trying to explain something and in that process was utilizing language, he would be dealing with the conceptual or the object of thought (*citta-gocara*). Accordingly, anything that is conceptual would also be the object of thought, and the non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa*) could not be an object of thought. A truth that cannot be thought of, let alone one that cannot be spoken of, would be as metaphysical as the conception of *atman* in the Brahmanical speculations. *Nirvikalpa* would, therefore, mean something else. In the course of the analysis of the *Karika*, it was pointed out that Nagarjuna was critical of a specific form of discrimination, a discrimination that produced polarities in human thinking. These consisted of existence and non-existence, substance and quality, self-nature and other-nature, permanence and annihilation. In such a context, *nirvikalpa* would refer to polar discriminations, not any and every form of discrimination.

This leads us to one of the most controversial discriminations that the metaphysicians of the Buddhist tradition as well as their counterparts of other substantialist traditions made with regard to bondage and freedom. Chapter XXV of the *Karika* is devoted to an analysis of this metaphysical issue. In Chapter XXIV, when Nagarjuna spoke of *samvrti* and *vyavahara* on the one hand and *paramartha* on the other, he was paving his way for a discussion of the discrimination between bondage and freedom.

Nagarjuna, who provided every indication that he had read the early discourses, could not have been unaware that the Buddha used the terms *sammuti* and *vohara* (*vyavahara*) more often in the sense of moral conventions. These moral conventions pertained to good (*dharma*) and bad (*adharma*). Thus, whenever he used the term *vyavahara*, Nagarjuna was referring to the moral conventions of good and bad (*dharmaadharma*) (XXIV.36)

or merit and demerit (*punya-papa*) (XVII.24). These moral conventions are accepted not because they are mere conventions agreed upon by consensus but because they work. They are pragmatically grounded. They produce fruits or consequences (*artha*). Such conventions provide a basis for ideal conventions referred to as *paramartha* ("highest fruit or consequence"). Yet, to safeguard the ideal from becoming a mere ideal and not a fact, Nagarjuna insists upon the dependence of the ideal on the concrete. A quotation from William James, even though extensive, seems to be relevant here.

If the ethical philosopher were only asking after the best *imaginable* system of goods he would indeed have an easy task; for all demands as such are *prima facie* respectable, and the best simply imaginary world would be one in which *every* demand was gratified as soon as made. Such a world would, however, have to have a physical constitution entirely different from that of the one which we inhabit. It would need not only space, but a time, of *n*-dimensions, to include all the acts and experiences incompatible with one another here below, which would then go on in conjunctionsuch as spending our money, yet growing rich; taking a holiday, yet getting ahead with our work; shooting and fishing, yet doing no hurt to the beasts; gaining no end of experience, yet keeping our youthful freshness of heart; and the like. There can be no question that such a system of things, however brought about, would be the absolutely ideal system; and that if a philosopher could create universes *a priori,* and provide all the mechanical conditions, that is the sort of universe which he should unhesitatingly create. But this world of ours is made on an entirely different pattern, and the casuistic question is here most tragically practical. The actually possible in this world is vastly narrower than all that is demanded; and there is always a *pinch* between the ideal and the actual which can only be got through by leaving part of the ideal behind. 138

In a similar way, Nagarjuna, following the pragmatic teachings of the Buddha, could not divorce *paramartha* from *samvrti* (i.e., the ultimate fruit from the fruit of everyday life of a human being). Just as much as "emptiness" is based upon "the empty," even so *paramartha* had to be based upon the *samvrti*. Without any reference to the concrete concepts of good, any notion of ultimate or ideal good would be not only meaningless but also "fruitless'' (*an-artha*) and terribly harmful (as proven by many such instances in the history of mankind). and Thus, for Nagarjuna, ultimate good is not one that transcends ordinary notions of good, but merely an extension of the so-called goodness recognized in everyday day life (*vyavahara*).

The sharp dichotomy between the ordinary notion of good and the ideal good is thus broken down. It is significant to note that when speaking of two truths Nagarjuna utilized the terms *samvrti* and *paramartha*. Yet, when he proceeded to explain their relationship, he utilized the term *vyavahara*, thereby establishing the synonymity of *samvrti* and *vyavahara*. The fact that Nagarjuna was not prepared to create an unbridgeable chasm between *samvrti* or *vyavahara* on the one hand and *paramartha* on the other is clearly expressed in his famous statement that without the former the latter is not expressed (*vyavaharam anasritya paramartho na desyate,* XXIV. 10).

Similarly, without understanding the ultimate fruit, freedom is not obtained (*paramartham anagamya nirvanam nadhigamyate, ibid.*). This would mean that freedom (*nirvana*) itself is not something to be sharply distinguished from *samsara* or ordinary human life, even though they are not identical. Freedom would not be absolute freedom that has nothing to do with *human life.* It is no more than the absence of certain constraints (such as greed, hatred, and confusion) in the life of a human being. It is, therefore, the life of an ordinary human being that is gradually transformed, through the cultivation of moral precepts, into one of moral perfection. This transformation (rather than transcendence) is what is implied by *nirvana.*

Moral Philosophy

The moral life that leads to the transformation of the human personality is dearly explained by Nagarjuna in Chapter XVII. The absolutistic interpretation of Nagarjuna's conception of "emptiness" constrained many of his modern admirers from discussing his views regarding karma and survival, even though these were part and parcel of the Buddha's teachings. The discussion of karma and survival in the *Karika* was thus considered to be "Hinayanistic," having nothing to do with the so-called Mahayana. As such, the Buddha's own views regarding these issues turn out to be "Hinayanistic " or, at least, were intended for those low-witted disciples who surrounded him.

Contrary to this view, our analysis of the contents of Chapter XVII, placed in the background in which Nagarjuna lived, shows that he was more positive than his modern day disciples in his treatment of karma and survival. Nagarjuna's major endeavor in this chapter is to rescue the Budda's discourse on moral responsibility from the havoc created by the substantialist thinkers who assumed karma to be either substantial or performed by a substantial agent. His was not an attempt to dissolve the conception of karma in favor of an absolutistic notion of "emptiness."

Indeed, the chapter begins with a reference to the Supreme Sage (*paramarsi*) whose doctrine he was about to

expound. Speaking of the morally good life, Nagarjuna uses the term *dharma,* instead of karma, and this may have confounded the modern interpreters. The term *dharma,* as explained earlier in the discussion of the Buddha's philosophy, was used both in an ontological sense and in an ethical context. Nagarjuna himself followed this practice, as indicated in the annotation of the *Karika* (see XXIV. 36). Thus, in the present context too, *dharma* means good karma and these are identified as (i) self-restraint, and (ii) benefitting others. Nagarjuna's selection of these two types of action as the foundation of moral behavior is significant. They are an echo of the Buddha's own first sermon to the world that advocated a middle path between two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. The "Middle Way" (*madhyamika*) philosopher *par excellence* could not have ignored the ethical middle path of the Buddha. He knew the implications of that first sermon. Self-restraint, but not selfmortification or self-immolation, constitutes one of the foundations of moral life. In this regard, Nagarjuna was not advocating the extremist form of behavior sometimes extolled as the ideal of a *bodhisattva* both in the Theravada and in the Mahayana, Self-restraint is a necessary prerequisite for any altruistic activity, which is the second of the virtues extolled by Nagarjuna as a "friendly way" (*maitram dharmam*).

The implications of the moral life recommended here should not go unnoticed. In spite of the exceedingly popular theme emerging among the Buddhists during Nagarjuna's day that emphasized extreme altruism, Nagarjuna seems to be playing a rather moderate tune recognizing the Buddha's own words in the *Dhammapada* (166): "One should not neglect one's own welfare through excessive altruism. Having understood one's own welfare, one should be devoted to true welfare."

A reader of the early discourses cannot but be impressed by the ideal of human behavior advocated by the Buddha. The noblest person according to the Buddha is one who avoids suffering for himself as well as others (*attabyabadha, parabyabadha*).139 Thus, a noble action should be one that contributes to one's own happiness as well as the happiness of others. This involves the recognition that, while abandoning a belief in a metaphysical self, one has to cultivate compassion for one's own person. At the same time such compassion should be extended to others as well. Nagarjuna seems to have picked up this theme well when, unlike many Buddhist writers of his day, he emphasised that self-restraint and benefitting others are both acts of friendliness (*maitram*). He was simply insisting: "Be a friend to yourself and be a friend to others." This would certainly be opposed to the ideal that calls for complete and unqualified self-sacrifice, including self-immolation. Thus Nagarjuna, the founder of the "Middle Way" (*Madhyamika*) school, could not have recommended a more sober moral life than one which avoids the two extremes of destroying onself and destroying others.

These two friendly ways are recommended by Nagarjuna because they are fruitful not only in the present life (*iha*) but also in an after-life (*pretya*). There could be no doubt that here he was recognizing the possibility of human survival. The *samsara* or "life-process" referred to at XXIV. 10 need not be confined to this present life alone. On the contrary, it refers to the continuity of the life-process through several births and deaths, referred to as *punabbhava* in the early discourses. That continuity, along with its attendant suffering, is to be eliminated by the development of wisdom (*jnana*) which for Nagarjuna consists in the avoidance of all metaphysical views (*drsti*).

Knowledge Leading To Freedom

Knowledge that leads to freedom is not omniscience (*sarvajnata*). Nowhere in the *Karika* does Nagarjuna refer to omniscience, even though it was a popular theme among the Theravadins and the Mahayanists. In the absence of omniscience, what form of knowledge could lead man from bondage to freedom? Nagarjuna refers to "a wise one" (*vidvan*) who, through his perception of the nature of truth (tattva-darsanat), does not accumulate dispositions (*samskara*) that lead to wandering (*samsara*)(XXVI.10). Thus, for Nagarjuna, as it was with the Buddha, the problem lies in the accumulation and pursuit of one's dispositions. Yet without following the dispositions a human being is unable to deal with the rather complex and excessive sensory input. The "big blooming buzzing confusion" of experience has to be faced without the aid of omniscience. The task is rendered extremely difficult because the dispositional tendencies that are a necessary means of dealing with such experience also lead to extremes, especially when these dispositions are dominated by one's likes and dislikes. When they are dominated by likes and dislikes, they produce perspectives on the basis of which one looks at the world, two of these being eternalism and annihilationism. In order to adopt a middle path avoiding these two extremes, one needs to eliminate the likes and dislikes and thereby appease one's dispositions. A person who has achieved the state of the appeasement of dispositions (*samskaropasama*) (and this would include the appeasement of the object of perception (*drastavyopasama*), whether that object be the *cogito* or the real external world) is said to have attained enlightenment and freedom. Such a person is enlightened because he comes to perceive things as they have come to be (*yathabhutajnana = tattvadarsana*), and he is free

because he does not adhere to any dogmatic view that rules out other possibilities. The difference between a metaphysical view criticized by the Buddha as well as Nagarjuna and the "middle position" (*madhyamapratipat*) accepted by both is that the former is a closed view while the latter is an open one. An open view does not subscribe to an absolute discrimination as either/or. The very idea of openness imiplies non-grasping (*anupadana*). Thus, when both the Buddha and Nagarjuna emphasized the renunciation of all views (*sarva-drsti-prahana*), they were insisting upon abandoning all forms of dogmatism with regard to views. For them, non-attachment to views does not necessarily mean having "no-views.''

Inappropriate rendering of Sanskrit terms into English seems to have contributed in some measure toward the myth that Nagarjuna had no view to express.140 The passage often quoted in support of this myth occurs in Nagarjuna's *Vigrahavyavartani* (29): "If I would make any commitment whatever, from that I would incur such error. On the contrary, I do not have a commitment. Therefore, there is no error on my part."

The term that occurs here is *pratijna,* which has been translated as a simple proposition or statement. It is much more than a simple proposition or statement. It is a commitment and should be contrasted with *vyakhyana*, "explanation," (IV.9). While avoiding the former, Nagarjuna continued to resort to the latter (see also XVII. 13, etc.). As such, it would be highly inappropriate to compare Nagarjuna's philosophical method with that of Ludwig Wittgenstein, for example by quoting him as follows: "Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything.Since everything lies open to view, there is nothing to explain."141 In fact, this quotation misrepresents Wittgenstein's own approach to metaphysics. The most important part of the statement has been omitted. It reads: "For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us." If this crucial statement is retained, then Wittgenstein's thought can certainly be compared with Nagarjuna's or even the Buddha's. This omitted part of the statement makes it abundantly clear that what Wittgenstein was not willing to explain is "what is hidden," and this "something" is, indeed, comparable to what Nagarjuna was referring to as *kimcit* or *kascit*, that is, the hidden substance in phenomena. Neither "the empty" (*sunya*) nor "emptiness" (*sunyata*), neither "the dependently arisen" (*pratityasamutpanna*) nor "dependent arising" (*pratityasamutpada*) represent a hidden something which Nagarjuna was reluctant to *explain.* On the contrary, if it can be shown that Wittgenstein did not provide any *explanation* of experience, or did not attempt to *formulate* in linguistic terms what a true experience is, as opposed to a confused one, then he could certainly be enlightened by the language of "emptiness" or of "dependence" adopted by the Buddha and Nagarjuna.

WESTERHOFF (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 & 10)

From: Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka

A Philosophical Introduction

Abbreviations

References to works in verse give the number of the chapter and verse or half-verse (e.g., MMK 24:18, RĀ 1:49a), apart from works not usually subdivided into chapters, such as the YS., ŚS, VV, and VP, where only the number of the verse is given. References to works in prose give the page and line of the editions cited below (e.g. VV(S) 82:3–7).

MMK MūlaMadhyamakakārikā

J.W. De Jong, Christian Lindtner (eds.), *Nāgārjuna's MūlaMadhyamakakārikā Prajñā Nāma*. Adyar Library, Adyar, Chennai, 2004.

YS. Yuktiṣaṣṭikā

Cristina Anna Scherrer-Schaub: *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti: Commentaire `a la soixantaine sur le raisonnement, ou, du vrai enseignement de la causalité*. Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, Brussels, 1991.

ŚS Śūnyatāsaptati

"The Ś*ūnyatāsaptati* of Nāgārjuna," chapter 3 of Fernando Tola and Carmen Dragonetti, *On Voidness. A Study of Buddhist Nihilism*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2002, 53–99.

VV Vigrahavyāvartanī

VV(S) *Svavṛtti* on the Vigrahavyāvartanī Kamaleswar Bhattacharya, E. H. Johnston, and Arnold Kunst (eds.), *The Dialectical Method of Nāgārjuna.* Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1998.

VP Vaidalyaprakaraṇa

VP(S) *Svavṛtti* on the Vaidalyaprakaraṇa Fernando Tola and Carmen Dragonetti, *Nāgārjuna's Refutation of Logic.* Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1995.

RĀ Ratnāvalī

Michael Hahn: *Nāgārjuna's Ratnāvalī. The Basic Texts (Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese).* Indica et Tibetica, Bonn, 1982. works by other authors

PP Candrakīrti's Prasannapadā

Louis de la Vallée Poussin (ed.), *Prasannapadā MūlaMadhyamakavṛttih.* . Bibliotheca Buddhica IV, St Petersburg, 1903–1913. J. W. De Jong: "Textcritical notes on the *Prasannapadā*," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 20, 1978, 25–59, 217–252. (Corrections of the above edition.)

MA Candrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra

MAB Candrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya

Louis de la Vallée Poussin (ed.), *Madhyamakāvatāra par Candrakīrti* Bibliotheca Buddhica IX, St. Petersburg, 1907–1912.

CŚ Āryadeva's Catuḥśataka

Karen Lang (ed.), *Āryadeva's Catuḥśataka. On the Bodhisattva's Cultivation of Merit and Knowledge.* Akademisk Forlag, Copenhagen, 1986.

BCA Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra

Louis de la Vallée Poussin (ed.), *Bodhicaryāvatāra of Cāntideva*, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1907. xii abbreviations

NS Nyāyasūtra

Taranatha Nyaya-Tarkatirtha and Amarendramohan Tarkatirtha (eds.), *Nyāyadarśanam with Vātsyāyana's Bhāṣya, Uddyotakara's Vārtika, Vācaspati Miśra's Tātparyaṭīkā and Viśvanātha's Vṛtti*, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1985.

1

Introduction

The following pages contain an investigation of Nāgārjuna's philosophy from a systematic perspective. Considering Nāgārjuna's important place in Buddhist philosophy as well as in Indian thought more generally, it is not surprising that his works have given rise to an enormous number of commentaries, studies, and analyses in Asia, and, more recently, also in the West. A large amount of these take the form of commentaries on specific texts, following their structure and analyzing individual passages in considerable detail. While the importance and usefulness of such commentaries is beyond dispute, the present work sets out to approach Nāgārjuna's philosophy from a different perspective. The idea is to present a synoptic overview of Nāgārjuna's arguments concerning different philosophical problems in order to present an account of the whole of his philosophy, showing how its individual parts fit together as elements of a single philosophical project. In order to achieve this goal, it is not sufficient to give a mere paraphrase of Nāgārjuna's arguments (as is frequently found in the secondary literature). We will have to analyze their philosophical contents, examine actual as well as possible objections, determine whether the arguments can in fact be made to work, and, if so, what kind of philosophical conclusion they support. Comparatively little work has been done in this direction. Since a great part of the contemporary Western studies of Nāgārjuna are interested primarily in philological, historical, or religious aspects of his works, genuinely philosophical studies have been rare. The aim of the present study is to help close this gap.

The following pages should be of interest both to philosophers looking for a systematic account of Nāgārjuna's philosophical position, and to Indologists and scholars of Buddhist studies interested primarily in the philosophical aspects of Nāgārjuna's works. To make this material as accessible as possible to readers with little or no background in Indian philosophy, I generally use English equivalents of technical Indian philosophical terms (such as "object" for *dharma*, "emptiness" for *śūnyatā*, "primary existence" for *dravyasat,* and so forth), providing the Sanskrit term in brackets if necessary. The only case where I have systematically violated this policy concerns the term *svabhāva*. My reason is that there is no single term used in Western philosophy that covers the different aspects of its meaning in the Madhyamaka context in a satisfactory manner. But given that all of chapter 2 is dedicated to a discussion of how we are to understand the notion of *svabhāva,* the reader should have a sufficiently clear conception of its meaning when encountering it again in later chapters. For the benefit of Indologists and Buddhist scholars, the Sanskrit and Tibetan (and occasional Pali) of all quotations is given in the footnotes. Some material and references in the footnotes will be particularly relevant to philosophers, some are of more historical or philological interest. I have made no attempt to differentiate the "philosophical" and "Indological" footnotes but trust in the reader's discernment to find the material that interests him.

Different kinds of readers might prefer different routes through the material presented here. Those interested in a step-by-step introduction to Nāgārjuna's philosophy should read the chapters in numerical order. Readers with previous acquaintance with Madhyamaka material who are interested in what I have to say on a particular Nāgārjunian topic will prefer to go directly to the relevant chapter. For those wanting to get straight at the philosophical content, I recommend finishing the introduction, followed by chapter 2, then immediately jumping to chapter 10. Then it is possible to dip into any of chapters 3 to 9 for more specific discussion of topics one finds interesting.

1.1. Nāgārjuna the Philosopher

Nāgārjuna, one of the greatest thinkers in the history of Asian philosophy, remains an enigma. Despite the existence of various legendary accounts of his life passed down in Buddhist literature,[1] contemporary scholars agree on hardly any details concerning him. It is unclear when he lived (although some time during the first three centuries a.d. is most likely),[2] where he worked (almost all places in India have been suggested),[3] what he wrote (the Tibetan canon attributes 116 different texts of very diverse content and quality to him), and even how many Nāgārjunas there were in the first place (up to four different ones have been distinguished).[4]

Recent research by Joseph Walser suggests that Nāgārjuna may have written the Ratnāvalī sometime between 170 and 200 a.d. in the area around presentday Amarāvatī.[5] This conclusion is based on two facts. First, there is a variety of evidence connecting Nāgārjuna with the Sātavāhana dynasty.[6] This is not very helpful on its own, since this dynasty spanned several centuries. However, in verse 232 of the Ratnāvali, Nāgārjuna mentions a depiction of the Buddha sitting on a lotus (*padmapīṭha*). Given that such images were available only during the late part of the dynasty in the Eastern Deccan, Walser comes to the tentative conclusion that Nāgārjuna composed the text during the reign of king Yajña Śrī Sātakarṇi (about 175 to 204 a.d.).[7] Of course none of this can be regarded as hard evidence, especially as the necessary detour via art history (in order to find the earliest date for the type of depictions of the Buddha Nāgārjuna describes) introduces a whole new range of complexities and uncertainties. Nevertheless, given our present inability to find out the time and place of Nāgārjuna in any other way, determining them approximately on the basis of a variety of historical data such as suggested by Walser is surely to be preferred to not determining them at all.

1.2. Nāgārjuna's Works

Assuming we resolve the uncertainty about Nāgārjuna's time and place by locating him in the second century a.d. in the Eastern Deccan, how do we deal with the multitude of works ascribed to him? This investigation will be based primarily on six of Nāgārjuna's works:

1. The "Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way" (*MūlaMadhyamakakārikā*, MMK)

2. The "Sixty Stanzas on Reasoning" (*Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, YS.)

1. Walleser (1923); Dowman (1985).

2. Mabbett (1998: 332). For an extensive list of references see Ruegg (1981: 4–6, n. 11).

3. Walser (2005: 67).

4. The most common view distinguishes only three Nāgārjunas: the Madhyamaka philosopher, the tantric adept, who possibly flourished around 400 a.d.(Lindtner 1982: 11, n. 12), and the alchemist, who might be placed in the seventh century (Walser 2005: 69, 75–79), (Eliade 1969: 415–416). For criticism of the thesis of multiple Nāgārjunas see Hua (1970).

5. Walser (2005: 61).

6. Walser (2005: 293, n. 26).

7. Walser (2005: 86).

3. The “Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness” (*Śūnyatāsaptati*, ŚS)

4. The “Dispeller of Objections” (*Vigrahavyāvartanī*, VV)

5. The “Treatise on Pulverization” (*Vaidalyaprakaraṇa*, VP)

6. The “Precious Garland” (*Ratnāvalī*, RĀ)

This set, the so-called Yukti-corpus, is well known in the Tibetan tradition, where is it called the “collection of the six texts on reasoning” (*rigs pa’i tshogs drug*).[8] We cannot be certain that all six texts were indeed composed by Nāgārjuna; apart from the MMK, where Nāgārjuna’s authorship is taken to be true by definition, the attribution of every other one has been questioned.[9] However, apart from the fact that all these texts were attributed to Nāgārjuna by a variety of Indian[10] and Tibetan Madhyamaka authors, they also expound a single, coherent philosophical system. For the purposes of this discussion we will therefore identify Nāgārjuna with the author of the Yukti-corpus.

1.3. Methodological Considerations

The six texts under consideration are all written in verse. In some cases they are accompanied by an autocommentary in prose, though the status of these autocommentaries is not always unproblematic.[11] Since this inquiry is intended to be a study of *Nāgārjuna’s* Madhyamaka, the texts of the Yukti-corpus constitute the basis of our discussion. It is nevertheless not possible to provide a philosophically satisfactory exposition of Nāgārjuna’s thought based exclusively on these texts. This is because their versified form often leads to a very condensed expression of arguments which requires a variety of details to be filled in. In itself this is hardly surprising given that Indian philosophical texts (unlike their Western counterparts) were generally not intended to provide the reader with a self-contained exposition of the author’s thoughts. Instead their versified form provided the structure of the argument to be memorized, which would then be elaborated on by written commentaries and by a teacher’s oral explanations. The reader of Nāgārjuna’s works will frequently encounter passages in which Nāgārjuna asserts that a certain position is deficient and ought not to be accepted, without giving the reason why this is the case. In order to give an assessment of the philosophical argument presented, such gaps have to be closed. Sometimes this can be done in a straightforward manner by consideration of other passages in Nāgārjuna’s works where similar issues are discussed. In other cases matters are more difficult. Occasionally Nāgārjuna’s extant works do not provide information about how a certain argument is to be understood, and so we face an important methodological issue. How do we justify ascribing a certain argument to Nāgārjuna if there is no evidence of such an argument being made in his works that have come down to us? The commentarial literature is of great help in dealing with this issue. We find a long and voluminous tradition of commentaries on Nāgārjuna’s works in India, Tibet, and China spanning nearly two millennia. These commentaries often unpack the complexity of Nāgārjuna’s compact verses by adding invaluable information about terminology, philosophical content, and alternative interpretations. So even though all of Nāgārjuna’s own texts might be silent on how to spell out a particular argument, commentaries will often provide us with information in this regard. Since these are part of a long argumentative tradition of considerable sophistication, some of which arose in relatively close proximity to Nāgārjuna’s own intellectual context, they should be taken very seriously when interpreting his thoughts. Our first methodological maxim when “filling in” the missing parts of Nāgārjuna’s arguments should therefore be to attempt *consistency with the commentarial tradition*.

The situation we are faced with might be compared to that of a restorer who wants to reconstruct parts of a painting that have been destroyed. In order to determine how to fill in the missing bits, he will do well to consider descriptions of the painting from the time when it was still intact, as well as copies, sketches, and drawings by other artists which have been based on the work in question. The restorer will then have a good idea of what might have been depicted on the missing piece of the canvas and can go about reconstructing it. A difficulty we face is that while Nāgārjuna’s works sometimes give not enough information, the commentarial tradition often presents us with more than we want. Like traditions in general, that of commentaries on Nāgārjuna does not speak with one voice. Some of the more obscure passages are read in so many different ways that we might despair about ever being able to come up with a faithful reconstruction of Nāgārjuna’s arguments.

Suppose one of the sources the restorer consults tells him that the missing lower left corner of the painting depicted a dog, another says that it depicted

8. See, e.g., Bu ston’s *History of Buddhism* (Obermiller 1931: I, 50–51).

9. Warder (1973: 79) notes that the authorship of Nāgārjuna for texts other than the MMK “has not been established beyond doubt and we ought not to assume it.” For comments on the authorship of the YS. see Tola and Dragonetti (1995a: 19–20), for the ŚS see Tola and Dragonetti (1995a: 54–55). The attribution of the VV is questioned in Tola and Dragonetti (1998) (but see Ruegg [2000: 115, n. 10]), that of the VP in Tola and Dragonetti (1995b: 7–15) and Pind (2001). For the RĀ see Walser (2005: 271–278).

10. Including Bhāviveka, Candrakīrti, Śāntarakṣita, and Kamalaśīla. See Lindtner (1982: 10–11, n. 9).

11. Despite substantial Indian support, the autocommentary on the MMK, the *Akutobhayā,* is not regarded as genuine by contemporary researchers (Lindtner [1982: 15–16, n. 33), but see Walleser (1911: iv]). The autocommentary on the ŚS is regarded as authentic by Lindtner (1982: 31), but Tola and Dragonetti (1995a: 57–58) disagree. There seems to be no dispute about the authenticity of the autocommentaries on the VV and VP.

a wolf, and a sketch shows a peacock in that same place. He might now try to rule out some of these variant interpretations on stylistic or iconographical grounds, but the conclusion arrived at must necessarily be highly conjectural. Fortunately, the restorer of philosophical arguments is in a slightly better position, because the parts of a philosophical text hang together in a way that the parts of a painting do not, since they form part of a coherent philosophical argument and express a unified philosophical position. At least this is what we have to assume if we want to adopt a charitable interpretation of the texts in question. Doing so seems to be a precondition for accomplishing any kind of philosophical reconstruction at all.[12] It of course does not imply that we assume the author is always right, but rather that we read his texts in a way that maximizes the rationality of the material. We might in the end find flaws in the argument or have other reasons for rejecting the conclusions, but doing so presupposes assuming that arguments and conclusion are to be found there in the first place.

Based on the necessity of providing a charitable interpretation, we can therefore use a second methodological maxim, namely *to reconstruct an argument in the philosophically most successful way*. Faced with a variety of interpretations in the commentarial literature, we can systematically select those that make most sense in presenting Nāgārjuna's philosophy as a systematic whole, as an intellectual enterprise whose parts fit together to present a unified philosophical theory.

Of course the extent to which the following discussion satisfies the above maxims may be disputed: different views on what the commentarial literature says and on which kinds of arguments are more successful do exist, and it is useful to compare these to gain a good grasp of the purpose of Nāgārjuna's arguments. What I hope will be clear, however, is that the interpretation of Nāgārjuna's thought presented here is not arbitrary but has been arrived at in an attempt to find the best balance between the two maxims of doctrinal coherence and systematic success.

Although the presentation of Nāgārjuna's philosophical positions given here, unlike that found in some contemporary literature,[13] is very much in accordance with the mainstream of Indian and Tibetan commentarial literature, its main aim is not to present a historical description of Nāgārjuna's views but rather to present Nāgārjuna's thought in a way that brings out its systematic appeal. There is a tendency in some parts of Buddhist studies to undersell

12. For the notion of the "principle of charity" see Davidson (1973).

13. Such as Wood (1994) or Burton (1999).

Nāgārjuna's thoughts by giving a purely descriptive and paraphrasing account of his arguments, which frequently falls short on philosophical sophistication. The present work is intended to redress the balance to some extent by showing the importance and impact of Nāgārjuna's thoughts *as philosophy*.

1.4. The Philosophical Study of Nāgārjuna in the West

Western interest in Nāgārjuna as a philosopher is a comparatively recent phenomenon, going back little more than a century.[14] In itself this attention constitutes only a part of Nāgārjunian scholarship, a substantial portion of which concerns itself with problems of philology, textual history, or the study of religion. A concise overview of the specifically philosophical investigation of Nāgārjuna in the West has been presented by Andrew Tuck.[15] Tuck argues that its history can be divided into three phases, corresponding to three Western philosophical frameworks against which Nāgārjuna used to be interpreted. First is the Kantian phase, then the analytic phase, and finally a post-Wittgensteinian one.[16] A clear example from the first phase is Theodore Stcherbatsky's *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, which was first published in 1927.[17] Stcherbatsky interprets Nāgārjuna as dividing the world into appearance and reality, the former corresponding to saṃsāra, the realm of cyclic existence, the latter to nirvāṇa, liberation. In his attempt to defend Nāgārjuna against the charge of nihilism, especially clear in the exposition given by La Vallée Poussin,[18] Stcherbatsky ascribes to Nāgārjuna the assumption of an absolute noumenal reality which underlies the constantly changing and ephemeral world of phenomena. The further development of this Kantianization of Nāgārjuna is presented in what is still a basic text of Buddhist studies, T. R. V. Murti's 1955 *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*.[19] Since Murti's exposition of Nāgārjuna is considerably more detailed than Stcherbatsky's, the fundamental difficulties of interpreting Nāgārjuna according to a Kantian framework become more readily apparent. Murti observes that "the relation between the two [i.e., the Absolute and the

14. The earliest systematic Western treatment of Madhyamaka more generally is to be found in the works of the Jesuit missionary Ippolito Desideri (1684–1733). Desideri published a number of works in Tibetan in which he attempted a refutation of Tibetan Buddhism from the perspective of Roman Catholicism. See Desideri (1981– 1989).

15. (1990).

16. (1990: 16–30).

17. Stcherbatsky (1968).

18. (1908: 101).

19. "The position occupied by the Mādhyamika in Indian philosophy is similar to that of Kant in modern European philosophy [. . .]." (Murti 1955: 123).

world of phenomena] is not made abundantly clear. This may be said to constitute a drawback in the Mādhyamika conception of the Absolute."[20] On the other hand, we might want to argue that the reason for this "drawback" is a defect not in the Madhyamaka position but in the choice of interpretative framework. To conceive of Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka as a theory whereby an indescribable Absolute grounds the world of appearances means reading assumptions into it that Nāgārjuna does not share, thereby resulting in an unsatisfactory theory. The second, analytic phase of Western studies of Nāgārjuna can be regarded as starting shortly after the publication of Murti's book, with Richard Robinson's 1957 article "Some Logical Aspects of Nāgārjuna's System."[21] Robinson sets out to analyze some of Nāgārjuna's arguments using the resources of modern symbolic logic, the ultimate aim being "to transcribe the *Kārikās* entirely, chapter by chapter, into logical notation, thus bringing to light formal features which do not appear from the consideration of examples taken out of context and listed topically."[22] The shift from the Kantian to the analytic reading of Nāgārjuna which Robinson's paper inaugurates brings with it a shift in the aspects of his thought receiving most attention. The focus is shifted from an investigation of the primarily metaphysical problem of the relation between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa to the logical aspects of Nāgārjuna's thought: his use of quantification and negation as well as the mechanics of the notorious form of argument known as the "tetralemma" (*catuṣkoṭi*).

If one considers the bigger picture, however, once again the limitations of the reading of Nāgārjuna during the analytical phase become apparent. Many of his views, concerning, for example, the rejection of a foundationalist ontology or the difficulties of assuming a world conforming to the structure of the language we use to refer to it, contradict assumptions of analytic philosophy of the first half of the twentieth century. While the employment of certain tools that are dear to analytic philosophers could be seen as presenting Nāgārjuna's arguments more clearly, it was also evident that Nāgārjuna would have had little regard for many of the goals aimed at by analytic philosophers. Neither the attempt to develop a logically perfect language for describing the world nor to ground our knowledge of the world on the supposedly secure foundation of sense-data could find much favor with Mādhyamikas. Analytic philosophy with its specific set of philosophical assumptions was helpful in trying to understand Nāgārjuna, but only up to a point.

20. (1955: 237).

21. Robinson (1957).

22. (1957: 307).

In fact by a rather curious turn in the third, post-Wittgensteinian phase of interpreting Nāgārjuna, the paragons of analytic philosophy were now identified with Nāgārjuna's *opponents*, such as the Ābhidharmikas and Naiyāyikas.[23] Works such as Frederick Streng's *Emptiness* [24] or Chris Gudmunsen's *Wittgenstein and Buddhism*[25] set out to stress similarities between Nāgārjuna and in particular the later Wittgenstein and his criticism of analytic philosophy. Whereas the relation between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa had been the chief concern for the Kantian readers of Nāgārjuna, and that of the logical consistency of *svabhāva* or substance for analytic interpreters such as Robinson,[26] the new key term of the post-Wittgensteinian phase was *pratītyasamutpāda* or dependent origination. This was regarded primarily as reflecting the underlying idea of a Wittgensteinian philosophy of language according to which language, and in particular the language of philosophical statements, could not be regarded as independent of the interrelated nature of conceptual thought and conventional language. Words were not supposed to gain their meaning by referring to something outside the system of language; the relation of words to their referents is not seen as being indicative of ontological status but is solely of practical value.

Looking at the way in which the Western study of Nāgārjuna was influenced by the philosophical fashions of the day, we may be worried that work following the post-Wittgensteinian phase will later appear to be a similar example of trying to shoehorn Nāgārjuna's thought into a fundamentally alien framework. While it is certainly not possible (nor indeed desirable) to proceed with this investigation and leave behind our specific interests, expectations, and concerns, there is no reason to panic. The fact that each interpretation takes place against a specific conceptual framework does not mean that successive interpretations might not lead to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Nāgārjuna's thought. In fact the literature published over the last decades suggests that the study of Nāgārjuna is becoming more mature. [27] First of all most authors now try to treat his writings as expressing a single, unified system of thought rather than as a quarry of cryptical verses from which individual isolated samples can be extracted to suit one's idiosyncratic

23. Tuck (1990: 78).

24. (1967).

25. "There is not nearly as much difference in the roles of Wittgenstein and Nāgārjuna as one might imagine" (1977: 68).

26. Robinson (1967: 41).

27. Among the most philosophically sophisticated contemporary commentaries on Nāgārjuna's texts, the works by Kalupahana (1991), Tola and Dragonetti (1987; 1995a;b), Garfield (1995), and Bugault (2001) have to be mentioned. Some of the best monographs are Huntington (1989) and Siderits (2003) (and, to a lesser extent, Wood [1994] and Burton [1999]).

interpretation. There finally appears to be an agreement that any interpretation of Nāgārjuna should cohere with his assertions in all the works that can be plausibly ascribed to him. Second, and more important, it has become evident that Nāgārjuna is worthy of philosophical investigation in his own right. There is no more need to legitimate a study by setting out to show him to be a proto-Kant, proto-Wittgenstein, or proto-Derrida. While such comparisons may be of hermeneutic use for those acquainted primarily with the Western tradition, most writers on the topic now agree that it is no more necessary to put on a Kantian lens to understand Nāgārjuna than it is to wear a Nāgārjunian lens to understand Kant. Therefore, even though we cannot interpret Nāgārjuna free of the preconceptions and concerns of our own time, we are justified in expecting that the more mature study of his works will provide us with more accurate and stable knowledge of his philosophy than was previously possible.

1.5. Overview

Even a casual acquaintance with Madhyamaka literature makes it evident that the central philosophical concept discussed is that of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). The main difficulty in explaining what this concept means is that it is a purely negative one: emptiness is the emptiness of something and indicates that something is *not* there. This absent something is what the Madhyamaka authors refer to by the term *svabhāva*, sometimes translated as “inherent existence” or “own being.” For this reason the term “emptiness” is often glossed as “empty of inherent existence” (*svabhāvaśūnya*). A good way of understanding the Madhyamaka notion of emptiness is therefore to provide a clear conception of what is meant by *svabhāva*. This is what chapter 2 sets out to do.

Even if we restrict ourselves to Nāgārjuna’s Madhyamaka, *svabhāva* turns out to be a very complex concept. It unifies two very different aspects, an ontological and a cognitive one. The ontological aspect of *svabhāva* is the one discussed in most detail in the contemporary commentarial literature. The basic idea here is that an object has *svabhāva* if it possesses its nature in an intrinsic manner. In order to spell out this still rather imprecise idea, we have to differentiate three distinct ontological understandings of *svabhāva*, all of which play some role in Nāgārjuna’s arguments. The first is the understanding of *svabhāva* as *essence*, as a property that an object cannot lose without ceasing to be that very thing; the second an understanding as *substance*, as something that does not depend on anything else; and the third is what I have called *absolute svabhāva*, as a property that is regarded as the true or final nature of things. Even though I argue that understanding *svabhāva* as substance occupies the most important place in Nāgārjuna’s arguments, one would be ill advised to regard it simply as some variant of the concept of substance found in the Western philosophical tradition. This is so because *svabhāva* has an important additional cognitive component which is completely absent from the concept of substance as it is usually conceived. The notion of *svabhāva* is regarded as a conceptual superimposition, as something that is automatically projected onto a world of objects that actually lack it. Unlike the notion of substance, *svabhāva* is not just a theoretical concept of ontology but rather a cognitive default, an addition that the mind unwittingly makes when trying to make sense of the world. This cognitive understanding of *svabhāva* makes clear why Madhyamaka metaphysics (unlike metaphysics in the Western tradition) is not a purely theoretical enterprise but something that also has to be put into practice. If *svabhāva* is an automatic mistaken superimposition, we cannot just get rid of it by going through arguments attempting to show that *svabhāva* does not exist. We will also have to train ourselves out of the automatic habit of projecting *svabhāva* onto a world that lacks it. This point can be illustrated by considering two different ways of studying higher-dimensional geometry. It is, for example, possible to prove various facts about a four-dimensional cube without having any idea of what such a cube would look like. We simply regard it as a theoretical entity which is defined in a certain way, and then proceed to prove further facts on the basis of this definition. On the other hand, we could also try to develop a spatial intuition for the fourth dimension, that is, try to get an idea of what such a cube would look like. We could, for example, imagine the ways in which a two-dimensional creature living on a plane could form the conception of a cube by extrapolating from a square and similarly try to extrapolate a four-dimensional cube from a three-dimensional one. It is evident that this latter attempt at enlarging our spatial intuition is not just about proving theorems, but requires certain exercises for enlarging our imagination.[28] In the same way, for the Madhyamaka the removal of the superimposition of *svabhāva* is not just about working through philosophical arguments, but also requires certain exercises to effect a cognitive shift which keeps the mistaken projection of *svabhāva* from occurring.

A great part of Nāgārjuna’s writings consists of the investigation of individual phenomena in order to argue that they do not exist with *svabhāva*. Before we can turn to the examination of these arguments, however, it is necessary to deal first with some formal aspects of Nāgārjuna’s arguments. I call these

28. The Victorian mathematician Charles Howard Hinton spent considerable time developing such exercises. See, e.g., Hinton (1904).

aspects “formal” because they all have to do with negation, which is generally regarded as a formal notion. Nevertheless this adjective is also somewhat misleading if one regards as “formal” those aspects of an argument that are independent of its content. For in the discussion of Nāgārjuna the point is precisely that there are certain presuppositions made by the traditional Indian theory of negation which conflict with the contents of his philosophical conclusions. In order to formulate his philosophy, Nāgārjuna must therefore come up with an adapted conception of negation which counters these presuppositions. The main difficulty involved here (which is addressed in chapter 3) is the assumption of the Naiyāyikas, who elaborated the standard Indian account of negation, that the constituents of negative statements must always refer to real entities. A statement such as “there is no pot” is always to be understood along the lines of “there is no pot at a particular place.” In this case both the pot and the place exist, it is only that the former does not occur at the latter. But Nāgārjuna obviously cannot interpret his statement “there is no *svabhāva*” along these lines, because he does not want to assert that *svabhāva* is a real entity existing anywhere else.

The second important formal issue, taken up in chapter 4, is the wellknown *catuṣkoṭi* or tetralemma. This is a rather puzzling form of argument, frequently employed by Nāgārjuna, which consists of the rejection of four positions: a statement, its negation, their conjunction, and their disjunction. An important prerequisite for making sense of the tetralemma is to realize that the various negations occurring in it are not all of the same type. Some are implicational negations (*paryudāsa*), which make an assertion about the object referred to (“the apple is not red” implies that it is some other color), while others are nonimplicational (*prasajyapratiṣedha*) and do not make such an assertion (“the force of gravity is not red” does not imply that it is some other color). Once the interrelations between these two kinds of negation have been taken into account, it becomes clear that Nāgārjuna uses this form of argument in order to reject all the possible alternative statements one can make about an entity *on the assumption that it exists with* svabhāva. If all these alternatives turn out to be inapplicable, we can conclude that the initial assumption was wrong and that there is no *svabhāva* to be found in that entity.

Having examined these formal aspects of Nāgārjuna’s arguments (which are intricately connected with the contents of his philosophy) and taking into account the clarification of the different aspects of the notion of *svabhāva,* the reader will be able to understand Nāgārjuna’s discussions of the emptiness of specific kinds of phenomena without too much difficulty. Chapters 5 to 9 deal with the main topics Nāgārjuna analyzes in order to demonstrate their emptiness, that is, lack of *svabhāva*. All of these play a major part in our cognitive interaction with the world and therefore constitute areas where we are particularly likely to mistakenly superimpose the existence of *svabhāva* on phenomena that in fact lack it. Chapter 5 deals with the central notion of causation. Nāgārjuna’s analysis concentrates on two aspects: that of the identity or difference between cause and effect, and that of their temporal relation. Each can be spelled out in different ways. We can assume that cause and effect are fundamentally the same thing, or that they are different, or that they are related as part and whole. Similarly, the cause can be regarded as preceding the effect, as following it, or as being simultaneous with it. By rejecting all these different ways of conceiving of cause and effect, Nāgārjuna attempts to demonstrate that our underlying assumptions about causation are deficient. Causation is not a mind-independent, objective relation which connects objects “which are there anyway.” It is rather something that would not exist without a substantial mental contribution; it is a conceptually constructed relation which would not exist without the conceptualizing mind. This also entails that the objects connected by such a relation cannot exist in a mind-independent way since their existential dependence on a cause holds via a relation that is not itself mind-independent.

Chapter 6 deals with the concept of motion. This might strike one as hardly as central a notion as those discussed in the other chapters. We do, however, have to take into account that according to the Indian worldview motion is something that characterizes not just billiard balls, chariots, or the planets but also the person moving through successive rounds of rebirth. It is therefore essential to keep in mind that when Nāgārjuna speaks of a “mover,” this can refer to a person crossing the street as well as to one crossing from this life to the next. To this extent this discussion is also connected with that of a person, which will be discussed in chapter 7.

On one level Nāgārjuna’s arguments attempt to establish the absence of an objective, mind-independent existence of the spatiotemporal location of motion. But in fact his conclusions are more far-reaching than that. When discussing the relation between mover and motion, he regards his arguments as a template which can be employed in a variety of contexts. Motion constitutes an important illustration of Nāgārjuna’s point, but his exposition is not confined to it. The point to be illustrated is concerned with the relation between individuals and the properties they instantiate. Nāgārjuna uses the example of motion to argue that the standard analysis of phenomena into independently existent individuals and properties (as encountered, for example, in the Nyāya- Vaiśeṣika theory of *dravya* and *guṇa*) is deficient and should be rejected. It is to be replaced by a view that regards individuals and properties as linguistically or conceptually mediated projections of at best pragmatic importance, but not as objective features of a mind-independent reality.

In the examination of the self considered in chapter 7 Nāgārjuna moves from the investigation of outer phenomena, such as causation or motion, to the most important example of a subjective entity. Following Buddhist tradition, Nāgārjuna rejects the view of a substance-self, an essentially unchanging unifier of our mental life distinct from our body on the one hand and our psychological states on the other, a self that is an agent whose decisions shape our life. Apart from the familiar investigation into the relation of a substance-self and its parts well known from Buddhist literature, Nāgārjuna also seeks to refute the substance-self by a different type of argument. This concerns the worry of the opponent that if there are properties of the self, there also must be a self which is the bearer of such properties. Given Nāgārjuna's theory of individuals and properties, there is, however, no necessity to draw this conclusion. Individuals and properties are seen as linguistic or conceptual artifacts rather than as fundamental constituents of reality which exist in dependence on one another. Accepting that there are properties of the self does not force him to accept the existence of a substance (*dravya*) as their bearer on which they depend for their existence. The conception of self emerging as an alternative is that of a process-self, something that is a sequence of physical and psychological events but mistakenly assumes that it is no such sequence, but a substance-self. As in the case of emptiness of objects, where the superimposition of *svabhāva* on phenomena had to be overcome, correcting the mistaken self-awareness of the process-self cannot be based solely on working through arguments demonstrating the nonexistence of the substance-self, that is, a self existing with *svabhāva*. Since viewing itself as a substance-self is the self's cognitive default, establishing a correct self-awareness can be achieved only by continuous practice.

The self and the world are connected in the theory of knowledge, which is the topic of chapter 8. For Nāgārjuna the discussion of epistemology entails examining yet another kind of phenomenon for existence by *svabhāva* (by investigating whether the means we employ to acquire knowledge of objects are intrinsically such means, and whether the objects are intrinsically such objects) as well as establishing an epistemological framework to explain how emptiness can be known. In this discussion Nāgārjuna's intellectual interaction with the Naiyāyikas is particularly pronounced. They provide the source of the idea that means and objects of knowledge can be established "from their own side," a view that Nāgārjuna understandably rejects. He concentrates on an examination of the different ways in which we could find out that particular putative means of knowledge are indeed such means. The idea that these means are in some way self-established and the idea that the means and objects of knowledge mutually establish one another are both rejected by Nāgārjuna. His aim is to show that there are no epistemic procedures that are intrinsically and essentially means of knowledge and that their objects are not independently existing reals. Essentialism about epistemic procedures is thus replaced by contextualism: procedures can give us knowledge in some contexts, but not in others, without ceasing to be means of knowledge. This turns out to be exactly the epistemology the proponent of emptiness needs. For if everything is empty, there is obviously nothing that is a means of knowledge intrinsically, by *svabhāva*. But if that means that there are no means of knowledge at all, then the problem is that emptiness could not be known, contrary to Nāgārjuna's assertion. It is therefore essential to come up with an account of epistemology like the contextualist one, which allows for means of knowledge but does not assume that they exist intrinsically.

A philosophical system which is concerned as much with the way in which our conceptual and linguistic conventions shape our view of the world as Madhyamaka is will have something to say on the philosophy of language. Somewhat surprisingly, discussions of language do not occupy a great part of Nāgārjuna's writings. The greatest part of the Madhyamaka philosophy of language is a later development. Nevertheless it is possible to extract some of Nāgārjuna's views on the more important issues in this area from the extant sources. This is the subject matter of chapter 9. A central and well-known assertion in this context is Nāgārjuna's pronouncement that he (and, we may conclude, the Mādhyamika in general) does not hold a thesis or position. The commentarial tradition has supplied a variety of ways of understanding this statement. I want to argue that the most coherent reading in the context of Nāgārjuna's philosophy as a whole is to understand it as a semantic pronouncement. What Nāgārjuna means when he says that he has no thesis is that he has no thesis that should be interpreted by a particular semantic theory. This theory, which I call the "standard picture," assumes that the world of referents is endowed with a mind-independent structure and that our language manages to latch onto the world not just by force of convention, but by the existence of some objectively existent structural similarity between language and world. Both of these assumptions, that of a "ready-made" world and that of an objective reference relation, are incompatible with Nāgārjuna's theory of emptiness, since each would entail the existence of entities with *svabhāva*. Once again the interconnectedness of Nāgārjuna's philosophy becomes evident. The doctrine of emptiness, which arises primarily in the context of a metaphysical and cognitive discussion, demands an adaptation not only of the standard view of epistemology but also of the standard view of semantics. Ultimately the Mādhyamika will have to explain both the structuring of the world and the reference relation in terms of conventions and speaker intentions in order to avoid reintroducing the notion of *svabhāva* by the back door.

The aim of chapter 10 is not just to bring all the parts of the discussion together, but to step back from the texts to assess Nāgārjuna's thought systematically. The objective is both to examine the plausibility of Nāgārjuna's conclusions and to establish that his philosophy is not a disparate collection of arguments but rather a coherent philosophical project whose different components are interconnected in intricate ways. In some instances I also set out to relate Nāgārjuna's conclusions to the contemporary discussion of the matters he deals with. Here my aim is not so much what is sometimes called "comparative philosophy" but rather an investigation of the question which aspects of contemporary philosophy might be of interest to one aiming to enlarge Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka from a theory of purely historical interest to a philosophical system with systematic appeal. The chapter is divided into sections dealing with the main problems Madhyamaka thinking investigates: metaphysics, personal identity, epistemology, and language and truth. I have also added a section on ethics, a topic which Nāgārjuna treats at length but which, I argue, he discusses with less emphasis on problems arising from a specifically Mādhyamika point of view than would justify a longer treatment in the context of the present investigation.

2

Interpretations of *Svabhāva*

The notion of *svabhāva* provides the central conceptual point around which the greatest part of Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka revolves. Although it is never used in the sūtras and is rare in the Pali canon, the term *svabhāva*, often translated as "inherent existence" or "own-being," acquired a dominating role in the thought of the Mādhyamika. Despite its centrality, its status is fundamentally negative: one, if not indeed *the* central concern of Madhyamaka argumentation is to demonstrate that, despite our intuitions to the contrary, *svabhāva* does not exist. The notion of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) denotes precisely the absence of *svabhāva*.

There are various difficulties to be faced when one is trying to get a clear idea of what *svabhāva* as a philosophical concept entails. First of all, like many philosophically central terms, *svabhāva* is used in a variety of ways in different philosophical traditions. The early Buddhist Abhidharma metaphysics uses *svabhāva* in a different way than do the later Mādhyamikas; their use is in turn different from Dharmakīrti's use of the concept, as well as from the Yogācāra notion of the "three natures" (*trisvabhāva*).

A second problem consists in presenting a clear explication of a concept which is taken to be vacuous and in fact, if clearly examined, inconsistent. When one is looking at the Madhyamaka arguments, it is often quite hard to attribute anything like a defensible philosophical theory to the proponents of *svabhāva* at all, since these often appear to be conveniently set up straw men.[1]

A final difficulty is the fact that the concept of *svabhāva* does not have any straightforward equivalent among the concepts discussed in the history of Western philosophy. This is not to say that it is a fundamentally alien concept, but merely that it combines a number of features which we do not see thus combined in the Western context. In order to get a clear conception of *svabhāva*, it is essential to appreciate that it incorporates three important conceptual dimensions: an ontological dimension, a cognitive dimension, and a semantic dimension. This chapter will spell out the first two of these three aspects of *svabhāva*. The semantic dimension will be taken up in the discussion of Nāgārjuna's view of language in chapter 9. Our focus will be on Nāgārjuna's use of the term *svabhāva*, though we will sometimes refer to later Madhyamaka authors; I do not claim that the above analysis will be adequate for the understanding of *svabhāva* in other Buddhist schools of thought. By explaining how the three aspects of *svabhāva* hang together, I also hope to be able to address the second difficulty, that is, give a clear account of what a proponent of *svabhāva* asserts and why this position might be a philosophical one to be taken seriously.

2.1. The Ontological Dimension

Conceiving of *svabhāva* as an ontological concept is no doubt the interpretation most commonly found in the contemporary commentarial literature, and one that gave rise to translations using such metaphysical terms as essence,[2] nature,[3] substance,[4] or aseity.[5] In the Madhyamaka literature after Nāgārjuna we find a useful distinction between three different senses of *svabhāva* in Candrakīrti's commentary on the MMK,[6] a distinction that is already partly present in earlier Abhidharma literature. We will refer to the three senses distinguished by Candrakīrti by the terms essence-*svabhāva*, substance-*svabhāva*, and absolute *svabhāva*.[7]

1. See Robinson (1972: 326).

2. Garfield (1995: 89), Komito (1987: 69).

3. Napper (1989: 65).

4. Lopez (1987: 445–446).

5. Ruegg (1981: 9).

6. This distinction is still alive in contemporary dGe lugs commentarial textbook literature. See the annotated translation of dKon mchogs 'jigs med dbang po's *Grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa rin po che'i phreng ba* given in Sopa and Hopkins (1976: 122).

7. Sopa and Hopkins (1976: 122) refer to these as phenomena's "conventionally existent nature," their "true or independent existence," and their "real and final nature." Further attempts at differentiating the different

2.1.1. Essence-svabhāva

Already in the early Buddhist literature we encounter an understanding of *svabhāva* as a specific characterizing property of an object. One characteristic passage from the *Milindapañha* (composed between 150 b.c.e. and 200 a.d.) asserts:[8]

Death, great king, is a condition which causes fear amongst those who have not seen the truth. . . . This, o king, is the power of the specific quality (*sarasa-sabhāva*) of death, because of which beings with defilements tremble at death and are afraid of it.

Although at this early stage *svabhāva* does not yet constitute a clearly defined piece of philosophical terminology, it is apparent that it denotes a feature by which a particular phenomenon is to be individuated, thereby rendering it knowable and nameable. This understanding of *svabhāva* is made more precise by the Sarvāstivadins' identification of *svabhāva* and *svalakṣaṇa*,[9] the *specific quality* that is unique to the object characterized and therefore allows us to distinguish it from other objects. Objects have specific qualities as their own (*svabhāva*) because they are distinguished from the qualities of other objects (*parabhāva*).[10] In this context *svabhāva* is understood as an antonym to the common characteristics (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) which are instantiated by all phenomena.[11]

This understanding of *svabhāva* as the specific quality of objects is further restricted by Candrakīrti's identification of *svabhāva* with the *essential property* of an object.[12] Every essential property will be part of the specific quality of an object, but a specific quality need not be an essential property. The specific quality of an object is the unique combination of properties which distinguishes the object from all others. An essential property is something an object cannot lose without ceasing to be that very object. Nāgārjuna observes that "*svabhāva* [in the sense of essence] cannot be removed, like the heat of fire, the fluidity of water, the openness of space."[13]

To consider a different example: assume that for some reason all existing samples of gold weighed more than 10 grams. In this case "weighing more than 10 grams" is a part of the specific quality of gold, since we use this pro perty together with others to distinguish samples of gold from other things. But even though we never come across a lighter piece of gold in this world, "weighing more than 10 grams" is a property any particular sample of gold could lose without ceasing to be gold—cutting a piece of 10 grams in half does not transform it into another kind of metal. Therefore "weighing more than 10 grams" would be part of the specific quality of gold but not part of its essential nature. In interpreting *svabhāva* as essence, Candrakīrti notes:[14]

For, in common usage, heat is called the *svabhāva* of fire, because it is invariable in it. The same heat, when it is apprehended in water, is not *svabhāva*, because it is contingent, since it has arisen from other causal conditions.

Heat is a property that is always instantiated by fire (and, for Candrakīrti at least, every instantiation of fire is also an instantiation of heat).[15] Water, on the other hand, can be either hot or cold and requires some special conditions (apart from just being water) to heat it up. Although not stated explicitly, the notion of essence-*svabhāva* also appears to include a modal element: if fire lost the property of heat, it would no longer be fire. Water, however, can cool down and still remain water. This conception of *svabhāva* therefore agrees very well with a common understanding of an essence or essential property in contemporary metaphysics, which conceives of them as the properties an object cannot lose without ceasing to be that very object.

usages of *svabhāva* in Candrakīrti can be found in Schayer (1931: xix, 55, n. 41), who distinguishes four different senses, as well as in de Jong (1972: 3) and May (1959: 124, n. 328), who distinguish two. Although there are obvious connections with the senses distinguished here, the relations between the different senses discussed by the three authors and, in Schayer's case, the distinctness of the four senses given by him, are too unclear to make an attempt at comparison worthwhile.

8. *maraṇan ti kho mahārāja etam. adit.ṭhasaccānam. tāsaniyam. ṭhānam. . . . maraṇass' eso mahārāja sarasabhāvatejo tassa sarasabhāvatejena sakilesā sattā maraṇassa tasanti bhāyanti*. Trenckner (1928: 149). For a translation see Davids (1890: 211).

9. "*Svabhāva* is precisely their own characteristic, a common characteristic, on the other hand, is the impermanence of compounded phenomena." *svabhāva evaiṣāṃsvalakṣaṇam sāmānyalakṣaṇam. tu anityatā saṃskṛtānām. Bhāṣya* on Vasubandhu (1970–1973: 6:14). For further references see Williams (1981: 243).

10. *Svabhāvena parabhāvaviyogatah.* (Vasubandhu 1970–1973: 1:18).

11. According to the Buddhist interpretation, these characteristics are being impermanent, unsatisfactory, and devoid of self (Ronkin 2005: 114–115).

12. Note that this sense of *svabhāva* is not to be equated with that of a haecceity or quiddity. A haecceity or "individual essence" is a property only a single individual can have (the socratesness of Socrates is a stock example). But *svabhāva* in the sense discussed here is shareable. The *svabhāva* of fire is heat, a characteristic that cannot be instantiated just by fire, but also, for example, by water (even though heat does not constitute the *svabhāva* of water).

13. *na hi svabhāvaḥśakyo vinivartayitum. yathāgner uṣn. atvam apām. dravatvam ākāśasya nirāvaraṇatvam.* VV(S) 82:14–15.

14. *agner auṣn.yam. hi loke tad avyabhicāritvāt svabhāva ity ucyate | tad evauṣn. yam apsūpalabhyamānam. parapratyayasam. bhūtatvāt kṛtrimatvān na svabhāva iti.* PP 241:8–9. A similar characterization of solidity (*khara*) as the invariable specific quality and thus *svabhāva* of earth is given in Sthiramati's *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā* (Williams 1981: 242–243).

15. Ames (1982: 170).

The notion of essence-*svabhāva* is not one Nāgārjuna frequently employs in his arguments concerning *svabhāva*.[16] One of his rare references to this conception can be found in the *Ekaś lokaśāstra* where he states:[17]

[B]ecause one, two and many each have its own *bhāva*, therefore we call it *svabhāva*. For example, earth, water, fire, and air are respectively hard, moist, hot, and moveable. Each has its own *svabhāva*. And because the nature of every one of the things has its own specific quality (*svalakṣaṇa*) it is said that each has its *svabhāva*.

Here *svabhāva* appears to be identified with a quality that each of the four elements cannot lose without ceasing to be what it is. It furthermore plays the role of an object's specific quality (*svalakṣaṇa*)[18] which allows the observer to individuate the elements and therefore reflects their essential qualities, that is, their *svabhāva*.[19]

2.1.2. Substance-svabhāva

The notion of essence-*svabhāva*, which equates *svabhāva* with the specific qualities of an object and contrasts them with those qualities it shares with other objects, serves mainly *epistemological* purposes. It provides a procedure for drawing a line between a variety of objects with shared qualities and thereby allows us to tell them apart.

There is, however, a second understanding of *svabhāva* which is of much greater importance in the Madhyamaka debate; it considers *svabhāva* to be a primarily *ontological* notion. Rather than *svabhāva's* being seen as the opposite of shared qualities (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*), it is contrasted with conceptually constructed or secondary (*prajñaptisat*) existents and equated with the mark of the primary ones (*dravyasat*). The distinction between primary and secondary existents constitutes the most fundamental ontological distinction drawn by the Sarvāstivādins.[20]

Primary existents constitute the irreducible constituents of the empirical world; secondary existents, on the other hand, depend on linguistic and mental construction for their existence. For the Sarvāstivādin, primary existents encompass primarily partless moments of consciousness out of which would be constructed secondary existents, as for example medium-sized dry goods such as tables and chairs. Although both classes of objects were taken as existents (*sat*), only the primary ones were assumed to possess *svabhāva*.

On this understanding *svabhāva* no longer denotes an individuating property of objects by which they can be told apart from other objects (as it did when conceived in terms of essence), but rather is an indication of ontological status.[21] To have *svabhāva* means to exist in a primary manner, unconstructed and independent of anything else.[22]

This notion of *svabhāva*, which we are going to call substance-*svabhāva*, is also the sense of *svabhāva* that is most prominent in Nāgārjuna's arguments.[23] The fifteenth chapter of the MMK, investigating the notion of *svabhāva*, begins by saying:

Svabhāva cannot result from causes and conditions, because if it was produced from conditions and causes it would be something artificially created. But how could *svabhāva* be artificially created, as it is not artificially created and not dependent on anything else?[24]

Substance-*svabhāva* is therefore taken to be something that does not depend on anything else. Candrakīrti in fact takes MMK 15:2b to constitute the definition of *svabhāva*:

16. Buddhapālita, on the other hand, clearly has the notion of essence-*svabhāva* in mind when he claims that the aim of Nāgārjuna was to teach the *svabhāva* (*ngo bo nyid*) of dependent origination, Walleser (1913–1914: 4:16–17). Since dependent origination identified with emptiness is the exact opposite of *svabhāva*, this expression would constitute a *contradictio in adiecto* unless we realize that Buddhapālita wants to say that Nāgārjuna teaches the *specific quality* of dependent origination.

17. Iyengar (1927: 160). Another translation of this passage of the *śāstra* can be found in Edkins (1893: 307–307). We might want to note, however, that Lindtner (1982: 16) classifies this text as "most probably not genuine."

18. Some information on the conceptual relationship between *svabhāva* and *svalakṣaṇa* can be found in Ronkin (2005: 110).

19. Nāgārjuna might here have in mind the Vaiśeṣika conception of the five elements (*bhūta*), all of which are substances (*dravya*) and are taken to have peculiar qualities which distinguish them from the other elements. See Sharma (1960: 177).

20. Williams (1981: 236–237).

21. Ronkin (2005: chapter 3) argues that there was a gradual move away from a basically epistemological understanding of *svabhāva* as a characteristic mark to individuate different aspects of experience to an ontological understanding, where *svabhāva* subsumes objects with a particular ontological status.

22. In the contemporary commentarial literature we find occasional reference to the notion of an *intrinsic property* to spell out the notion of *svabhāva* (Tillemans [2001: 14, n. 24]; Siderits [2004: 117]). Intrinsic properties are those that "things have in virtue of the way they themselves are," while extrinsic properties are had "in virtue of their relations or lack of relations to other things" (Lewis [1986b: 61]). While it is clear that all properties constitutive of a primary existent must be intrinsic, not all intrinsic properties characterize a primary existent. For example, the property of being the tallest man in the room is extrinsic (since a man can have it only in relation to the other men in the room), while that of being a man is intrinsic. However, a man does not exist by *svabhāva*, since he is causally, mereologically, and conceptually dependent on a variety of factors.

23. Hayes (1994: 311) distinguishes two senses of *svabhāva: svabhāva* in the sense of identity and *svabhāva* in the sense of independence. The former expresses the understanding as *svalakṣaṇa*, the latter as *dravya*. Hayes then goes on to argue that Nāgārjuna equivocates between these different readings, thereby rendering his arguments invalid (316). For some comments on this point, see Taber (1998); Tillemans (2001); Siderits (2004: 135, ṇi).

24. *na sam. bhavah. svabhāvasya yuktah. pratyayahetubhih. / hetupratyaya-sam. bhūtah. svabhāvah. kṛtako bhavet // svabhāvah. kṛtako nāma bhaviṣyati punah. katham. / akṛtrimah. svabhāvo hi nirapekṣah. paratra ca*. MMK 15:1–2.

This is the definition of it: *Svabhāva* is not artificially created and not dependent on anything else.[25]

The notion of substance-*svabhāva* as "something which does not depend on anything else" is stronger than the one found in the Abhidharma literature. For the Ābhidharmikas, some objects that have primary existence (*dravyasat*) can be dependently originated. A conditioned object (*saṃskṛta dharma*) will have *svabhāva* but is still dependent on causes and conditions. It would be wrong, however, to assert[26] that the Ābhidharmika's only criterion for absence of *svabhāva* is having parts, so that all other forms of dependence would be compatible with an object's being a primary existent. Walser[27] cites a passage from the Theravādin *Puggalapaññatti At.ṭhakathā* in which one example of objects existing through dependent designation (*upādāya prajñapti*, i.e., objects that do not exist in a primary way [*dravyasat*]) is the measuring of time and space through the revolution of the sun and the moon.[28] Now the division of time into days depending on the rising and setting of the sun is certainly no example of mereological dependence: the latter is not part of the former. It is rather the case that the concepts of day and night owe their existence to the rising and setting of the sun. This is why they are not primary existents but dependently designated, or, as we may also want to put it, conceptual constructs. For the Ābhidharmika, an object existing with *svabhāva* does therefore not have to be independent of *everything* (in particular it can depend on its causes and conditions); on the other hand, there are reasons distinct from having parts which explain why a thing is merely a secondary existent (*prajñaptisat*) and therefore lacking *svabhāva*.

A view of *svabhāva* that is not explicitly formulated by Nāgārjuna but is nevertheless prominent in the Indian and Tibetan commentarial literature is that of *findability under analysis*.[29] Candrakīrti observes:

Worldly things exist without being analysed. When analysed, [however,] there is no self different from form and the other [four constituents].[30]

25. *tasya cedam. lakṣaṇam. akṛtrimah. svabhāvo hi nirapekṣah. paratra ca*. PP 265:5–6. See also Candrakīrti 's co mmentary on Āryadeva's CŚ 12:13: "Here 'self' is a self-existent object which does not depend on other objects. The non-existence [of such an object] is selflessness." *de la bdag ces bya ba ni gang zhig dngos po rnams kyi gzhan la rag ma las pa'i ngo bo rang bzhin ste | de myed pa ni bdgag myed pa'o*. Candrakīrti (1999: 321:1–2). See also Tillemans (1990: 126).

26. As done by Burton (1999: 90–92).

27. (2005: 242–243).

28. For a discussion of the variety of ways in which the notion of *prajñapti* is understood in Abhidharma literature, see Priestley (1999: chapter 9).

29. See Tillemans (2001: 5–6).

30. [. . .] *avicāratаśca laukikapadārthānām astitvāt | yathaiva hi rūpādivyatirekeṇa vicāryamāṇa ātmā na sam. bhavati*. PP 67:7–8; see Ruegg (2002: 117).

The underlying idea is that whatever is not ultimately real disappears under analysis so that what we are left with must be an ultimately real object existing by its own nature. The reason why composite objects such as a chariot or the self (*ātman*) are not ultimately real is that they do not withstand logical analysis (*rigs pas dpyad bzod pa*). Once the chariot or the self is conceptually dissolved into the parts that constitute it, the objects have disappeared and all we are left with are parts collectively conceptualized as a chariot or a self.[31]

Findability under analysis and independence of other objects imply one another. Assume that some objects *x* have been determined by analysis to be the ultimate constituents of some thing. If the existence of these *x*s in turn depended on the existence of some *y*, then only *y*, but not *x*, could be a candidate for an ultimately real object. Conversely, if no ultimate constituent can be found under analysis (and if this is not due to practical limitations), that is so because every potential candidate is again dependent on something else.

There are some conceptions of substance in Western philosophy which exhibit a certain amount of similarity with the notion of substance-*svabhāva* just described. Descartes's view of substance as something that does not require another thing for its existence[32] springs to mind, as well as Wittgenstein's theory of logically simple objects presented in the *Tractatus*.[33] These objects, which are supposed to constitute the substance of the world, are simple, are unchanging, and exist independently of one another and constitute a notion which shares at least some important properties with the Sarvāstivādin's primary objects.

DEPENDENCE RELATIONS. In order for us to understand this ontological conception of substance-*svabhāva*, it is important to get a clear idea of what precisely is meant by the dependence of an object on another one. First of all it is important to distinguish two notions of "dependence" which should not be confused. These are

• *existential dependence*: An object *a* existentially depends on objects falling under the property *F* iff necessarily, if *a* exists there exists something falling under *F*.

• *notional dependence*: Objects falling under the property *F* are notionally dependent on objects falling under the property *G* iff necessarily, if some object *x* falls under *F* there will be a distinct object *y* falling under *G*. Saying that a sprout depends existentially on its cause means that necessarily, if a sprout exists there will be some objects falling under the property "causes

31. Trenckner (1928: 27); Davids (1890: 44).

32. Principes I, 51.

33. Keyt (1963); Proops (2004).

of the sprout," such as a seed, soil, water, sunlight, and so on. Similarly, if a complex physical object exists, so will all its parts; therefore the object existentially depends on its parts. Necessarily, if a book exists, so will each of its pages.

Notional dependence, on the other hand, is a quite different case. Northern England depends on Southern England, but we would hardly want to say that this dependence is existential. If because of some geological disaster all of Southern England were destroyed, this circumstance would not affect the *existence* of the stretch of land now called Northern England. But it affects its *description* as Northern England, since now there would be nothing south of it which was also England. The concept Northern England therefore depends notionally on the concept Southern England, but the object in the world that the concept "Northern England" picks out does not depend existentially on the object that "Southern England" picks out.[34]

It is interesting to note that in the later dGe lugs commentarial tradition, three varieties of existential dependence are distinguished: *causal* dependence, when an object depends for its existence on its causes and conditions; *mereological* dependence, when an object depends on its parts; and *conceptual* dependence, postulating the dependence of an object on a basis of designation, a designating mind and a term used to designate the object.[35] These dependence relations are supposed to stand in a qualitative and doxographical hierarchy. Causal dependence is seen as the coarsest understanding of dependent arising and is associated with the Vaibhāṣikas or Sarvāstivādins, the Sautrāntikas, and the Cittamātrins; mereological dependence is a bit more subtle; the Svātantrika Mādhyamikas are assumed to understand emptiness in terms of both causal and mereological dependence. The most subtle understanding which incorporates all three forms of dependence is associated with the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas.[36]

There are a variety of examples from Nāgārjuna's works which show that both the notions of existential and notional dependence are employed in his arguments. Verse 13 of the ŚS asserts:[37]

The father is not the son, the son is not the father,

those two cannot exist one without the other,

those two cannot be simultaneous,

likewise the twelve links of dependent origination.[38]

When saying that the son cannot exist without the father, Nāgārjuna obviously means that the son is existentially dependent on the father: if some person *a* exists, there exists something falling under the property "father of *a*." But claiming that the father cannot exist without the son cannot be a case of existential dependence as well. Abelard (that very man) could have existed without having ever fathered Astrolabius. But Abelard as a father depends notionally on Astrolabius: if nobody was subsumed by the concept "son of Abelard," Abelard would not fall under the concept "father."

It is therefore evident that the "mutual dependence" of father and son that Nāgārjuna postulates is based on two different dependence relations, the son depending existentially on the father, the father notionally on the son. For Nāgārjuna's argument, however, it is necessary that the two entities be related by a symmetric dependence relation.[39]

The difficulty disappears if we take into account that if some object *x* is essentially *F*, and if it also depends notionally on some *y* being *G*, then *x* will also depend existentially on *y*'s being *G*, since *x* has to have *F* to exist at all (this is just what *F* being an essential property of *x* means). Therefore if we assumed that Abelard was the father of Astrolabius essentially, Abelard would indeed depend existentially on his son, since having Astrolabius as a son would be a property Abelard could not lose without being that very man.

Of course we might wonder now why we should assume that Abelard was essentially the father of Astrolabius. Even if we do not think that this is reasonable (because we think that a childless Abelard would have been the very same man), it is important to note that Nāgārjuna intends the father–son example as an argumentative pattern in which different predicates can be substituted. For example, we might think (as Nāgārjuna's opponent does) that cause and effect have their respective natures essentially. In this case it is then evident that the existential dependence between the two must be symmetric: the effect depends existentially on the cause, but the cause also depends existentially on the effect.

I hope this small example has convinced the reader of the importance of keeping the two different kinds of dependence relation apart when analyzing

34. A detailed discussion of different kinds of dependence relations can be found in Simons (1987: chapter 8). Our notion of existential dependence is there called "generic dependence."

35. Ngag dbang dpal ldan (1797–?) refers to these three kinds of dependence (1964: 154:6–155:1) (which constitutes commentary on the *Grub mtha' chen mo* of 'Jams dbyangs bzhad pa [1648–1721]) as *'phrad ba* (*prāpya*), *ltos ba* (*apekṣya*), and *brten pa* (*pratītya*), respectively. See Magee (1999: 56–57); Hopkins (1983: 166–177); Komito (1987: 190); Gyatso (2005: 20–21).

36. Ngag dbang dpal ldan (1964: 154:6-155:1); Gyatso (2005: 33, 43–44, 59–62).

37. *pha bu ma yin bu pha min / de gnyis phan tshun med min la / de gnyis cig car yang min ltar / yan lag bcu gnyis de bzhin no.* ŚS 13.

38. The father–son example is also used in VV 49–50. See also MMK 8:12, 10:10.

39. Oetke (1989: 11) claims that "the assumption of isomorphism or identity of logical and causal dependence relations [which correspond to our notional and existential dependence relations] explains a significant part of Nāgārjuna's arguments and simultaneously elucidates numerous apparent difficulties."

Nāgārjuna's thought.[40] A more detailed discussion of how this distinction is put to work in his arguments will be found in chapters 5 to 9. Returning to the understanding of *svabhāva* in terms of substance, we should note that for Candrakīrti such substance-*svabhāva* is qualified by its nondependence on other objects, *either existentially or notionally*. This fact is evident from the examples Candrakīrti gives for objects that are dependent on causes and conditions: the heat of water, the farther and nearer shore, long and short.[41] While the heat of fire depends existentially on the causes that heat up the water, the concepts "farther shore" and "long" depend only notionally on the concepts "nearer shore" and "short." The farther shore would not cease to exist if the nearer shore did, nor would long objects decrease in length if short objects disappeared, but their descriptions as "farther shore" or "long" could no longer be employed.

It is evident that the notion of substance-*svabhāva* is much stronger than that of essence-*svabhāva*. In particular we can assert the existence of the second without affirming that of the first. It could be the case that every object had some properties it could not lose without ceasing to be that very object (although in some cases it may be more difficult than in others to determine what these properties are) and therefore be endowed with essence-*svabhāva*. But at the same time everything could in some way (either existentially or notionally) be dependent on something else so that substance-*svabhāva* did not exist at all.

the rejection of substance-svabhāva. It is important to note that the elaborate Mādhyamika criticism of the notion of *svabhāva* is directed against this stronger notion of substance-*svabhāva* rather than against essence-*svabhāva*. Since the common conception of *svabhāva* was in terms of essential properties (a conception "well known," as Candrakīrti charmingly puts it, "to people, including cowherds and women"),[42] Candrakīrti explicitly distinguishes it from his notion of substance-*svabhāva*: even though it is an essential property, the heat of fire is no more the *svabhāva* of fire than it is the *svabhāva* of water. Let it be recognized that heat, also, is not the *svabhāva* of fire, because of its artificiality. Here one apprehends that fire, which arises from the conjunction of a gem and fuel and the sun or from the friction of two sticks, etc., is purely dependent on causes and conditions, but heat does not occur apart from fire. Therefore, heat, too, is produced by causes and conditions and therefore is artificial; and because of its being artificial, like the heat of water, it is clearly ascertained that it is not *svabhāva*.[43]

Candrakīrti does not attempt to refute the notion of essence-*svabhāva* but asserts its existence in conventional terms (*vyavahāra*). If something lacked the property of heat, we would not call it fire.[44] Candrakīrti's emphasis is on establishing that essence-*svabhāva* "does not deserve to be called *svabhāva*"[45] and is distinct from the notion of substance-*svabhāva* that Nāgārjuna deals with. Unlike the case with substance-*svabhāva*, however, Candrakīrti has no difficulties in agreeing with the usefulness of essence-*svabhāva* as a concept for everyday usage.[46] For the Ābhidharmikas, substance-*svabhāva* does exist; it is the intrinsic and essential quality of ultimately real objects (*dravya*). The justification for the assumption of such objects is evident if we consider the case of objects consisting of parts.[47] A partite object cannot exist by *svabhāva*, since it exists only in dependence on its parts. For the same reason, its parts cannot exist by *svabhāva* either, as long as they have parts in turn. For the defender of substances this regress must stop somewhere, because even though it might be possible to have a chain of explanations stretching back infinitely (if we explain the properties of the whole by the properties of the parts and then in turn provide an explanation of their properties in terms of their parts), a chain of dependency relations must terminate ultimately, that is, the hierarchy of dependency relation must

40. The failure to distinguish between existential and notional dependence has resulted in considerable confusion in the contemporary commentarial literature, primarily in connection with the so-called *principle of coexisting counterparts*. Taber (1998: 216); (Ruegg [1977] calls it "the principle of the complementarity of binary concepts and terms"), which is supposed to say that "a thing cannot be a certain type unless its counterpart exists simultaneously with it". Far from being "a blatant contradiction of common sense" (Taber [1998: 238]), it expresses an obvious truth about notional dependencies: something cannot be Northern England unless Southern England exists at the same time. It is only if we think that notional dependence is the very same thing as existential dependence that we can accuse Nāgārjuna of being unable to distinguish "between saying that a thing exists at all and saying that it exists under a given description." Hayes (1994: 315). For more (unfortunately not very clear) discussion of this matter, see Taber (1998).

41. PP 264:1.

42. *gopālān˙ ganājanaprasiddham*. PP 260:14.

43. *yad etat auṣn. yam. tad apy agneh. svabhāvo na bhavatīti g r. hyatāṃkṛtakatvāt | iha man. īndhanādityasamāgamād araṇinidharṣan. ādeś cāgner hetupratyayasāpekṣa taivopalabhyate | na cāgnivyatiriktam auṣn. yaṃsam. bhavati | tasmād auṣn. yam api hetupratyayajanitam. | tataśca kṛtakam. | kṛtakatvāc cāpāmauṣn. yavat svabhāvo na bhavatīti sphut.am avasīyate*. PP 260:9–13.

44. Schayer (1931: xix) argues that the Mādhyamika denies the existence of essence-*svabhāva*. Since everything is causally produced, "there is no property which could never be missing from a particular object" (55, n. 41). While the Mādhyamika will accept this view, the important point is that saying some property is part of the essence-*svabhāva* of an object of type *X* does not mean it could never be missing from that object, but that if it was missing we would not consider it to be of type *X*.

45. *nāyaṃsvabhāvo bhavitum arhati*. PP 260:15.

46. Ames (1982: 170).

47. Siderits (2004: 118–119).

be well founded.[48] The Ābhidharmikas consider the entities that are the foundation of the mereological dependency relation to be ultimately real objects which have their properties essentially and intrinsically. These objects exist by substance-*svabhāva*.

The Indian and Tibetan Madhyamaka literature contains a variety of ways for classifying arguments against the existence of substance-*svabhāva*.[49] A fivefold classification distinguishes the following kinds:

1. The diamond slivers[50]

2. The refutation of the production from existent or nonexistent [51]

3. The refutation of the four kinds of production[52]

4. The argument from dependent origination[53]

5. The "neither one nor many" argument[54]

1. The diamond slivers, so called because of the power ascribed to this argument in refuting substance-*svabhāva*, analyzes four ways in which an object could be causally produced: by itself, by another object, by both, or without a cause.[55] This argument will be discussed in detail in section 5.3 of chapter 5.

2. The refutation of the production from the existent or nonexistent concerns the temporal relation between cause and effect.[56] It will be discussed in section 5.4 of chapter 5.

3. The refutation of the four kinds of production is generally taken to refer to an argument that considers the numerical relations between cause and effect: many causes creating one effect, many causes creating many effects, one cause creating many effects, one cause creating one effect. It is the only one of the five arguments that does not have a textual basis in Nāgārjuna's works; we therefore do not discuss it here any further.[57]

48. See Burton (1999: 109–111); Walser (2005: 243–244).

49. Most classifications distinguish either four or five kinds of arguments; there are also slight variations concerning which arguments are subsumed under which heading. For details see Tillemans (1984: 371–372, n. 16).

50. *vajrakaṇa, rdo rje gzegs*.

51. *sadāsatutpādapratiṣedha, yod med skye 'gog*.

52. *catuṣkot.yutpādapratiṣedha, mu bzhi skye 'gog*.

53. *pratītyasamutpādahetu, rten cing 'brel ba'i gtan tshigs*.

54. *ekānekaviyogahetu, gcig du bral gyi gtan tshigs*.

55. Hopkins (1983: 132–150, 639–650).

56. Tillemans (1984: 361). The temporal reading of this argument is not always so clear. Sometimes (1984: 361) it is argued that the diamond slivers and the refutation of the production from the existent or nonexistent are to be distinguished by the fact that the first analyzes the cause, the second the effect. This analysis then investigates whether a cause produces an existent, a nonexistent, a both existent and nonexistent, or a neither existent nor nonexistent effect. See Hopkins (1983: 151–154).

57. Some discussion is in Hopkins (1983: 155–160).

4. The argument from dependent origination considers the compatibility of substance-*svabhāva* with a variety of dependence relations such as those I discussed in the previous section.[58]

5. The "neither one nor many argument" will be discussed below.[59] I will also examine two arguments against the existence of substance-*svabhāva* which we find in Nāgārjuna's works but which are not included in the classification given above: the property argument and the argument from change.

THE PROPERTY ARGUMENT. One problem with the assumption of primary existents endowed with substance-*svabhāva* becomes evident once we analyze them in terms of the familiar distinction between individuals and properties. According to classical Buddhist ontology there are different kinds of primary existents (*mahābhūta*s: earth, water, fire, wind), which are distinguished by different qualities.[60] This list is sometimes enlarged to a list of six elements or *dhātu*s by adding space and consciousness.[61] It is this list of six upon which Nāgārjuna's account in chapter 5 of the MMK is based.[62] The problem he discusses, however, is independent of our willingness to assume the existence of primary "fire-atoms" and so forth. It arises whenever we assume that there are different categories of primary existents distinguished by different properties.[63]

We can easily conceive of ordinary individuals as lacking some qualities which they in fact possess; for example we can conceive of a red apple as lacking the property of redness and being green instead. In the case of primary existents, however, this is not possible. If we abstract the property of heat from a fire-atom, there is nothing left, unless we believe in a propertyless "bare particular" which could act as the individual instantiating the property of heat. Nāgārjuna considers this possibility in the case of space:[64]

> No space is evident prior to the characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) of space. If it existed prior to the characteristic, it would follow that it was without the characteristic.[65]

58. See Hopkins (1983: 161–173).

59. See Hopkins (1983: 176–196).

60. La Vallée Poussin (1988–1990: 68–70); Dhammajoti (2004: 147–148).

61. La Vallée Poussin (1988–1990: 88).

62. MMK 5:7.

63. See Siderits (2003: 120–123).

64. The ontological status of space is a controversial issue in the Buddhist philosophical literature. Although it is not one of the four *mahābhūta*s (Dhammajoti [2004: 148–149]) the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* nevertheless includes it together with these in a list of six elements (*dhātu*s) (La Vallée Poussin [1988–1990: 88]). Moreover, the **Abhidharmamahāhavibhāṣaśāstra* argues that space can be a dominant condition (*adhipatipratyaya*) for the *mahābhūta*s and therefore possesses *svabhāva* (Dhammajoti 2004: 384). Problems with properties of the *mahābhūta*s will therefore equally apply to space.

65. *nākāśam. vidyate kim. cit pūrvam ākāśalakṣan. āt / alakṣaṇam. prasajyeta syāt pūrvam. yadi lakṣan. āt*. MMK 5:1.

Thus assuming that space existed first without its characteristic and only later acquired it, in the way in which an apple can exist without the property of redness which is acquired only once the apple is ripe, commits us to the existence of a propertyless bare particular. This is due to the fact that unlike ordinary objects such as apples, primary existents have all their properties essentially. Since the only essential characteristic of space is its particular space-nature, space without this characteristic is like a knife without a handle which has lost its blade: there is nothing left. For Nāgārjuna, introducing bare particulars at this point is not an option; he claims that "an object without characteristics is not to be found anywhere."[66]

Why does Nāgārjuna reject the notion of a bare particular? Bare particulars do not appear to be straightforwardly contradictory entities; in fact their existence is postulated by metaphysicians claiming that individuals must be more than just bundles of properties.[67]

The problem seems to be this. Let us assume that there was indeed a bare particular left over once we abstracted the property of heat from a fire-atom. Assume furthermore that this particular would have its nature (its bare-particularness) intrinsically and essentially. In this case heat could not be its *svabhāva* as well, since something cannot have two different *svabhāvas*. Its further characterization by heat would therefore be superfluous for establishing its status as a primary existent.

Alternatively we could assume that the bare particular did not have its nature intrinsically and essentially but was dependent on something else. We could then ask again whether this something else has *its* property essentially, and so on.[68] In this case we get into a regress which the opponent of Nāgārjuna has to terminate somewhere, since he wants to establish that *some* objects (i.e., the true primary existents) exist by *svabhāva* and are therefore not dependent on anything else. We therefore end up with the first possibility again, as the various properties that make up the supposed *svabhāva* of the primary elements fire, water, and so forth are superfluous in characterizing these foundational objects as primary existents, since these objects are already existent as such. This is what Nāgārjuna means when he says:

The occurrence of a characteristic is neither in the uncharacterized nor in the characterized. It does not proceed from something other than those with or without characteristics.[69]

66. *alakṣan. o na kaścic ca bhāvah. sam. vidyate kvacit*. MMK 5:2a.

67. Armstrong (1997: 109–110, 123–126).

68. PP 130:5–13; Siderits (2003: 121).

69. *nālakṣan. e lakṣaṇasya pravṛttir na salakṣan. e / salakṣan. ālakṣan. ābhyām. nāpy anyatra pravartate*. MMK 5:3.

If we regard the bare particular as characterized by its bare-particular-ness intrinsically and essentially, any further characteristic is superfluous for bestowing the status of a primary existent. If we do not regard it as so characterized, however, we end up in an infinite regress without establishing any primary existents at all. Since these possibilities are mutually exclusive, the notion of a bare particular seems to be facing a problem.

The proponent of bare particulars might now be inclined to say that all this shows is that the pluralist theory of the six primary elements was mistaken and that we have to assume that there is only one kind of primary existent, namely bare particulars having their nature intrinsically and essentially. They constitute the "pure stuff" of the world which is then "flavoured" by such properties as heat, wetness, etc. in order to form fire-, water- and other atoms.

Bracketing the difficulty of how these different bare particulars are to be told apart, the most important problem with this is that Nāgārjuna's opponent also wants to argue that the primary existents are mind-independent, that they exist whether or not any conscious beings are around. But while this has a certain plausibility for objects that can be distinguished by their properties (such as the four *mahābhūta*s or the fundamental particles of contemporary physics), a bare particular from which all characteristics have been abstracted away bears the mark of the mind's handiwork. Bare particulars are nothing we are immediately (or even mediately) acquainted with—they are conceptual fictions, theoretical entities introduced in the course of constructing an ontological theory, but hardly anything we would suppose exists "from its own side," independent of conscious minds.

If Nāgārjuna's opponent does not want to postulate the existence of bare particulars, he might try to solve the problem of properties of primary existents by arguing that primary existents *are* property-particulars rather than things characterized by properties. This is the dual of the bare-particular view, for we now assume properties without bearers rather than bearers without properties. As a matter of fact, ontological theories based on property-particulars (also called tropes) have become relatively popular in the recent metaphysical discussion.[70] The fundamental idea here is that the redness of an apple is not regarded as *one* thing inhering in different red objects. The redness of the apple, that of a tomato, and that of a postbox are rather regarded as three distinct property-particulars which are sufficiently similar to be classified under the common name "red."

70. See Williams (1953) for an early example, Bacon (1995) for a more recent discussion.

Nāgārjuna is clear on his rejecting property-particulars[71] but unfortunately not very explicit on his reasons for doing so. A plausible reason for Nāgārjuna's rejection is provided by Marks Siderits.[72] If we assume that the different primary existents, such as fire- and water-atoms are just property particulars of heat, wetness, and so forth, we face the problem of how the different atoms are to be individuated.[73] We obviously cannot say that two fire-atoms are different because the property of heat is instantiated in different bearers, because this stance would get us back to the scenario discussed earlier. It seems that the best we can do is individuate clusters of property-particulars, as in saying that in one cluster heat is associated with wetness (as in hot water), in another with solidity (as in a red-hot iron ball), and that in this way the two property-particulars of heat are individuated. However, now the problem is that the independence of primary existents is compromised, as we now have to rely on distinct propertyparticulars to tell them apart. Therefore their existence as distinct primary existents is not any quality they possess from their own side, but only something they have dependent on occurring in clusters with other property-particulars.

It now becomes evident that whatever analysis of primary existents in terms of individuals and properties we propose seems to face fundamental difficulties. If we treat the primary existents and their properties as distinct and independent entities (as we do in the case of ordinary objects), we realize that the two cannot be independent at all, since we cannot conceive of a primary existent without its characteristic property. If, on the other hand, we subsume primary existents under one side of the individual-property divide, that is, if we assume that they are either bare particulars (individuals without properties) or tropes (properties without individuals), it becomes evident that neither of these can play the desired role of mind-independent foundational objects existing from their own side.

Given that Nāgārjuna regards these options as exhaustive,[74] he considers the above difficulties as a *reductio* of the notion of a primary existent. For him the primary existents and the properties they instantiate have to be regarded as existentially dependent on one another. If the properties did not exist, there would be no particulars to characterize, and in the absence of the particulars there would be no characterizing properties. But in this case a fundamental property of primary existents is no longer fulfilled: namely that these existents should be independent of all other objects.[75] Depending for their existence on the properties characterizing them, the supposed primary existents cannot produce the foundation for a hierarchy of dependence relations. It therefore turns out that the only satisfactory way of understanding the relation between primary existents and their properties has to deny that there are primary existents in the first place.

the mereological argument. In the same way in which applying the framework of individual and property to primary existents leads to problems, Nāgārjuna argues, conceiving of them in terms of parts and wholes entails difficulties. Ordinary objects are either mereologically complex (i.e., they have proper parts) or they are mereologically simple, that is, they are atomic, partless things. Primary existents, however, the Mādhyamika argues, are neither complex nor simple. Since everything must be either complex or simple, the notion of a primary existent is thereby reduced to absurdity.

While this "neither one nor many argument"[76] is mentioned by Nāgārjuna at several places,[77] it does not play a prominent role in his arguments and is not spelled out in great detail. The later Tibetan commentarial literature, on the other hand, contains quite an extensive development of this argument for refuting substance-*svabhāva*.[78] We will use some of these materials in order to formulate the details of the argument, which can at best be said to be implicitly present in Nāgārjuna's texts.

It seems to be clear that we do not want to say that primary existents are partite phenomena. This is so because partite phenomena depend for their existence on their parts, and primary existents are not supposed to be existentially dependent on anything. For any object with parts it is at best possible that its parts are primary existents, but the composite object itself cannot be. This denial of the primary nature of partite entities is a well-entrenched Buddhist position which can be traced back to some of the earliest textual material[79] and provides the reason for Nāgārjuna's denial that any candidate for a primary existent, whether causally produced or not, can be regarded as having parts.[80]

71. In the absence of the characterized, the characteristic does also not exist. *lakṣyasyānupapattau ca lakṣaṇasyāpy asam. bhavah.* . MMK 5:4b.

72. (2003: 122–123).

73. A discussion of different ways of individuating tropes is in Schaffer (2001).

74. MMK 5:3, 5.

75. MMK 5:4–5.

76. *ekānekaviyogahetu, gcig du bral gyi gtan tshigs*.

77. ŚS 32ab; RĀ 1:71. VP 33–39 also contains a mereological discussion which is of relevance in this context. Unfortunately this material is relatively opaque and also set in the specific context of the rejection of the notion of the parts of a syllogism. Its usefulness in explicating Nāgārjuna's understanding of the "neither one nor many argument" is therefore limited.

78. Tillemans (1983; 1984).

79. See Siderits (2003: chapter 1) for a discussion of this "Buddhist reductionism."

80. *'dus byas dang ni 'dus ma byas / du ma ma yin gcig ma yin*. ŚS 32ab.

The other alternative, that primary existents could be atomic, is also denied by Nāgārjuna. In RĀ 1:71 he claims:

Because of having many parts it is not simple; there is nothing which is partless.[81]

Unfortunately Nāgārjuna does not give us an argument here for why he thinks that nothing is partless. Considering the secondary literature, we can come up with at least two accounts of what the argument might have been. Their difference is due mainly to different understandings of the word *pradeśa* (*phyogs*), here translated as "part."

Tucci[82] reads *pradeśa* as denoting a straightforward mereological part or side of an object and assumes that Nāgārjuna here refers to the well-known Yogācāra argument against the existence of atoms.[83] In a nutshell the idea is that if we assume that atoms can conglomerate to form macroscopic objects, then individual atoms must touch one another, like neighboring mustard seeds in a heap. But if we now regard the side (*pradeśa*) of an atom where it touches its right neighbor as spatially coinciding with the side where it touches its left neighbor, the entire conglomeration of atoms will collapse to a single spatial point. If we regard them as spatially distinct, on the other hand, the atom must be seen as spatially extended and therefore it cannot be atomic.

A more comprehensive understanding of the notion of part in the "neither one nor many argument" which we find, for example, in Tsong kha pa subsumes under it not just mereological parts but also temporal stages and aspects (*rnam pa*).[84] This approach allows us to run a more general argument than is possible on the purely mereological interpretation.

The question investigated in this case is the relationship between the parts, stages, or aspects of a primary existent and the primary existent itself.[85] For the sake of simplicity, consider the case of a supposed primary existent, say an earth-atom, and two of its properties (say "being solid" and "being heavy"). Now obviously the earth-atom cannot be identical with both these "parts," because one thing cannot be identical with two. So it must be distinct from them and should be conceived of as an individual which constitutes the bearer of the two properties. But this understanding of primary existents then leads us straight back to the problems we encountered when discussing the property argument: we either end up with a bare particular (which is difficult to consider as existent in a mind-independent way) or with a trope (which cause problems with individuation). The view that primary existents exist without parts, stages, or aspects should therefore be given up. The conclusion Nāgārjuna wants to draw from this is that since everything either has parts or does not, and since neither option is possible for primary existents, our difficulties stem from assuming such a notion in the first place. From a mereological point of view no consistent account of primary existents can be given. It is a notion we should do without. the argument from change. Nāgārjuna considers the existence of substance-*svabhāva* to be incompatible with change:[86]

If *svabhāva* existed, the world would be without origination or cessation, it would be static and devoid of its manifold states.

But given that we do perceive change in the world, this provides us with an argument against substance-*svabhāva*:

By the observation of change [we can infer] the lack of *svabhāva* of things. . . . If *svabhāva* was found, what would change? Neither the change of a thing itself nor of something different is suitable: as a young man does not become old, so an old man does not become old either.[87]

No thing which we perceive to be changing can exist by substance-*svabhāva*. This is so because an object existing by substance-*svabhāva*, that is, a primary existent, constitutes an independent, irreducible, and unconstructed fundamental constituent of reality. If the young man had its age as an essential and intrinsic property (i.e., if he was young by *svabhāva*), he could never grow old.

The obvious reply the advocate of substance-*svabhāva* should make at this point is to say that both change and substance-*svabhāva* exist, though not at the same level. Things that we perceive as changing do not possess substance*svabhāva*, while those that do possess it do not change.

There are at least two different ways in which we could spell this idea out. According to the *annihilationist* view, an *x*-atom existing by *svabhāva* can never change into a *y*-atom. What can happen, however, is that the *x*-atom ceases to

81. *naiko 'anekapradeśatvān nāpradeśaś ca kaścana*. rGyal tshab dar ma rin chen in his commentary explicitly regards this verse as a statement of the "neither one nor many argument." See Hopkins (1998: 103).

82. (1934–1936: 324).

83. The argument is described in verses 11–14 of Vasubandhu's *Vim. śatikā* (Tola and Dragonetti 2004: 127–129, 142–145). See also Kapstein (2001), Hopkins (1983: 373).

84. Tillemans (1983: 308).

85. Thurman (1984: 97).

86. *ajātam aniruddham. ca kūt.astham. ca bhaviṣyati / vicitrābhir avasthābhih. svabhāve rahitam. jagat*. MMK 24:38. Other passages dealing with the permanence of *svabhāva* include 13:4, 21:17, 23:24, and 24:22–26.

87. *bhāvānām. nih. svabhāvatvam anyathābhāvadarśanāt* / [. . .] *kasya syād anyathābhāvah. svabhāvo yadi vidyate // tasyaiva nānyathābhāvo nāpy anyasyaiva yujyate / yuvā na jīryate yasmād yasmāj jīrn. o na jīryate*. MMK 13:3a, 4b–5.

exist and is replaced by a *y*-atom. What we perceive as macroscopic change in the nature of entities (hot water cooling down, green leaves turning brown) is in fact nothing but the microscopic arising and ceasing of entities the natures of which do not change.[88]

According to the *permutationist* view, no entities existing by *svabhāva* ever pass out of existence. The change we observe is merely a difference in arrangement of the eternally existing objects. When hot water cools down, it does so not because the fire-atoms in the water pass out of existence, but rather because the set of permanently existent atoms changes its arrangement so that fewer fire-atoms are now mixed among the water-atoms.

There are two main difficulties for the annihilationist view. First of all it is not obvious to which extent the cessation of entities existing by *svabhāva* is theoretically less problematic than a change in their nature. The annihilationist view is based on the assumption that if some object passes out of existence, its *svabhāva* is not changed, since the object does not exist anymore. It did not lose one nature and acquire another one, since there is nothing left that could possibly acquire such a nature. Whether this theory in fact works depends on the interaction of the conception of *svabhāva* with that of momentarily existent objects. This is an intricate issue[89] which we fortunately do not have to settle here. There remains a second problem: namely answering the question of what is responsible for the cessation and production of entities existing by *svabhāva*. If they are dependent on causes and conditions for their production and annihilation, then they cannot be ultimately real entities after all, since the whole point of postulating entities existing by *svabhāva* was to have some objects that are not existentially dependent on any others.[90]

The permutationist does not have this problem. He still has to assume that the ultimately real objects congregate in certain ways dependent on causes and conditions. But all this means is that the complex objects thus constituted will existentially depend on each other, as well as on the ultimate reals. The complex objects, however, were never supposed to exist by *svabhāva* in the first place. The ultimately real objects themselves do not depend on causes and conditions. While the permutationist view thus seems more attractive than the annihilationist one, it has the curious consequence that the supposedly ultimately real objects existing by *svabhāva* recede more and more.

The idea of fire-atoms as ultimately real objects is obviously only of historical interest. It is far from clear, however, whether the conception of elementary particles of contemporary physics is much more attractive to the permutationist. While the *mahābhūta*s had the advantage of being relatively close to objects of ordinary experience, such as fire, water, and so forth, various subatomic particles, quarks, or strings are purely theoretical posits very different from anything we usually observe. Nobody has ever seen a string and nobody ever will, since these are not accessible to sensory perceptions. Moreover, their assumed properties are very different from what we observe in the macroscopic world. As with all theoretical posits, claims for their existence are based on the explanatory work this concept can do in a particular theory. It is therefore quite ironic that our best candidates for ultimately real entities existing independent of human conceptualization turn out to be objects that are so highly theorydependent and the existence of which seems to be considerably less secure than that of the medium-sized dry goods with which we interact daily.

It appears that neither the annihilationist nor the permutationist view manage to give a satisfactory explanation of the existence of change in the presence of substance-*svabhāva*. In the absence of any other explanations, Nāgārjuna thus concludes that our experience of change constitutes an argument against the existence of substance-*svabhāva*.

Considering the previous discussion, it is evident that most of Nāgārjuna's arguments, as well as those found in the work of his commentators such as Candrakīrti, are concerned with the rejection of substance-*svabhāva*, while the examination of essence-*svabhāva* appears to play at best a minor role. From certain passages in Candrakīrti's works, however, we get the impression that a third conception of *svabhāva* is in play in the Madhyamaka arguments as well. This third notion does not seem to share the marginal status of essence-*svabhāva* and is also not the aim of attempted refutations. We will call this conception *absolute svabhāva*.

2.1.3. Absolute Svabhāva

Candrakīrti describes absolute *svabhāva* in the following way:[91] Ultimate reality for the Buddhas is *svabhāva* itself. That, moreover, because it is itself nondeceptive is the truth of ultimate reality. It must be known by each one for himself.

While he stresses that substance-*svabhāva* is a notion erroneously ascribed to objects that in fact lack it,[92] he also asserts that *svabhāva* does not in any

88. See Siderits (2003: 124–125) for a description of this view.

89. See von Rospatt (1995).

90. Siderits (2003: 125).

91. *sangs rgyas rnams kyi don dam pa ni rang bzhin nyid yin zhing | de yang bslu ba med pa nyid kyis don dam pa'i bden pa yin la | de ni de rnams kyi so sor rang gis rig par bya ba yin no.* MAB 108:16–19.

92. PP 261:3–4.

way appear to those having misknowledge.[93] It therefore appears that *svabhāva* is both a mistaken ascription made by beings with deficient cognitive capacities *as well as* something that does not appear to such beings. To make sense of this notion, we have to assume that there are two different conceptions of *svabhāva* in play here: substance-*svabhāva*, which the Madhyamaka arguments attempt to show to be nonexistent on the one hand, and, on the other hand, another kind of *svabhāva*, which I call absolute *svabhāva*, which constitutes the true and intrinsic nature of phenomena.[94]

Candrakīrti explicitly characterizes this *svabhāva* as changeless (*avikaritva*), not originated (*sarvadānutpāda*) and not dependent on something else (*paranirapeks. a*).[95] On the basis of this idea, the later Tibetan commentarial literature conceives of *svabhāva* as "triply characterized."[96] Tsong kha pa describes it as

1. Not produced by causes and conditions[97]
2. Unchangeable[98]
3. Set forth without depending on another object[99]

The interesting problem arising at this point is that both Candrakīrti's attributes as well as Tsong kha pa's triple characterization are supposed to be applicable *both* to substance-*svabhāva as well as* to emptiness, that is, the absence of substance-*svabhāva*.[100] But taking into account that substance-*svabhāva* is argued not to exist while emptiness does exist, this view faces an obvious difficulty. The lack of *svabhāva* seems to have exactly the properties of substance *svabhāva*, so the absence of *svabhāva* should both exist (since *svabhāva* does not) and not exist (since it has the same properties as the non-existing *svabhāva*). Emptiness (that is, the absence of *svabhāva*) appears to be a contradictory concept.[101]

ames's solution. William Ames, in his analysis of Candrakīrti's use of the concept *svabhāva*, tries to resolve this problem by arguing that substance-*svabhāva* and lack of *svabhāva* or emptiness do not collapse into one another, since the latter differs from the former in two important ways:[102]

(1) Being purely negative, it does not satisfy the implicit condition that *svabhāva* be a positive quality. (2) It is not a quality of things, but a fact about qualities of things, namely, that none of them are *svabhāva*.

It appears to me that neither of these supposed differences can be made to carry much weight. The difference between "positive" and "negative" qualities seems to be purely an artifact of language. If our language did not contain the word "blunt," we might describe a blunt knife as "not sharp" and conclude that sharpness is a positive quality while bluntness is not. If we did not have the word "sharp," the reverse would be the case. But we would not have to assume that this indicates any difference between the *properties* we refer to.

Concerning the second point, it does not seem to help much to observe that there is a fact about qualities of things which holds continuously, causelessly, and necessarily. All we have done is push up the location of *svabhāva* to the level of second-order properties: it is now not the property of heat (or any other first-order property) which qualifies as the *svabhāva* of fire, but one of its second-order properties, that is, the property that none of its first-order properties is the object's *svabhāva*. But it is hardly satisfactory for the Mādhyamika to avoid the above problem by saying that when he claims that no objects have *svabhāva* what he really means is that none of an object's first-order properties are its *svabhāva*.

TSONG KHA PA'S SOLUTION. Another solution to this difficulty is suggested by Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419). Though this Tibetan scholar is separated from Nāgārjuna by a considerable temporal, geographical, and linguistic distance, both the ingenuity of his solution as well as the considerable influence of his thought on the later interpretation of Madhyamaka justify its

93. MAB 107: 15. See also 306.

94. Some of the synonyms for absolute *svabhāva* Candrakīrti gives include "objecthood of objects" (*dharmān. ām. dharmatā*), "intrinsic nature" (*tatsvarūpam*), "original nature" (*prakṛti*), "emptiness" (*śūnyatā*), "lack of *svabhāva*" (*naih. svabhāvyam*), "thusness" (*tathatā*), "complete non-origination" (*sarvadā anutpāda*), and "being thus, changelessness, ever-abidingness" (*tathābhāvo 'vikaritvam sadaiva sthāyitā*) PP 264:11–265:1.

95. PP 265:1–2.

96. *khyad par gsum dang ldan pa* (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 1985: 643:12); (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 2000-2004: 3:194). This characterization follows Nāgārjuna's discussion of *svabhāva* in MMK 15:2 and 8. See also Magee (1999: 87–88).

97. *rgyu dang rkyen gyis ma bskyed pa*. (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 1985: 643:12–13), (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa. 2000–2004: 3:194).

98. *gnas skabs gzhan du mi 'gyur ba* (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 1985: 643:13), (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 2000–2004: 3:194).

99. *rnam 'jog gzhan la mi ltos pa* (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 1985: 643:13), (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 2000–2004: 3:194).

100. This is the reason why Tsong kha pa does not regard the three characteristics as sufficient for identifying the object of negation (*dgag bya*). 'Jam dbyangs bshad pa asks in the *mChan bu bzhi: 'di stong nyid kyi khyad par yin pas dgag byar ga la rung*, "These [three characteristics] being characteristics of emptiness, how could they be the object of negation?" (Jam dbyangs bshad pa et al. 1972: 387.6).

101. Most philosophers would regard this contradiction as a problem with the notion of emptiness. An exception is Graham Priest (2002: 249–270) who regards it as an indication of the fundamentally contradictory nature of reality.

102. Ames (1982: 174).

inclusion in this discussion. Tsong kha pa attempts to solve the difficulty by arguing that substance-*svabhāva* (i.e., the Mādhyamika's "object of negation") is to be distinguished from emptiness by its having additional characteristics. Apart from being triply characterized, substance-*svabhāva* is also

4. established from its own side[103]

5. a natural, not a learned notion.[104]

Concerning the first, Tsong kha pa states: that

Ultimate truth is established in this way as positing the nature of things (*chos nyid*) by *svabhāva* (*rang bzhin du*), but what establishes it as *svabhāva* is the fact that it is not fabricated and does not depend on other objects. It does not in the slightest exist by *svabhāva* which is established from its own side.[105]

Here Tsong kha pa regards "establishment from its own side" (*rang gi ngo bos grub pa*) as distinct from "independence from other objects" (*gzhan la mi ltos pa*) in order to drive a wedge between the characterizations of substance-*svabhāva* and emptiness or absolute *svabhāva*. It should be noted, however, that this interpretation is not shared by all dGe lugs commentators, some of which read Candrakīrti's *nirapekṣah.* as meaning "the establishment of an object from the perspective of its own entity."[106]

Concerning the second point it should be noted that Tsong kha pa draws a distinction between conceptions of *svabhāva* that are acquired misconceptions (*kun brtags*) and those that are innate (*lhan skyes*). Given the fundamental cognitive change the understanding of emptiness is supposed to bring about, he regards the removal of the latter as considerably more important than the former.[107] Later commentaries[108] classify the triply characterized *svabhāva* as such an acquired misconception. The triply characterized *svabhāva* is too wide

103. *rang gi ngo bos grub pa* (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 1985: 648:5), (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 2000–2004: 3:199).

104. *kun brtags* (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 1985: 644:20), (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 2000–2004: 3:196).

105. *don dam pa'i bden pa ni chos nyid la rang bzhin du bzhag pa der grub kyang rang bzhin der 'jog byed bcos ma min pa dang | gzhan la mi ltos pa ni rang gi ngo bos grub pa'i rang bzhin der cung zad kyang med pa* (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 1985: 648:3–5), (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 2000–2004: 3:199). An alternative translation of this passage is in Magee (1999: 92–93).

106. *rang gi ngo bo'i sgo nas yul gyi steng du grub pa*. The relevant passage from Ngag dbang dpal ldan is cited in Magee (1999: 94–95).

107. (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 1985: 644:18–645:1), (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 2000–2004: 3:196).

108. See Magee (1999: 96).

a notion to capture the object of negation, which is therefore further specified as an innate rather than an acquired misconception.[109]

absolute svabhāva as essence-svabhāva Let us conclude by considering one final way of distinguishing substance-*svabhāva* from absolute *svabhāva* in order to solve the apparent contradiction inherent in this understanding of emptiness. [110] The basic idea is that, while agreeing that both substance-*svabhāva* and absolute *svabhāva* are characterized as (a) not fabricated (*akṛtrimah.*), (b) immutable (*na anyathābhāvah.*), and (c) not dependent (*nirapekṣah.*), we assume that (b) and (c) are understood in very different ways for the two different notions of *svabhāva*. But let us consider these three characterizations in turn.

Absolute *svabhāva* is described as not fabricated (*akṛtrimah.*) or as "complete nonorigination" (*sarvaśa anutpāda*) to make clear that it is not in any way produced together with an empty object and does not cease once the object is destroyed. It is therefore unlike the hole in a cup or a vase, which is dependent on the cup or vase for its existence and is destroyed if the cup or vase is broken.

This point can be clarified by considering Candrakīrti's assertion that *svabhāva* "neither exists, nor does not exist, by intrinsic nature."[111] It is evident that since *svabhāva* does not exist, it also does not exist by intrinsic nature. But why does it not fail to exist by intrinsic nature? In other words, why does emptiness not exist by substance-*svabhāva*? After all, for Nāgārjuna phenomena do not just happen to lack *svabhāva*, but could not have possibly had *svabhāva* no matter what.

What Candrakīrti wants to say here is that the property of lacking *svabhāva* is dependent as well, since it depends on the erroneous ascription of *svabhāva* in the first place. It is not a property that phenomena have independently of everything else. If someone hallucinates white mice running across his desk, then part of what it means that this is a hallucination is that there are in fact no white mice on his desk. But even someone with a rather promiscuous attitude toward existence-claims concerning properties would hesitate to say that besides being brown, rectangular, and more than two feet high, the table also has the property of being free of white mice. If there is any distinction to be made

109. The problem of the differentiation between substance-*svabhāva* and absolute *svabhāva* was later further elaborated in the Tibetan tradition in the context of the debate over self-emptiness (*rang stong*) and other-emptiness (*gzhan stong*). For further details see Hookham (1991); Magee (1999: 103–115).

110. I thank Mattia Salvini for a helpful discussion of this point.

111. *na tadasti na cāpi nāsti svarūpatah.* PP 264:3. The terms *svarūpa* and *svabhāva* are generally used interchangeably by Candrakīrti.

between the properties an object has in itself and those that are merely ascribed to it by an observer, purely negative properties such as being not round or being free of white mice seem to be the best candidates for being included in the latter category.

Candrakīrti stresses this point in a passage dealing with a person suffering from vitreous floaters[112] which cause the illusory appearance of hairlike objects in the visual field.[113] An ordinary observer would not generally ascribe the property "free of hairs" to an empty pot, since this is one of the countless things the empty pot is empty of. But in order to correct the impression of the patient with the eye disease, the pot might indeed be described in this way. The property of hairlessness (like that of the absence of *svabhāva*) is something ascribed to an object to correct a mistaken attribution of the property of being filled with hairs. It is not a property an object would have independently of such an attempt to rectify a mistake.

Emptiness as a correction of a mistaken belief in *svabhāva* is therefore not anything objects have from their own side, nor is it something that is causally produced together with the object, like the empty space in a cup. It is also not something that is a necessary part of conceptualizing objects, since its only purpose is to dispel a certain erroneous conception of objects. In the same way as it is not necessary to conceive of tables as free of white mice in order to conceive of them at all, in the same way a mind not prone to ascribing substance*svabhāva* to objects does not need to conceive of objects as empty in order to conceive of them correctly.

When absolute *svabhāva* is interpreted as immutable (*na anyathābhāvah.*), as changelessness (*avikaritva*) and ever-abidingness (*sadaiva sthāyitā*), this interpretation does not mean the same as, for example, the Sarvāstivādin's primary existents (*dravya*) being described in this way. Emptiness is not to be regarded as some unchanging, permanent, absolute reality. Candrakīrti does not mean that if some empty object like a pot or a flower is destroyed the pot's or flower's emptiness somehow stays behind, as it is changeless and ever-abiding. If the pot or flower is destroyed, there is no use in referring to its emptiness. The point is rather that *whatever* phenomenon is conceptualized by ordinary beings will turn out to be empty, since they will ascribe substance-*svabhāva* to this phenomenon, and it is empty of such *svabhāva*. In this sense emptiness is unchanging, since it is a property to be ascribed to all things ever considered, once they have been correctly analyzed.

112. *rab rib, timira*.

113. MA 6:29, MAB 106:10–110:3.

Finally, when we say that something is not dependent (*nirapekṣah.*), there are two different things we can mean. We might want to say that it does not depend on *any object whatsoever* or that it does not depend on *some specific object*. For example, when saying that a mathematical theorem is independent we might make the claim that it does not depend on anything (human beings, minds, the world) for its existence, or we might mean something much weaker, namely that it does not depend on some particular thing (the person who proved the theorem, its inscription on a blackboard), that is, that it would exist if someone else had proved it or if some inscription or other existed on some blackboard or other.

These two meanings can also be employed when one is speaking about *svabhāva*. We could say that if something exists by *svabhāva*, it does not depend on anything whatsoever. This is the meaning of *svabhāva* that is usually identified with substance-*svabhāva* and that corresponds to the Sarvāstivādin's primary existent. But we could also say some property exists by *svabhāva* if *as long as any objects are around* they have that property. This, I would want to argue, is the best way to understand the assertion of emptiness being not dependent. It does not mean that emptiness is some sort of primordial reality *ante rem* but rather that as long as objects exist, and are conceived of by beings with deluded minds more or less like ours, then these objects will be empty.

The bottom line of this way of resolving the difficulty is the claim that for Nāgārjuna there are not three different senses of *svabhāva*, but only two. Absolute *svabhāva* is equated with the essence-*svabhāva* of all objects. In the same way as the property of heat constitutes the essence-*svabhāva* of fire, emptiness, that is, the absence of substance-*svabhāva*, constitutes the essence-*svabhāva* of all things. There are therefore only two different senses of *svabhāva* to be distinguished, namely essence-*svabhāva* and substance-*svabhāva*; what I have called "absolute *svabhāva*" turns out to be an instance of the former. Apart from resolving the above contradiction, this view also allows us to make sense of such characterizations of emptiness as the "objecthood of objects" (*dharmān. ām. dharmatā*), "thusness" (*tathatā*), "intrinsic nature" (*tatsvarūpam*), or "original nature" (*prakṛti*). These epithets do not equate emptiness with some objectively existent noumenal reality but simply indicate that emptiness is a property all objects could not lose without ceasing to be those very objects.

2.2. The Cognitive Dimension

If we conceive of the Mādhyamika arguments about *svabhāva* solely in ontological and semantic terms, we are likely to miss one important dimension of the

concept which occupies a central place in the Buddhist understanding of emptiness. This is the idea that the purpose of determining the existence or nonexistence of substance-*svabhāva* is not just to arrive at a theoretically satisfactory understanding of the fundamental objects that make up the world, or of the relation between words and their referents, but is supposed to have far more comprehensive implications for how we interact with the world. Nāgārjuna notes in the final verses of chapter 26 of the MMK:[114]

[W]ith the cessation of ignorance, formations will not arise. Moreover, the cessation of ignorance occurs through right understanding (*jñāna*). Through the cessation of this and that [link of dependent origination] this and that [other link] will not come about. The entire mass of suffering thereby completely ceases.

Nāgārjuna claims here that with the realization of the nonexistence of substance-*svabhāva*, the first link (ignorance) of the twelve links of dependent origination, which constitutes the fundamental Buddhist theory of the generation of the cognitive constitution of the human mind,[115] will cease to exist. The first link being cut off, all consecutive links, beginning with formations, will no longer arise. With the cessation of the entire chain, Nāgārjuna argues, suffering, which is the distinguishing mark of human existence, will cease as well. How exactly the twelve links of origination are to be interpreted, and how the cessation of ignorance brings them to a halt, is a complex and much debated question within Buddhist philosophy. It is not one I want to focus on in this context, however. The main idea I want to highlight here is that the cessation of suffering is supposed to be brought about by a cognitive shift, which is constituted by the realization of the absence of *svabhāva*.

Candrakīrti remarks in his commentary on the above passage that "the one who sees dependent origination correctly does not perceive a substance (*svarūpa*) even in subtle things."[116] Note that *svabhāva* is here not regarded as a theoretical posit, as something an ontologist or semanticist might postulate when investigating the world or its representation in language. The underlying idea here is rather that seeing objects in terms of *svabhāva* is a kind of cognitive default which is criticized by Madhyamaka arguments against *svabhāva*, such as ones described above. It is important to realize that *svabhāva* is seen here as playing a fundamental *cognitive* role insofar as objects are usually conceptualized in terms of *svabhāva*. This conceptualization (which the Mādhyamika tries to argue is also theoretically deficient) is taken to be the ultimate cause of suffering. According to this cognitive understanding, *svabhāva* is here regarded as a superimposition (*samāropa*) which the mind naturally projects onto objects when attempting to conceptualize the world. The term *samāropa* is mentioned only once by Nāgārjuna in the MMK[117] but acquires a more prominent rôle in Candrakīrti's commentary. I think that agreeing with Candrakīrti about the presence of a notion of *svabhāva* as superimposition in Nāgārjuna's arguments allows us to give a theoretically coherent account of his view of *svabhāva*, while it also helps us to understand why the establishment of the absence of substance- *svabhāva* occupies such a central place in Madhyamaka thinking.

Candrakīrti argues that the understanding of *svabhāva* in terms of a superimposition is of central importance for understanding the entire intellectual enterprise of the MMK:

Thus, when it is said that entities do not arise in this way, first of all the initial chapter was written to counter the mistaken attribution (*adhyāropa*) of false intrinsic natures; the remaining chapters were written to eliminate whatever distinctions are superimposed anywhere.[118]

It is important to note that Candrakīrti is concerned not merely with the refutation of a theory he assumes to be mistaken, but with something more fundamental:

For one on the road of cyclic existence who pursues an inverted [view] due to ignorance, a mistaken object such as the superimposition (*samāropa*) on the aggregates appears as real, but it does not appear to one who is close to the view of the real nature of things.[119]

Independent of one's particular theoretical position concerning the existence or nonexistence of *svabhāva, svabhāva* is something which is superimposed on ordinary objects in the process of conceptualization. The five aggregates, for example, are seen as a single, permanent, independent self, because of the superimposition of *svabhāva* on such a basis. The same happens when ordinary

114. *avidyāyām. niruddhāyāṃsamskārān. ām asam. bhavah. / āvidyāyā nirodhas tu jñānasyāsyaiva bhāvanāt // tasya tasya nirodhena tat tan nābhipravartate / duh. khaskandhah. kevalo 'yam evaṃsamyag nirudhyate*. MMK 26: 11–12.

115. See Willams and Tribe (2000: 62–72) for an overview.

116. *yo hi pratītyasamutpādaṃsamyak paśyatīti sa sūkṣmasyāpi bhāvasya na svarūpam upalabhate*. PP 559:3–4.

117. MMK 16:10. See Tanji (2000: 352, 355).

118. *tasmād anuppanā bhāvā ity evam. tāvad viparītasvarūpādhyāropapratipakṣeṇa prathamaprakaran. ārambhah. | idānīṃkvacid yah. kaścid viśes. o 'dhyāropitas tad viśeṣāpākaran. ārtham. śeṣaprakaran. ārabhyah.* . PP 58:10–11.

119. *saṃsārādhvani vartamānānām avidyāviparyāsānugamān mṛṣārtha eva skandhasamāropah. satyatah. pratibhāsamānah. padārthatattvadarśanasamīpasthānām. na pratibhāsate*. PP 347:1–3.

partite and causally produced material objects, linguistic items, and so forth are apprehended.

It is because this cognitive default of the superimposition of *svabhāva* is seen as the primary cause of suffering that the Mādhyamika draws a distinction between the *understanding* of arguments establishing emptiness and its *realization*. Being convinced by some Madhyamaka argument that an object does not exist with *svabhāva* does usually not entail that the object will not still appear to us as having *svabhāva*. The elimination of this appearance is achieved only by the realization of emptiness. The ultimate aim of the Mādhyamika project is therefore not just the establishment of a particular ontological or semantic theory, but the achievement of a *cognitive change*. The elimination of *svabhāva* as a theoretical posit by means of arguments such as those presented above has to be followed by its elimination as an automatic cognitive superimposition by means of specific practices.

But what kind of evidence is there that *svabhāva* constitutes an automatic cognitive superimposition? I agree with Tillemans that for anyone trying to establish this point "the Indian Mādhyamika literature would offer very little evidence, apart from a number of quotations from scriptures and a lot of doctrinal talk about people being ignorant, under the influence of karma, etc."[120]

However, it might be possible to adduce some evidence from other sources which make this assumption at least plausible. Buddhist philosophy generally assumes that the superimposition of *svabhāva* applies to two things: to the self and to other phenomena we encounter. This superimposition at least entails conceiving of the self as *unitary* and *permanent*, and also viewing objects as *external* or *observer-independent* as well as *permanent*. We will have more to say on the former when considering Nāgārjuna's analysis of the self later on, so let us at the moment just consider our perception of objects. I would like to suggest that there is a cognitive default which (a) determines that, other things being equal, we conceive of a sequence of stimuli as corresponding to a single enduring (though changing) object rather than to a sequence of different, momentary ones, and (b) makes it more likely that we assume an external rather than internal object as being the source of the stimulus. Let me call these the *principle of permanence* and the *principle of externality*.

The principle of permanence ensures that we generally conceive of objects as enduring phenomena which may change over time but still remain fundamentally the same object, rather than as unrelated momentarily arising and ceasing phenomena, each of which lasts only for an instant. It should be noted that this latter way of interpreting the information we get through the senses is not in any way logically deficient, it is just not the way we see the world. There are good reasons why we do not do so, primarily that such a representation is vastly too complex to use in practice. Any mind who lived in such a world of kaleidoscopically flashing phenomena would presumably be at an evolutionary disadvantage when compared with one that represented a world of stable, enduring objects. The principle of externality makes us assume that the causes of sensory stimuli are objects lying outside of us rather than the product of our own perceptive mechanism. We generally assume that our perception is evidence for things lying outside of ourselves and that we do not live in a hallucinatory world of our own devising. Again, such a principle makes evolutionary sense: running away from an imaginary tiger is not as detrimental to our chances of passing on our genes as is declaring a real tiger rushing toward us to be a figment of our imagination.

Whether the principles of permanence and externality really determine our conceptualization of the world is of course an empirical question which can hardly be decided in a philosophical discussion such as this. What we can do, however, is to acquaint the reader with two simple empirical results which could serve as evidence that something like these two principles might play an important role in our cognitive access to the world.

The first is the so-called beta phenomenon, which has been known to experimental psychologists for a long time.[121] The subject of the experiment is shown two slides, the first of which contains a dot in the top left-hand corner, the other a dot in the bottom right-hand corner. What the subject perceives if these slides are shown in quick succession is not two stationary dots, but a *single* dot moving diagonally from the top left to the bottom right across the slides. What has happened here is that our brain has interpreted the sequence of two stationary dots as a single moving object which is seen first on the left and then on the right. Rather than interpreting this particular stimulus as one object appearing at one spot and immediately disappearing, followed by another object appearing at a different spot, the principle of permanence causes us to see the two dots as indications of a single object changing its position in space. When offered the choice of regarding some sequence of stimuli either as corresponding to a series of momentarily arising and ceasing objects or as an enduring object changing its attributes, our brain seems to opt automatically for the latter.[122]

120. Tillemans (2001: 18).

121. The earliest description of the beta phenomenon is in Wertheimer (1912); further results and interpretations are given by Dennett (1991) (who erroneously refers to it as the phi phenomenon) and Hoffman (1998).

122. The problem of "object permanence," i.e., of the question when two distinct perceptions of an object are regarded as being caused by a single thing, has been investigated extensively in developmental

Some evidence for the principle of externality can be drawn from the psychological investigation of dreaming, in particular of the phenomenon of lucid dreaming.[123] A lucid dream is a dream in which the dreamer is conscious of dreaming without waking up. Although lucid dreams happen spontaneously to some people, there are also a variety of techniques for inducing them.[124] But the fact that some special effort is required to have a lucid dream points to the fact that our natural reaction to perceptions in dreams is to regard them as caused by external objects rather than by our own mind. So it seems that our view of sensory information both in the waking state and in the dream state is generally determined by the principle of externality: in both cases we regard the source of the information to be something that is both external to us and existing independently of us. It requires a particular cognitive effort to question in a dream whether the things one sees are indeed caused by external sources, an effort which appears to be essential in inducing lucid dreaming.

If it is plausible to understand the Mādhyamika's notion of superimposition (*samāropa*) of substance-*svabhāva* in terms of certain cognitive defaults (such as the principles of permanence and externality)[125] which govern our representation of the world, then it becomes clear why the Mādhyamika draws a sharp line between intellectual understanding and realization. As familiarity with any optical illusion attests, neither merely understanding *that* it is an illusion, nor even understanding *how* it works, will make the illusion go away. Now if there was a way of training oneself out of perceiving a particular illusion, we would have an apt example of the relation between understanding and insight as seen by the Mādhyamika. First of all we have to gain an understanding of how the illusion (in this case the superimposition of substance-*svabhāva*) works, and in a second step we have to follow some training which eventually makes even the appearance of the illusion go away.

But now this point also indicates the limitations of appealing to results from cognitive science for gaining a better understanding of *svabhāva*. Even though such references are useful in giving us an idea of why the Mādhyamika's view of superimposition could be plausible, they give us very little insight into how the removal of such superimpositions could be possible and what it would entail. The reason is obvious: according to the traditional Buddhist view, those who have realized (as opposed to merely understood) the absence of *svabhāva* and thereby emptiness are few and far between. Empirical research into the way such persons perceive the world is therefore naturally difficult. Fortunately this is not a task the present discussion has to achieve. For our purposes it is sufficient to point out that a mere understanding of *svabhāva* as a theoretical posit (arrived at within an ontological or semantic theory) is not sufficient for understanding the central role it occupies in Buddhist thought. The notion of *svabhāva* must also be something that plays a much larger part in the mental life of the majority of people who are after all neither ontologists nor semanticists. The cognitive understanding of *svabhāva* provides us with an interpretation that achieves this goal.

psychology. See Piaget (1937) and Spelke (1990) for two now classical discussions. An interesting related experiment is described in Subbotskii (1991).

123. LaBerge et al. (1986).

124. LaBerge and Rheingold.

125. Further investigation of our perceptions of the self, of causality, or of mereological relations might provide other aspects which cohere with the view of *svabhāva* as a superimposition.

3

The Role of Negation in Nāgārjuna's Arguments

Chapter 2 acquainted the reader with the main objective of Madhyamaka thought, that is the rejection of *svabhāva.* Before we can discuss the further ramifications of this idea in Nāgārjuna's philosophy, it is necessary to discuss some formal aspects of his arguments which those acquainted primarily with Western philosophical literature might find puzzling. They arise mainly from specific logical and methodological considerations connected with the concept of negation which were widespread in Indian philosophy but are not always shared by the Western notion of negation, which is derived primarily from formal logic. What makes the issue particularly intricate is the fact that there exists a tension between some presuppositions of the traditional Indian account of negation and the contents of Nāgārjuna's philosophical views, so that Nāgārjuna sometimes sees himself challenged to adapt these presuppositions in order to formulate his philosophical position.

In this chapter I will discuss Nāgārjuna's view of the standard conception of negation as presented in the Nyāya system. Chapter 4 will discuss a specific form of argument, the *catuṣkoṭi* or tetralemma, which is frequently employed in Nāgārjuna's writings and essentially involves single and iterated negations.

Nāgārjuna's central argumentative aim is to develop a philosophical theory which does not have recourse to the notion of substance or *svabhāva.* His main strategy is to examine all the possible ways in

which particular phenomena (such as physical objects, causation, the self, language, etc.) could be thought to exist with *svabhāva,* and to conclude that on close inspection none of these are satisfactory. It then remains to conclude that the phenomenon in question does *not* exist with *svabhāva.* Since many of Nāgārjuna's conclusions are therefore negative ones, it is essential to gain a clear understanding of the role of negation in his philosophical system. Doing so is more difficult than it may sound initially, especially because Nāgārjuna's discussion of these matters, the greatest part of which is to be found in the VV and, to a lesser extent, in the VP, is formulated against the background of the Nyāya theory of negation. This differs significantly from accounts of negation with which those acquainted primarily with Western philosophical discussions are likely to be familiar.

3.1. Nyāya Theory of Negation

The philosophical system known as "Nyāya" incorporates a comprehensive theory of logic and epistemology which proved to be extremely important in Indian intellectual history, influencing not only different kinds of philosophical inquiry, but also such disciplines as linguistics, poetics, rhetoric, and law.[1] The system is based on the *Nyāyasūtra* attributed to Gautama (also known as Akṣapāda). There is little agreement on when the sūtra was composed; the dates proposed range from the sixth century b.c. up to the second century a.d.[2] It is, however, relatively clear that it achieved the form in which it has been transmitted to us around the time of Nāgārjuna and might even have in parts been composed as a reply to Nāgārjuna's arguments.[3] We must therefore keep in mind that when we refer to the relations between Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka and Nyāya we are dealing with a very early phase of the latter. At Nāgārjuna's time none of the long sequence of works on Nyāya,[4] including Vātsyāyana's *Bhāṣya*, had been written yet.[5]

1. Matilal (1968: 21); Potter (1970–2003: II, 1–3); Guha (1979: 1–2). A concise summary of the assumptions underlying the Nyāya system is given in Matilal (1986: 5–6).

2. Potter (1970–2003: II, 4). Jha (1939: viii) even suggests a date of composition as late as the sixth century a.d. A comprehensive account of the history of the composition of the NS is given in Meuthrath (1996).

3. Bronkhorst (1985) argues the greatest part of the NS existed before Nāgārjuna and was known to him, and that some parts were added later in response to Madhyamaka objections. Bronkhorst's conclusions have been severely criticized by Oetke in his (1991) and (1997). For a reply see Bronkhorst (1993).

4. Potter (1970–2003: II, 9–12).

5. For more details on the relation between the VV and the NS see Meuthrath (1999).

In order to understand the Nyāya theory of negation, we have to note that in the underlying ontological system, properties are seen as separate entities over and above the substrata in which they inhere.[6] Now the Naiyāyika regards the absence (*abhāva*) of a property as a category in its own right (*padārtha*),[7] as something that can equally be possessed by a substratum.[8] The referent of a negative statement such as "there is no pot in the house" is therefore regarded as the qualification of the house by an absence, namely the absence of a pot.[9] Judgments, whether they are affirmative ("There is a pot in the house") or negative ("There is no pot in the house") involve a qualification or an attribution, which can be either an attribution of a presence or an attribution of an absence. As such the attribution can be construed as either affirmative or negative. Whether it is expressed by an affirmative or a negative statement is then a question about how the judgment of that attribution is formulated in ordinary language, not a fact about the attribution itself.[10]

According to the Naiyāyika account, a judgment is correct if it combines some parts of reality in the way in which they are indeed combined (such as the house and the absence of the pot, if there is no pot in the house), and it is erroneous if it combines elements from reality in a way in which they are not combined (such as the house and the absence of the pot if there *is* a pot in the house).[11] Error will therefore always arise from the way elements are combined in judgments, never from simple perceptions. For the Naiyāyika "a simple, noncomplex property can never be empty."[12]

6. Matilal (1968: 16). The Nyāya system of logic and epistemology usually relies on the Vaiśeṣika ontology. The association between the two systems is so close that one often refers to them jointly as Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Opinions differ on how the two systems came to be associated, and even on whether we are to speak of two systems rather than one. See Potter (1970–2003: II, 12–13); Bronkhorst (1985: 123–124).

7. Chatterjee (1939: 166–168); Sharma (1970: 11–12).

8. We will not go into the reasons offered in defense of this assumption. Sharma (1970: 3–11) argues that the conception of liberation (*mokṣa* or *apavarga*) espoused by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas made it "imperative for this system to posit Absence as an ultimately real entity (*padārtha*)" (6), so that this ontological point also acquired soteriological significance.

9. Matilal (1968: 3).

10. Matilal (1968: 92–93).

11. Matilal (1970: 95). As such there is a close similarity between this view and the familiar correspondence account of truth we find, for example, in a semantics based on states of affairs. There the sentence "there is a pot in the house" is regarded as true iff the referents of the constituents of the sentence (the pot, the house, the "inside of" relation) are arranged in structurally the same way in the state of affairs in which the constituents are arranged in the sentence. The main difference is, of course, that this view does not accord any ontological status to absences, as the Nyāya theory does.

12. Matilal (1970: 96).

3.2. Negation and Nondenoting Terms This concept leaves us with a substantial difficulty if we want to deny the existence of certain entities, for the Naiyāyika faces the very problem Quine observes at the beginning of "On what there is":[13]

When I try to formulate our difference of opinion, I seem to be in a predicament. I cannot admit that there are some things which [my opponent] McX countenances and I do not, for in admitting that there are such things I should be contradicting my own rejection of them.

Suppose we want to say that Pegasus does not exist (or that every place is characterized by an absence of Pegasus). Such a judgment would intuitively be regarded as true, but for the Naiyāyika a true judgment has to combine elements of reality in the right way. But Pegasus is not an element of reality, since he does not exist. Matilal observes:[14]

The property of Pegasus-ness thus arrived at would be, according to Nyāya, unexampled or fictitious because it has no locus to occur in, that is, no locus possesses this property. In such cases, Nyāya asserts that we cannot even say that such a property is absent or does not occur somewhere. . . . Thus, if a sentence is said to express an absence of such an unexampled property, it becomes nonsensical.

Now of course this does not mean that in adopting the Nyāya semantics we have no way of saying that a possible entity (like Pegasus) or an impossible one (like the round square) does not exist. If this was indeed the case it would not be a very satisfactory theory to begin with. What we have to do is to rephrase the statement to make evident that the source of the vacuity of such properties is the combination of more basic properties each of which exists in reality but which are not thus combined in the world. So the Naiyāyika can make the meaningful assertion that wingedness and horseness are never combined in the same animal, and that roundness and squareness are never combined in the same figure.[15] All the properties referred to now have referents in reality, so the Naiyāyika's semantics is taken care of.[16] There is an obvious similarity between this approach and the Russellian procedure of replacing a non-denoting term by a definite description.[17]

13. Quine (1953: 1).

14. Matilal (1968: 154–155).

15. See Uddyotakara's commentary on the *Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya* 3.1.1 Chakravarti (1982: 232–233).

16. Matilal (1968: 9, 23).

17. Matilal (1970: 85), Chakravarti (1982: 211–212).

This view of non-denoting terms is just a reflection of the fact that for the Naiyāyika, language must hook up with the world at some fundamental level via a denotation relation. Even if there are non-denoting terms in our language, they can exist only parasitic on denoting terms. Simple designators are therefore guaranteed to refer, while complex designators may or may not do so. This of course means that according to Nyāya theory, negative statements involving simple designators (statements of absence of some entity) can only ever be statements of a local absence and will always entail the presence of that entity somewhere else.[18] In his *Vārttika* on Vātsyāyana's *Bhāṣya* on 2.1.12 of the NS Uddyotakara notes:[19]

[W]hen the word "jar" is coordinated with the term "does not exist" it does not convey the non-existence of the jar; all that it does is to deny, either the [spatial] connection of the jar with the house or its specification [as located at] a particular point in time.

Since the statement "There is no pot in the house" or "There is an absence of a pot in the house" is meaningful only if the pot referred to does indeed exist, it must be present somewhere else. It would be nonsensical if there were no pots at all, at least if "pot" is regarded as a simple designator. Vātsyāyana raises this objection in his commentary on the passage from the NS 2.1.11, where he argues against the opponent's attempt to deny the existence of means of knowledge:[20]

If you want to deny the existence [of the means of knowledge, this denial] implies their existence, and the refutation of [means of knowledge like] perception and so forth is not accomplished.

Phaṇibhūṣana's subcommentary elucidates this point by adding:[21]

The very attempt to deny their existence presupposes the admission of their existence inasmuch as there is no sense in demolishing the possible existence of something which has no existence at all, just as it is impossible to smash with a stick the jar which does not exist.

18. Phaṇibhūṣaṇa (Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya 1968: II:28) remarks that "there is no sense in denying the absolutely non-existent like a flower imagined to blossom in the sky. The denial of something can have sense only when its existence is admitted somewhere else, e.g., to say that there is no jar in the room means that it exists elsewhere."

19. *na hy ayam. nāsti nāsamānādhikaran. o ghat.ādiśabdo ghat.ābhāvam. pratipādayati api tu gehaghat.asam. yogam. vā kālaviśeṣam. vā* [. . .] *pratiṣedhati.* Gautama (1887: 192: 20–22); Jha (1984: II: 623).

20. *tad yadi sambhavo nivartyate sati sambhave pratyakṣādīnām. pratiṣedhānupapatih. .* Nyaya-Tarkatirtha and Tarkatirtha (1985: 425: 2–3).

21. Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya (1968: 2: 26).

The idea that simple designators have to have a denotation seems to possess some intuitive plausibility. Suppose I present you with some simple, non-denoting name such as "Hopzik." You could not be taught the meaning of "Hopzik" by ostension (since there are none), nor could I give you an analysis in terms of other properties (since it is a simple designator). But then the problem occurs of how you could make sense of *any* sentence containing the term "Hopzik," including statements such as "Hopzik does not exist." We do not have any idea what this negation means, since we do not have any positive notion of the entity being negated.

Having taken account of this background, it is understandable that the issue of non-denoting terms is raised by the Naiyāyika opponent against the central philosophical thesis of Madhyamaka that there is no *svabhāva.* He argues that if the Madhyamaka claim was true and if there was indeed no *svabhāva,* then the claim would be nonsensical. For if a negative statement about *svabhāva* was interpreted along the same lines as a negative statement about a pot in the house,[22] we would have to hold that the existent *svabhāva* stood in an absence relation to the world in the same way as the pot stood in an absence relation to the house. But if we understand the statement in *this* way, *svabhāva* exists after all and so the Madhyamaka thesis must be false. The statement "there is no *svabhāva*" has to be either false or nonsensical, since "there is no name without referent."[23]

A later manifestation of the same difficulty can be found in certain problems connected with formal reasoning.[24] According to the Nyāya theory, a formally set out "inference for oneself" (*svārthānumāna*) establishing that the subject (*pakṣa*) has the qualifying property (*sādhya*) must provide both an agreeing and a disagreeing example (*udāharaṇa*).[25] Thus, in order to establish the thesis that all white things are colored we need both an "agreeing" example of a subject having the qualifying property (such as a conch shell, which is both white and colored), as well as a "disagreeing" example of the contraposed version ("whatever is not colored is not white," space, which is neither, being a case in point).

But we realize that this reasoning leads to a problem if we assert a universal thesis such as "all things lack *svabhāva*" or "all things are momentary." In this case the disagreeing example would have to be an instance of some object that has *svabhāva* or is not momentary. Since we want to establish that there are no such things, the term has to be empty. But if the occurrence of an empty term renders a statement meaningless, as the Naiyāyika asserts, it immediately follows that the two theses cannot be established. If, on the other hand, the two theses are meaningful (as they appear to be), then they must assert absences of existent things, and *svabhāva* or the property of permanence must exist. So once again we are faced with the unenviable choice between falsity and nonsense. Nāgārjuna suggests a variety of possible replies to the Nyāya difficulty of non-denoting terms. First of all he remarks:[26]

To one who says that the name is *sadbhūta* you would have to reply: "There is *svabhāva.".* . . [However,] since things have no *svabhāva,* that name also lacks *svabhāva.* Because of this it is empty, and, being empty, it is not *sadbhūta.*

Bhattacharya[27] here translates *sadbhūta* as "existent." This does not strike me as a very fortunate rendering, primarily because Nāgārjuna does not want to claim that emptiness entails a lack of existence. It is evident that what Nāgārjuna wants to say in the first sentence is that if the Nyāya account was indeed correct (and each simple term in a negative statement had to denote an existent object), *svabhāva* would exist. It therefore seems plausible that saying that a name is *sadbhūta* is supposed to mean not that the name exists (something that neither Nāgārjuna nor his opponent denies) but that it functions in accordance with Nyāya theory: that each non-complex term is hooked up with a designated object in the real world.

But this is exactly what the proponent of emptiness denies. For the Mādhyamika, a satisfactory semantics cannot consist in an objectively existent reference relation which links the terms of our language to an objectively existent world. He will argue that both the question of how the world is sliced up into individual entities and the question of how these entities link up with the parts of language are to be settled by convention. There is no "ready-made world" of simples out there which could provide the semantic foundation for the simple terms of our language.[28]

Nāgārjuna therefore argues in this passage that the Naiyāyika criticism is justified only if one is antecedently convinced of the Nyāya picture of semantics. This, however, is something that the Mādhyamika does not want to share.

22. VV 11.

23. *nāma hi nirvastukam. nāsti.* VV 9.

24. This is discussed in Matilal's analysis of part of the *Ātmatattvaviveka* by Udayana (10–11th century a.d.) in (1970).

25. For a concise summary of the Nyāya theory of inference see, Potter (1970–2003: II, 179–208).

26. *yo nāmātra sadbhūtam. brūyāt sasvabhāva iti evam bhavatā prativaktavyah. syāt* | [. . .] *tad api hi bhāvasvabhāvasya abhāvān nāma nih. svabhāvam tasmāc chhūnyam śunyatvād asadbhūtam.* VV(S) 76:16–77:2.

27. Bhattacharya et al. (1978: 128).

28. See chapter 9 for further discussion of this point.

We might wonder at this point why a relatively obvious reply to the Naiyāyika worries about statements like "there are no objects existing with *svabhāva*" is not made by the Mādhyamika. This reply consists in arguing that *svabhāva* is not a simple designator. As we saw earlier it is possible to assert that there are no unicorns even on Nyāya terms. This is done by rephrasing the statement as an assertion about real entities (such as hornedness and horseness) that do not occur together. We could now similarly break up the property "existing with *svabhāva*" into its simpler components (such as not depending causally on other phenomena, not depending notionally on other phenomena, and so forth) and argue that since all these dependence relations exist, all we are asserting by a statement denying *svabhāva* is that there is no object that is qualified by the absence of all these dependence relations at the same time.

This reply is certainly adequate for answering the Naiyāyika worry, but it is hardly a position a Mādhyamika would want to adopt without further qualification. For, according to the Naiyāyika's interpretation of this answer, there is still a world of objectively existent simple properties which the simple terms in our language refer to in a way that is independent of linguistic conventions. While the statement "there is no *svabhāva*" is thus at least rendered comprehensible to the Naiyāyika, it is done so at the price of accepting a view of semantics fundamentally at odds with the one the Mādhyamika is arguing for. For this reason trying to establish that *svabhāva* is a complex designator is not a very satisfactory response by Madhyamaka standards.

Within the context of discussing the problem of negating a non-denoting term, Nāgārjuna also discusses a somewhat curious objection raised in VV 12. The opponent asks about the point of negating a non-existent object since "the negation of a non-existent, such as the coolness of fire or the burning of water, is established without words."[29] This passage assumes that there are two kinds of negation for the opponent: those established without words, and those established with words. If one looks at the choice of examples used, it seems that members of the former group include negations of an essential property of an object, such as the heat of fire. What kinds of negation are included in the latter group is not quite clear. A reasonable assumption is to include negative contingent statements in here (such as "There is no pot in the house"). Now the opponent does not want to say that the absence of the pot in the house is *brought about* by the assertion "there is no pot in the house": just saying it is so does not make it so.

There are two different ways of understanding what the opponent could mean here. First, note that the Naiyāyika does not draw any fundamental distinction between the judgments expressed by affirmative and negative statements. As Matilal observes:[30]

> All determinate cognitions or judgmental cognitions (*savikalpa jñāna*), which can be very well regarded as the counterpart of statements, involve a qualification or attribution, and such an attribution cannot be construed as either affirmative or negative.

The affirmative–negative distinction is not one the Naiyāyika regards as ontologically fundamental. Whether a particular statement is affirmative or negative just mirrors the way the particular qualification or attribution is expressed in ordinary language. What is meant therefore by saying that a negation such as "There is no pot in the house" is established with words is that it is only by the force of language that a negative meaning is expressed. The world itself contains no negations, only presences and absences of different kinds. It is only the words that bring negations into existence.

The absence of a non-existent entity (such as the absence of the opposite of an essential quality, like the absence of coolness in fire) can be regarded as a "negation established without words" (*vacanād vinā siddhah. pratiṣedhah.*), since it cannot rely on language for its expression as a negation, because the Nyāya restrictions on non-denoting terms render the phrase "absence of coolness of fire" meaningless. It is of course the case that there is no coolness in fire, but, for the sake of argument assuming that "coolness of fire" is a simple designator, this is not something that can be expressed in language, nor is it something that indeed needs to be expressed. We might, after all, think there is a pot in the house when there is none, but who would think there is coolness to be found in fire?

Second, we can understand the claim that some negations are established with words while some are established without not as referring to the negation itself, but rather as referring to the corresponding *cognition of the negation* created in our mind.[31] To establish a cognition like the one that there is no pot in the house, we generally need language (since we are not able to inspect all the parts of a house at once). Other cognitions, however, like those that fire is not cool and water is not burning, are established without linguistic mediation. Our acquaintance with fire or water directly acquaints us with these essential properties of them. There is therefore no need to assert the absence of properties that are opposed to the essential nature of things in language. Because the

29. *asato hi vacanādvinā siddhah. pratiṣedhah. tadyathāgneḥśaityasya apāmauṣn. yasya.* VV(S) 51:6–7.

30. Matilal (1968: 92).

31. As argued below on page 64 this is also the most satisfactory way to understand the opponent's worry about the temporal relations between negation and negated object.

claim concerning the absence of *svabhāva* is of the very same nature, it is therefore not obvious what the point of asserting this negation is supposed to be.

Nāgārjuna replies by saying that the purpose of a statement such as "there is no *svabhāva*" is to point out the absence of *svabhāva,* not to create the absence of something which is in fact there.[32] He uses the example of saying "Devadatta is not in the house" when he is in fact not there—this statement obviously just reports the absence of Devadatta and does not cause him not to be in the house.[33] We noted above that it is quite unlikely that the opponent should hold such a peculiar position, unless what is created is supposed to be the cognition of the absence, rather than the absence itself. In this case Nāgārjuna could be interpreted as saying that both kinds of negation, those involving essential and nonessential properties, have to be linguistically mediated to be cognized by us.

What would be replied to our first interpretation of the opponent's worry, that is, the position that the absence of something necessarily non-existent (such as the coolness of fire, or the *svabhāva* of things) cannot and need not be expressed? We have already seen that the impossibility of expressing such negations depends on the peculiar nature of the Nyāya semantics which the Madhyamaka will not want to accept. And concerning the need to express this negation, the Madhyamaka will argue that while nobody in his right mind will think fire to be cool (and could therefore benefit from having this pointed out to him), the belief in the *svabhāva* of things is extremely widespread, and realizing its falsity is one of the essential preconditions of liberation. Thinking that there is *svabhāva* in things is like thinking there to be real water in a mirage.

Deceived people who are likely to run toward the mirage to quench their thirst will benefit from getting to know that there is no real water there, just as ordinary people will benefit from learning that things exist without *svabhāva.*[34] Nevertheless we might think that when we negate water perceived in a mirage, there is still the person perceiving the mirage, its perception, and the perceived object (i.e., the mirage), as well as the person doing the negating (us), the negation, and the object negated (namely real water in the mirage).[35] But if this is the case, the Naiyāyika will argue we are facing the familiar problem again: if the thing we negate (the mirage, *svabhāva*) does exist after all, then the statement asserting its negation is obviously a falsity. If, on the other hand none of them exist, if there is no perceiver, perception, and perceived object, no negator, negation, and object to be negated,[36] then the Madhyamaka argument vanishes altogether and the existence of *svabhāva* is established by default.[37]

What we have to say here (and what Nāgārjuna in fact does say)[38] is that all these things can exist without existing in quite the way the Naiyāyika supposes. As we have seen for the Naiyāyika, each of the different entities referred to by the simple designators in a negative statement (a statement of absence) has to be real for the statement to be meaningful. The Mādhyamika, however, thinks that an unreal entity, such as the water in a mirage or the appearance of *svabhāva,* can very well be the object of an (erroneous) cognitive state and also be able to be referred to in a true sentence. From the fact that "something has become the 'object' (*viṣaya*) of a cognitive state, it does not follow that it must have been causally related to the production of that cognitive state."[39] This is due to the fact that for the Mādhyamika the source of error is not located exclusively in the erroneous combination of individually existing properties, as the Naiyāyika assumes.[40] The example of the mirage presents us with the case of a simple yet erroneous perception. As long as we assume that the object of perception and the object of negation are all dependently arisen objects rather than entities existing in their own right, we can deny their existence without antecedently having to regard them as real.[41]

Even though the term "the water in the mirage" is non-denoting, since there is no water in the mirage, there is still something created by the interplay of our senses, light, and heat on which the presence of water is superimposed, which we can subsequently deny. Similarly our language and general cognitive habits can, the Mādhyamika argues, create the unreal superimposition (*samāropa*) of *svabhāva* which Nāgārjuna's arguments set out to refute.

32. VV 64.

33. A similar point is made by Uddyotakara in his *Vārttika* on Vātsyāyana's *Bhāṣya* on NS 2, 1, 11: "negation does not have the power to make an existing thing otherwise [i.e., non-existent]. Because it makes something known, it does not cause the existence of something to cease; [therefore] this negation [too] makes something known and does not cause the existence of something to cease." *na ca pratiṣedhasyaitat sāmarthyam. yad vidyamānam. padārtham anyathā kuryat jñāpakatvāc ca na sam. bhavanivṛttih. jñāpako 'yam. pratiṣedho na sam. bhavanivartaka iti.* Gautama (1887: 191: 13–15); Jha 1984: (II: 619).

34. VV 13.

35. VV 14.

36. Of course what the opponent must mean here is that the object of negation (i.e. *svabhāva*) does not exist *as an object of negation* (because there is no negation), not that it does not exist at all.

37. VV 15–16.

38. VV 65–67.

39. Matilal (1970: 94).

40. Matilal (1970: 96).

41. VP 16. This point is also underlined by Candrakīrti in commenting on MMK 15:11: "A healthy person does not perceive any of the hairs which appear to one afflicted by vitreous floaters. When he says 'these [hairs] are not,' he does not say that they are an existing entity the existence of which was denied because the object of negation is not real. In the same sense we say that 'all things are not,' in order to remove clinging to an error in those who see things in the wrong way like those afflicted by vitreous floaters." *yas tu taimirikopalabdha keśes. viva vitaimiriko na kim. cid upalabhate sa nāsti iti brūvan kim. cin nāsti iti brūyāt pratiṣedhyābhāvāt | viparyastānām. tu mithyābhiniveśanivṛttyartham ataimirikā iva vayam. brūmo na santi sarvbhāvā iti.* PP 273:14–274:3.

3.3. Negation and Temporal Relations

Apart from worries about negative statements involving non-denoting terms, the second main difficulty to do with negation raised by Nāgārjuna's opponent concerns the possible temporal relation between a negation and the object negated.[42] This is a form of argument which we encounter frequently in Nāgārjuna's works, the most prominent examples being in the discussion of the relation between means of knowledge and object known, and between cause and effect.

The worry of the opponent is that there is a general difficulty with negative statements (including the Mādhyamika's assertion that there is no object with *svabhāva*). He argues that the negation can exist neither before, after, nor at the same time as the object of negation, and therefore cannot possibly exist. Now this might strike us as a strange position to maintain. Since we usually regard negation as a *logical* relation, temporal considerations seem to be wholly irrelevant, in the same way as there is no point in asking which numbers in a mathematical equation are there first.

In order to see the point at issue here, we have to note that for the Naiyāyika the negation is the instrument making known a particular absence of a quality in some substratum. This making known is obviously a causal process,[43] so that it is clear that the Naiyāyika worries here just stem from an application of Nāgārjuna's criticism of causation[44] to epistemology. The Naiyāyika will argue that if causes and effects cannot exist standing in any of the three temporal relations (as the Mādhyamika sets out to show), then this must also apply to *epistemic* causes and effects,[45] and thus also to negations, which constitute one particular kind of epistemic cause. Therefore, if we take the Madhyamaka view of causation seriously, we have a problem with establishing the negative thesis that there are no objects with *svabhāva.*

The argument itself proceeds in the expected manner. The opponent argues that the negation cannot exist before the object to be negated, because then there would be a negation without anything negated. More worryingly, if the negated object does not (yet) exist, what is the point of negating it? Nor could the negation exist *after* the object of negation, for what is the point of negating something existing? We also have to note that it is only the causal interpretation of negation in this context which allows us to make sense of the opponent's criticism of the simultaneous existence of the negation and its object. We might think that this was indeed a satisfactory way of thinking of the two (in the same way in which we might think that all the numbers in a mathematical equation exist at the same time). But in considering negation in causal terms we face the problem that "the negation is not the cause of the object known by negation, nor is the object known by negation the cause of the negation."[46] As is illustrated by the familiar analogy of the two horns of a cow[47] which do not cause each other, in the case of simultaneously existing cause and effect we would have a problem in establishing which is which, since the conceptual distinction between cause and effect is drawn in terms of temporal priority.

There are various ways in which one can respond to this problem. In VV 69 Nāgārjuna tries to turn the tables on his opponent.[48] As we saw, for the Naiyāyika the existence of a negation is equivalent to the existence of an object of negation, that is, of an object whose absence in a particular substratum could be asserted. But if there is no negation, as the Naiyāyika has just been trying to argue, there is also no object whose absence can be asserted, and therefore it follows *on the Naiyāyika*'s *own terms* that there is no *svabhāva.*[49]

A more general way of replying is to point out that in the same way as we can still talk about causal relations even if the realist's picture of causality turns out to be unsatisfactory, the fact that some epistemic process cannot be made sense of in Nyāya terms does not mean it could not be made sense of at all. After all, what Nāgārjuna criticizes in his analysis of causation is the conception of causes and effects as mutually independent, objectively existing entities. Similarly, in his treatment of epistemology he sets out to refute the conception that being a means of knowledge is an essential property of some cognitive processes. If we do not make this presupposition, however, there is nothing intrinsically problematic with the existence of causes and effects in general, and also not with causes and effects in epistemic processes.

42. VP 20, VP 13–15. The same problem is raised in NS 2.1.12 (NS 425–426).

43. See Jha (1984: 621).

44. See the discussion in chapter 5.

45. VP 12.

46. *na pratiṣedhah. pratiṣedhasyārthasya kāraṇam pratiṣedhyo na pratiṣedhasya ca.* VV(S). 54:13–14. This translation appears to me more satisfactory than that of Bhattacharya's, who just has "object of negation" for *pratis. edhasya ārtha* (Bhattacharya et al. 1978: 106). It would seem very peculiar to ascribe to Nāgārjuna's Naiyāyika opponent the view that the object of negation is causally brought about by the negation (or the other way round).

47. See Bhattacharya et al. (1978: 106, n. 1) for a list of references to this example.

48. "By virtue of your statement a negation is not possible in the three times, and, like the negation, the thing to be negated also [does not exist]." *tathā hi tvadvacanena pratiṣedhastraikālye 'nupapanna pratiṣedhavat sa pratiṣedhyo 'pi.* VV(S) 83:17–18.

49. In VP 14–15 we find a different reply. Here the opponent argues that once the existence of the means and objects of knowledge is denied in the three times, this denial then also infects the possibility of negation *of the means and objects of knowledge,* which also has to exist in the three times. Nāgārjuna then replies that it is not feasible to first accept the negation of some object and then use this very acceptance to argue for its existence. See the commentary in Tola and Dragonetti (1995b: 108–110).

4

The *Catuṣkoṭi* or Tetralemma

The second major formal aspects of Nāgārjuna's arguments we have to discuss is the *catuṣkoṭi* or tetralemma. Even though Nāgārjuna employs this argumentative figure frequently and at important points in his arguments, it is by no means restricted to his writings. In fact the tetralemma is likely to be familiar to any reader of Buddhist philosophical literature. Roughly speaking it consists of the enumeration of four alternatives: that some proposition holds, that it fails to hold, that it both holds and fails to hold, that it neither holds nor fails to hold. The tetralemma also constitutes one of the more puzzling features of Buddhist philosophy, because the use to which it is put in arguments is not immediately obvious and certainly not uniform: sometimes one of the four possibilities is selected as "the right one," sometimes all four are rejected, sometimes all four are affirmed. It seems that this confusion is only exacerbated by the plethora of treatments we find in the modern commentarial literature, many of which try to analyze the tetralemma by recourse to notions of modern logic. There is no agreement about whether the four alternatives are to be understood as quantified[1] or unquantified propositions,[2] whether any quantification is to be understood substitutionally or referentially,[3] whether the Law of the Excluded Middle holds for them,[4] or whether they should be formalized in classical,[5] intuitionist[6] or paraconsistent logic.[7]

1. Robinson (1967: 57–58).

2. Schayer (1933: 93).

3. Tillemans (1990: 75).

Despite some important work done during the last decades,[8] a comprehensive study of the origin and development of the *catuṣkoṭi* from its use in the earliest Buddhist literature up to its later employment in the Buddhist philosophical works of Tibet, China, and Japan remains yet to be written. This chapter obviously does not intend to fill this gap but has the more modest and more specific objective of giving an interpretation of Nāgārjuna's employment of the tetralemma that both makes logical sense and sheds most light on Nāgārjuna's philosophical position.[9]

This discussion is divided into four main parts. The first discusses the Indian distinction between two kinds of negation which will be of central importance for understanding the interrelations of the nested negations found in the tetralemma. The second section considers what might be taken to be a simplified case of the *catuṣkoṭi*, namely Nāgārjuna's rejection of two alternatives, of a position and its negation. Once the resources for understanding the argumentative role of this argument-schema are in place, we can move on to the third section, in which Nāgārjuna's use of the tetralemma proper as the negation of four alternatives is considered. This section concentrates on three main questions: whether the four alternatives are logically independent, what the status of the third, "contradictory" alternative is, and how instances of the *catuṣkoṭi* applied to properties are to be related to those applied to relations. The fourth and final section concludes this discussion with an account of the positive tetralemma, in which all four alternatives are affirmed.

4.1. Two Kinds of Negation

The Indian philosophical tradition distinguishes two kinds of negation, referred to as *prasajya* and *paryudāsa.* The origin of this distinction is grammatical; in *prasajya*-negation the negative particle connects with a verb (as in *brāhmaṇa nāsti*, "This is not a brahmin"); in *paryudāsa*-negation it connects with a noun (as in *abrāhmaṇa asti*, "This is a nonbrahmin").[10]

4. Murti (1955: 146); Staal (1975: 46–47); Napper (1989: 672–673, n. 83).

5. Robinson (1957).

6. Chi (1969: 162–163).

7. Priest and Garfield (2002).

8. One of the most thorough treatments pertaining to its usage in the Madhyamaka context is given by Ruegg (1977).

9. To this extent the present discussion differs importantly from treatments like that of Robinson (1975), who explicitly restricted his investigation to the formal aspects of Nāgārjuna's arguments (295).

10. Oberhammer et al. (1991–: II:163).

This grammatical distinction corresponds to an important semantic distinction. If we refer to somebody as a non-brahmin, we negate the term “brahmin” and simultaneously affirm that he is a member of one of the three other castes. If, however, we simply say “This is not a brahmin,” we negate a proposition (i.e., “This is a brahmin”) rather than a term (“brahmin”) and we do not imply that we speak about a person belonging to one of the three lower castes; in fact we do not have to speak about a person at all.[11] In the Indian philosophical discussion (and particularly in the Madhyamaka context) it is this semantic distinction between implicational term-negation and non-implicational propositional negation which the terms *paryudāsa* and *prasajya* are supposed to mark. It is therefore not necessarily the case that, for example, non-implicational propositional *prasajya*-negation is expressed as verbally bound.[12]

In fact this distinction is very familiar to contemporary philosophers. Not only can the grammatical distinction from Sanskrit be easily replicated in English, but the semantic distinction between the two types of negation also features prominently in the current discussion, particularly concerning the notion of a category mistake. Given that numbers are abstract objects, it is clear that claiming “The number seven is green” is a category mistake. But what about “The number seven is not green”? This depends on how we take negation to operate in this case.

It has been argued by a variety of authors[13] that we have to distinguish two kinds of negation, called *choice negation* and *exclusion negation*. A choice negation presupposes that an object falls under a property or its opposite. Presupposing that the apple on the table has some color or other, it must either be red or non-red. If we negate one alternative, we affirm the other. Exclusion negation, on the other hand, “is supposed to reject merely what is denied, without making any presuppositions as to the fulfillment of sortal specifications.”[14] Thus if we deny that the apple on the table is divisible by three, we do not presuppose that it is the kind of thing that *could* be divided by three, but we still (correctly) assert that it does not fall under the property “divisible by three.” It is then evident that “The number seven is not green” is a category mistake only if the negation employed is taken to be a choice negation, not if it is an exclusion negation.

While the distinction between choice negation and exclusion negation gives us a good model for understanding the distinction between *paryudāsa* and *prasajya* negations, the two distinctions should not be identified, since there is no textual evidence that Indian thinkers connected the distinction between the two kinds of negation specifically with categorial considerations. Rather, the difference between choice and exclusion negation should be considered as *one example* of the difference the pair *paryudāsa* and *prasajya* indicates. This is the difference between negations carrying with them the presuppositions implied by the propositions they negate, and those that deny these presuppositions. Thus reading the “not” in “The number seven is not green” as a choice negation carries with it a presupposition “The number seven is green” makes, namely that seven is a thing that could be green. This assumption is denied if the “not” is read as an exclusion negation.

Examples of these different kinds of negation that do not rely on sortal considerations are not hard to come by. There are two ways of negating the assertion that the present King of France is bald, one making the negation true, the other making it false or meaningless[15]; similarly there are two ways of negating the accusation of continuing to be an alcoholic, one asserting that one has stopped drinking now, the other also denying the implication that one ever was a heavy drinker.[16]

As I will argue, the best way of interpreting Nāgārjuna’s arguments is based on understanding the concepts *paryudāsa* and *prasajya* in this particular manner. That is, *paryudāsa*-negations will be regarded as negations that continue to endorse the presuppositions made by the proposition they negate, while the purpose of *prasajya*-negations is to be able to formulate negations that explicitly reject some of these presuppositions.

4.2. Rejection of Two Alternatives

The distinction between the two kinds of negation helps to understand an important methodological tool which is used extensively throughout Nāgārjuna’s writings. Consider MMK 18:10, which sets out claiming that

11. Renou (1942: II: 11); Cardona (1967: 40); Kajiyama (1973: 167–174).

12. Ruegg (1977: 5), (2002: 20–21).

13. Mannoury (1947); Pap (1960); Routley (1969); Sommers (1965).

14. Thomason (1972: 242).

15. The first being “It is not the case that there is somebody who is both the King of France and bald,” the other “The present King of France is not bald (i.e., he has a full head of hair).” The difference between the two is drawn in terms of the scope of the negation operator, that is, put formally, as the difference between $\neg(\exists!)(Kx \wedge Bx)$ and $(\exists!)(Kx \wedge \neg Bx)$.

16. Shaw (1978: 63–64) notes the interesting idea of representing the proposition a sentence expresses as an ordered set, the last member of which is the sentence itself, the preceding one expressing the presuppositions that sentence makes, the one preceding this its presuppositions in turn, and so on. A *paryudāsa*-negation can then be understood as negating the final member of the set only, whereas a *prasajya*-negation negates both it and some (possibly all) of its predecessors.

whatever comes into being dependent on some object is not identical with that object, nor is it different from that object.[17]

If we ascribe to Nāgārjuna anything like the standard conception of identity (i.e., that identity is the relation that everything bears to itself, and that nothing bears to any other object), it seems hard to make sense of it, at least if we want to stay within the domain of classical logic. Nāgārjuna considers the property "being identical with the object it depends on for coming about" (which we will abbreviate to "being identical with *a*") and he denies that it applies to any object and also denies that it fails to apply to any object. Expressed semiformally this gives

1. For all *x* which come into being depending on some particular object, not (identical-with-*a*[*x*] or not identical-with-*a*[*x*]*).* But applying the familiar laws of logic (in this case DeMorgan's law and Double Negation Elimination), this statement can easily be seen to be equivalent to

2. For all *x* which come into being depending on some particular object (not identical-with-*a*[*x*] and identical-with-*a*[*x*]*)*, which is a contradiction.

How can this interpretation be avoided? The key lies in the distinction between the two kinds of negation. We have to assume that the two occurrences of "not" in 1 do not in fact refer to the same concept of negation, but rather that the first is a *prasajya*-negation, a presupposition-cancelling negation,[18] and the second is a *paryudāsa*-negation, understood as a presupposition-preserving negation.

Taking the first negation as *prasajya* is also suggested by Matilal,[19] who claims that on this interpretation "the apparent contradiction of the joint negation" disappears.[20] Staal claims that such attempts to avoid inconsistency are unsuccessful, since "it is not true that contradictions do not arise between *prasajya*-negations."[21] However, this reasoning disregards the fact that Matilal's point was that only the outer negation of the two alternatives is to be regarded as *prasajya*, while the negations employed *within* the statement of the alternatives are supposed to be *paryudāsa*-negations. It is therefore the entire set of two mutually exclusive alternatives that is negated, and on this interpretation there is indeed nothing inconsistent about it.

In order to see the motivation for this employment of two kinds of negation, we have to understand that one of Nāgārjuna's main aims in the MMK as well as elsewhere is to demonstrate the deficiency of some key concepts of our conceptual scheme (such as causation, motion, identity, and so forth).[22] Their deficiency is taken to be due to a presupposition failure: in the same way that we spot a deficiency in calling the number seven yellow (because the presupposition that numbers are things that could possibly have a color is not fulfilled), Nāgārjuna regards commonsense concepts like causation to be deficient because they presuppose the existence of *svabhāva*, the independent existence of objects, which, Nāgārjuna argues, is a presupposition that is not fulfilled.[23] It then becomes easy to see that statement 1 should be interpreted along the lines of

3. For all numbers *x, not* (yellow[*x*] or not yellow[*x*]).

If the outer negation is taken to be exclusion negation and the second to be choice negation, we cannot just read this statement as implying the contradictory statement that all numbers are both yellow and not yellow. Rather we will read it as denying (in a *prasajya*-manner) that the property yellowness and its (*paryudāsa*) opposite (which would imply that numbers were of some other color) fail to be applicable to numbers.[24] Interpreted in this way, since the outer negation is read as exclusion negation, statement 3 does also not presuppose that any *other* property is in fact applicable to numbers. In the context of statement 3 this neutrality is not particulary important, since we usually would want to claim that there are other (mathematical) properties that are applicable to numbers. It is important for statement 1, however, since Nāgārjuna wants

17. *pratītya yad yad bhavati na hi tāvat tad eva tat / na cānyad api* [. . .].

18. That the first instance of negation is supposed to be *prasajya* is stated both by Candrakīrti in PP 13:5 (see Ruegg (2002: 19) for a translation and commentary), and earlier by Bhāviveka in the *Prajñāpradīpa* (Walleser 1914: 10:8). Candrakīrti does not explicitly say what kind of negation the *second* negation is. It is evident, however, that for him it cannot be *prasajya*-negation too. Considering the first two alternatives of the tetralemma, Candrakīrti argues against the claim that the negation of the first alternative (A) logically implies (*prāpnoti*) the second alternative (not *A*). If the "not" in this "not *A*" was indeed taken to be *prasajya*, it would be obviously entailed by the *prasajya*-negation of *A*. Since it is not so entailed, however, it cannot be a *prasajya*-negation as well. It is therefore plausible to regard the second kind of negation as *paryudāsa*, an assumption which, as we shall see, also makes a good deal of exegetical sense.

19. Matilal (1971: 164).

20. Matilal refers both to the negation of two and of four alternatives (the *catuṣkoṭi*). As we will see, the interpretation of the latter involves additional complications of which Matilal does not seem to be aware.

21. See Staal (1975: 46). He also claims that the principle of contradiction holds *only* for *prasajya*- and not for *paryudāsa*-negations, a claim which he backs up by reference to the Mīmāṃsā concept of two kinds of *paryudāsa* (Staal 1962: 60–61). But this claim can serve only to show that the Madhyamaka concept of *paryudāsa* is quite different as it is manifestly taken to be subject to the principle of contradiction. Compare the characterization of *paryudāsa* by Avalokitavrata given in Kajiyama (1973: 169–172).

22. Ganeri (2001: 45–47).

23. Ruegg (1977: 51).

24. See Galloway (1989: n. 13, 29–30). "*x* is yellow" and "*x* is not yellow" are contraries when the referent of *x* is sortally incorrect (since they are both false). If the referent is sortally correct they are contradictories. See Raju (1954: 710–711).

to extend his arguments to all other *svabhāva*-presupposing concepts (which, according to him, are all the concepts we usually operate with). If we therefore read the first "not" in Nāgārjuna's statement as *prasajya* and the second as *paryudāsa*, the following interpretation emerges:

4. It is denied that either the concept "identical-with-a" or its choice negation "different-from-a" can be ascribed to any object *x* which comes into being depending on some particular object, without assuming that there is any pair of a concept and its choice negation one of which *can* be applied to such an object.

In order to demonstrate the deficiency of a concept, Nāgārjuna then has to examine both the concept and its *paryudāsa*-negation and show that both are not applicable to the objects under discussion, in the same way in which we argue that the concept "yellow" is not applicable to numbers because numbers, not being material objects, cannot have a property like yellowness (which is exclusively had by spatio-temporal objects), nor can they have any other color (the *paryudāsa*-negation of the concept "yellow").[25]

4.3. Rejection of Four Alternatives

As will be obvious to any reader of Nāgārjuna's writings, far more common than the case just discussed, where two alternatives (a concept and its *paryudāsa*negation) are both rejected, is the rejection of *four* alternatives: the rejection of the application of a concept, of the application of its negation, of the application of both the concept and its negation, and finally of the application of neither the concept nor its negation. For example we read in MMK 22:11: "Empty" should not be asserted, "non-empty" should not be asserted, both or neither should not be asserted, since these are only said for the purpose of designation.[26]

The same argumentative pattern of the rejection of four alternatives is also applied to "permanence" and "finitude" concerning the Buddha,[27] to the existence of nirvāṇa,[28] to the existence of persons in the past,[29] to their permanence, [30] and to the finitude of the world.[31]

The employment of the tetralemma can be traced back to the earliest Buddhist scriptures. In the *Kandaraka Sutta* the four alternatives are employed as a classificatory tool for distinguishing four classes of ascetics: those that torment themselves, that torment others, that torment both, and that torment neither.[32] In this case the fourth alternative is explicitly recommended by the Buddha as the ideal to be emulated.

A case of the rejection of the four alternatives by the Buddha concerning the question whether the Tathāgata exists after death[33] can be found in the *Aggivacchagotta Sutta*[34] and the *Cūl.amālunkya Sutta*.[35] Although the relationship between the use of the tetralemma in early Buddhism[36] and its employment by later Madhyamaka authors is complex and will not be investigated here, it is nevertheless important to note at least that two different motivations can be discerned in the Buddha's rejection of the four alternatives. One motivation is pragmatic; deciding which of the four positions holds regarding specific questions (such as whether the Tathāgata exists after death, whether the world is finite, etc.) is seen to be irrelevant for the attainment of liberation. The Buddha therefore wants to set these questions aside, as is illustrated in the well-known simile of the poisoned arrow.[37] The other motivation is systematic; the Buddha argues that the predicates applied in the four alternatives under consideration are in fact not applicable to their respective subjects, in the same way as any specification of spatial coordinates is not applicable in reply to the question where the extinguished flame of a candle went.[38] All members of an exhaustive set of applications of such predicates (which the four alternatives are taken to be) therefore have to be rejected.

4.3.1. Distinctness of the Four Alternatives

There are a variety of *prima facie* difficulties in interpreting the four statements of the tetralemma. The first difficulty concerns the distinctness of the four

25. Raju (1954: 701–702) employs this argumentative procedure to show that neither the concept "positive" nor its *paryudāsa*-negation "negative" is applicable to the number zero (*śūnya* in Sanskrit) and claims that similarly for the Mādhyamika no concept is applicable to emptiness (*śūnyatā*). We should note, however, that there is no evidence in the Madhyamaka literature of an explicit connection between the mathematical concept *śūnya* and the metaphysical concept *śūnyatā* having ever been made. See Ruegg (1977: 69, n. 154), (1978), Galloway (1989: 27–28, n. 7).

26. *śūnyam iti na vaktavyam aśūnyam iti vā bhavet / ubhayam. nobhayam. ceti prajñaptyartham. tu kathyate.*

27. MMK 22:12.

28. MMK 25.

29. MMK 27:13.

30. MMK 27:15–18.

31. MMK 27:25–28.

32. Trencker (1888: 1:341); Bikkhu Nalamoli and Bikkhu Bodhi (2001: 445).

33. Nāgārjuna considers the same question in MMK 22:12.

34. Trencker (1888: 1:484–485); Bikkhu Nalamoli and Bikkhu Bodhi (2001: 591).

35. Trencker (1888: 1:431); Bikkhu Nalamoli and Bikkhu Bodhi (2001: 536).

36. For some material on this see Gunaratne (1980).

37. Trencker (1888: 429); Bikkhu Nalamoli and Bikkhu Bodhi (2001: 534–535).

38. Trencker (1888: 486–487); Bikkhu Nalamoli and Bikkhu Bodhi (2001: 593).

alternatives. It is fairly common in the Western commentarial literature to express the tetralemma in propositional form, so that in MMK 22:11 cited above (letting A stand for the proposition " 'Empty' should be asserted") Nāgārjuna is taken to say that all of the following propositions are to be rejected:[39]

1. A
2. $\neg A$
3. $A \wedge \neg A$
4. $\neg(A \vee \neg A)$

It is easy to see, however, that on this understanding the final two alternatives come out as logically equivalent.[40] Given the prominent place which the tetralemma occupies in Madhyamaka literature, we would have to charge both Nāgārjuna and later Madhyamaka authors with remarkable logical naïvety for not realizing that instead of considering four possibilities, they were in fact dealing with only three.

In order to see how to solve this difficulty, it is important to realize that once the fourth alternative is rejected, we are dealing with a statement with three nested negations, namely $\neg\neg(A \vee \neg A)$.[41] If we read the negation-symbols as just straight truth-functional negation, both this and the negation of the third alternative turn out to be equivalent to $A \vee \neg A$, and it is obvious that this is not the conclusion Nāgārjuna wants to draw.[42] I have already argued that

39. See, e.g., Schayer (1933: 93), Galloway (1989: 16), Ng (1993: 93), Tillemans (1999: 134). In some cases the equivalent form $(\neg A \wedge \neg\neg A)$ is given for the fourth alternative. The reader might wonder why we expressed the fourth alternative as "not (A *or* not A)" rather than "not (A *and* not A)," i.e., as the negation of the third alternative, which would be equivalent to "A or not A." If we look at the way the fourth alternative is formulated in the MMK, we realize that there is a considerable amount of variation which seems to allow both formalizations. We sometimes find it formulated as *na ubhayam* "not both [the first and second alternative]" (22:11, 25:17, 25:23, 27:13), which supports the reading as "not (A *and* not A)" and sometimes as *naiva . . . naiva . . .* "not even . . ., not even . . ." (18:8, 25:15–16) or *na . . . na . . . ca* "not . . . and not . . ." (25:22), which seems to support the reading as "not (A *or* not A)." The reason for this variation is not that Nāgārjuna had problems distinguishing "and" and "or" but rather that the context makes it clear that "not (A *or* not A)" is intended. If we read the fourth alternative as "not (A *and* not A)" this interpretation leaves us with three possible ways in which it could be true: either A obtains and not-A does not, A does not obtain and not-A obtains, or A does not obtain and not-A does not obtain either. Given that the first two possibilities would be inconsistent with the rejections of the first two alternatives earlier in the argument, we are left with the third possibility, which just says the same as "not (A *or* not A)."

40. Applying DeMorgan's law to the fourth alternative, $\neg(A \vee \neg A)$, we get $(\neg A \wedge \neg\neg A)$, which, by Double Negation Elimination, is equivalent to $A \wedge \neg A$, i.e., the third alternative. Robinson (1967: 57) is one of the surprisingly few authors to have picked up on this very problematic issue.

41. After the relevant parts of MMK 22:11 are rearranged, it is straightforward to see the three stacked occurrences of negation it contains (here highlighted in bold): **na** *vaktavyam* **na** *ubhayam śūnyam* **a***śūnyam*. See also 27:13.

42. It is interesting to note that the Tibetan commentarial tradition tried to avoid this difficulty by plugging in various modifiers, such as "ultimately" (*don dam par*) or "conventionally" (*tha snyad du*). If these are

the two instances of negation in such statements as MMK 18:10 should be regarded as different kinds of negation, namely that the outer had to be taken as *prasajya*-negation and the inner as *paryudāsa*-negation. Since it is evident that the negation involved in the rejection of the four alternatives is meant to be *prasajya*-negation,[43] the rejection of the fourth alternative would then have to be read as

prasajya-$\neg$ *prasajya*-$\neg(A \vee$ *paryudāsa*-$\neg A)$.

If we now assumed that *prasajya*-negation obeyed Double Negation Elimination, in other words that an even number of such negations cancelled each other out, this assumption would mean the rejection of the fourth alternative entailed the assertion of either A or its *paryudāsa*-negation, which is clearly not what Nāgārjuna wants to say. I therefore want to argue that this assumption is indeed not justified, that $\neg\neg A \equiv A$ does not hold when the negation is taken to be *prasajya*-negation.

It is sometimes remarked in the contemporary commentarial literature that the notion of negation at work in Madhyamaka arguments should be understood along the lines of intuitionist negation, which famously does not accept the equivalence $\neg\neg A \equiv A$.[44] It has to be kept in mind, however, that the intuitionist rejection of $\neg\neg A \equiv A$, which went hand in hand with a negation of the Law of the Excluded Middle, was motivated by very specific mathematical reasons. Since the negation symbol was interpreted as expressing our ability to give a *reductio ad absurdum* of the mathematical proposition to be negated, while the assertion of an unnegated proposition was taken to imply our ability to provide a proof of that proposition, $\neg\neg A$ could not entail A, because a demonstration

abbreviated by U and C, respectively, the tetralemma is taken to assert that all of the following should be rejected:

1. UA
2. C$\neg A$
3. U$A \wedge$C$\neg A$
4. $\neg$ U$A \wedge \neg$C$\neg A$

It it thereby denied that A obtains ultimately, that it conventionally fails to obtain, that it both ultimately obtains and conventionally fails to obtain, and finally that it neither ultimately obtains nor conventionally fails to obtain. Tillemans (1999: 134–137) gives an example (slightly more intricate than the above) of such an interpolation procedure from Se ra rje btsun chos kyi rgyal mtshan's *sKabs dang po'i spyi*. It is evident that on this account the third and fourth alternatives are not in turn equivalent to the Law of the Excluded Middle, without requiring us to assume that negation behaves non-classically. While the dGe lugs interpolation procedure here (as well as in other contexts) provides a very interesting interpretation of the Madhyamaka arguments there seems to be no textual evidence that Nāgārjuna expected qualifications of the above kind to be supplied when is interpreting the tetralemma.

43. As stressed in PP 13:5.

44. For an exposition of intuitionist logic, see Heyting (1971). The intuitionist reading was considered by Chi (1969: 162–163) and Staal (1975: 47).

that we cannot disprove a proposition does not amount to a proof of that proposition.[45] Moreover, given the existence of undecided mathematical sentences, the intuitionist is unwilling to accept that we are able to provide either a proof or a refutation of each mathematical proposition, which is what $A \vee \neg A$ means for him.[46] It is obvious that these problems in the ontology of mathematics were not problems Nāgārjuna was concerned with.[47] What speaks furthermore against the intuitionist interpretation of Madhyamaka negation is the fact that while it is sensible to argue that *prasajya*-negation does not obey $\neg\neg A \equiv A$ in order to make sense of the tetralemma, I do not think Nāgārjuna also rejected the Law of the Excluded Middle for it.[48] For even if some property (or indeed all properties) should turn out to be inapplicable to an object, the *prasajya*negation of the ascription of the property to the object should be affirmed. And given that Nāgārjuna does not express any doubts about our ability to check whether properties are in fact applicable to objects in general, it appears to be unproblematic to affirm that $A \vee \neg A$ holds for *prasajya*-negation, that is, to assume for any property and any object, that either this property is applicable to the object or it is not.[49]

There does not seem to be any direct textual evidence in Indian Madhyamaka literature stating that *prasajya*-negation does not obey $\neg\neg A \equiv A$.[50] If we consider one example of a presupposition-cancelling *prasajya*-negation discussed above, namely the case of exclusion negation, it seems plausible that $\neg\neg A \equiv A$ does not hold for it. Remember that when we use choice negation to negate a statement such as "The apple is red," we are merely saying of the apple that it has some other color. To use set-theoretic terminology, we assert (within the domain of colored things) that the apple belongs to the complement of the set of red things. Now if we use choice negation twice, saying "The apple is not not red," we are just saying that the apple belongs to the complement of the complement of the set of red things, which is of course the set of red things itself. In brief, we just say that the apple is red.

Exclusion negation, on the other hand, would be used to negate a statement such as "The number seven is yellow," thereby claiming that yellowness not just fails to be true of the number seven, but is indeed not applicable to it. If we then iterate this exclusion negation, we say that it is not applicable to assert of the number seven that the property of yellowness is not applicable to it—and whatever this means, it seems quite distinct from saying that the number seven is yellow.

Be this as it may, I think there is a more elegant way to dissolve the above difficulty of iterated negations. This involves the notion of *illocutionary negation*.[51] The underlying idea is that propositions expressing a content can be prefixed by illocutionary operators forming assertions, commands, requests, promises, and so on. Thus, ascribing the property of being open to the window produces the assertion "The window is open" when prefixed by the assertion operator, the command "Open the window!" when prefixed by the command operator, and so on. It is now important for our purposes to note that when one of these results is negated, it makes a difference whether or not the negation operator is within the scope of the illocutionary force operator, that is, whether we say "I promise not to open the window" or "I do not promise to open the window." Similarly there is a distinction between "I assert that the window is not open" and "I do not assert that the window is open"—the first involving familiar propositional negation, the second illocutionary negation.

There are various reasons why someone may employ illocutionary negation. One example is obviously when the proposition to be negated carries an unwelcome presupposition which propositional negation would preserve. Thus we will be happy to say "I do not assert that the number seven is yellow" (presumably together with "I do not assert that the number seven is not yellow"), but not "I assert that the number seven is not yellow." In other words, one motivation for using illocutionary negation is the desire to employ a *prasajya*- rather than *paryudāsa*-negation because we want to reject a particular presupposition made by the sentence to be negated. Note, however, that this is not the only reason why we might use illocutionary negation. Another obvious candidate is lack of evidence. We might say "I do not assert that the continuum hypothesis is true" in order to indicate that we have no good evidence either way; in

45. See Heyting (1971: 17–18) for an example.

46. Heyting (1971: 99–100).

47. In (1974: 297) Richard Chi agrees with this point, calling his earlier intuitionist analysis of the tetralemma a "mistake": "Despite the superficial resemblance, it is incredible that Nāgārjuna and Brouwer could possibly think in the same way. Dialectics and pure mathematics are, after all, two different disciplines. The agreement of the two systems is a sheer coincidence; they reach the same result for different reasons."

48. Nor did Tsong kha pa. See Napper (1989: 61).

49. That Nāgārjuna accepts the Law of the Excluded Middle is also argued by Ruegg (1977: 48–49). His argument there, however, is based on the erroneous presupposition (also made by Staal [1975: 47]) that the intuitionist has to assume the existence of a third truth-value (see Dummett [1998: 178], [2000: 11]).

50. An interesting case of a Tibetan rejection of this principle is provided by the Sa skya pa scholar Go rams ba bsod nams seng ge. As Tillemans (1999: 137) has argued, according to the mainstream dGe lugs approach the Tibetan analogues of *prasajya*- and *paryudāsa*-negation, *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag*, were assumed to obey $\neg\neg A \equiv A$. (See, e.g., Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1973: 43–44).) Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1988: 51–52), however, rejects this principle, precisely to make sense of the tetralemma without the dGe lugs-style interpolations.

51. Searle (1969: 31–33); the distinction of illocutionary force from content goes back to Frege. The relevance of illocutionary negation to this problem was suggested by Jayatilleke (1963: 346, 475), (1967: 81), Chakravarti (1980), Ruegg (1983: 238), and Matilal (1986: 66–67, 88–90).

this case the presupposition-cancelling consideration involved when discussing the color of the number seven does not come into play. We do not want to say that the continuum hypothesis is not the kind of thing that could be true or false. A third case in which we might want to apply illocutionary negation to a proposition *A* is one in which *A* is not part of our language and we have no way of translating it. In this case we would not want to assert *A*, because we do not know which situation would make it true and which would make it false. It is therefore evident that illocutionary negation is a more general notion than presupposition-cancelling *prasajya*-negation: it incorporates it, but it subsumes other considerations as well.

It is now tempting to interpret the tetralemma as asserting that illocutionary negation[52] should be applied to the following positions:

1. A

2. $\neg A$

3. A and $\neg A$

4. I do not assert (A or $\neg A$)

Here the negation-operator $\neg$ is to be read again as *paryudāsa*-negation. The focus of our attention is of course the negation of the fourth alternative, which now features two illocutionary negations in a row:

I do not assert that I do not assert that (A or $\neg A$).

The advantage of replacing the *prasajya*-negations in this way by illocutionary negations is that it allows us to see straightaway that the two negations do not reduce to an unnegated proposition, that is, that $\neg\neg A \equiv A$ does not hold. Declining to assert a proposition that in turn asserts that we decline to assert a third proposition does not amount to an assertion of this third proposition. Tillemans has argued that the illocutionary reading of *prasajya*-negation in the context of the tetralemma has the "serious philosophical drawback" that it gives the impression of the Mādhyamika's refusing to adopt either a positive or negative position on some subject-matter. This impression would be misleading, however, since it is apparent that Nāgārjuna and his commentators wanted to assert "*some form* of a negated proposition"[53] when setting out the arguments for rejecting the different parts of the tetralemma.

Fortunately this problem can be easily dissolved. While the application of illocutionary negation to some proposition entails that we want to be "uncommitted to the truth or falsity of it,"[54] it also means that we want to assert a negative proposition when speaking *about* the proposition concerned. For example, we might want to deny that there is enough evidence available for deciding it, or that we can translate it into our language, or that it carries with it a presupposition we want to assert. It is of course this last justification for using illocutionary negation that the Mādhyamika wants to adopt, because he wants to deny the existence of *svabhāva* presupposed by the four positions in the tetralemma. It is therefore unproblematic to assert that the Mādhyamika declines to assert any of the four positions while still "asserting *some form* of negated proposition."

A further objection one might make at this point is that the interpretation in terms of illocutionary negation is not able to account for one important feature we would want to ascribe to the tetralemma, namely that the four alternatives are logically disjoint. It is evident that if I refuse to assert some proposition *A* (that is, negate it illocutionarily) doing so will entail that I also refuse to assert its conjunction with some other proposition. It could not be the case that I refused to assert the continuum hypothesis but would be happy to assert both the continuum hypothesis and Riemann's hypothesis. But in this case the illocutionary negation of the first alternative will imply that of the third, so that any distinct argument for rejecting the third possibility would be superfluous. This argument of course depends on the assumption that the "and" in the formulation of the third alternative behaves like the truth-functional operator of conjunction, so that the third alternative entails the first. We will argue shortly that this is not generally the case. To do so, however, we must first have a closer look at the status of the third alternative itself.

4.3.2. The Status of the Third Alternative

An important problem in interpreting the tetralemma is connected with the rejection of the third alternative, which asserts the applicability of a property and its *paryudāsa*-negation. Why, we might well ask, does Nāgārjuna think we

52. It is interesting to note that in the Pali sources we sometimes find the four alternatives denied by the phrase *na h' idam*, "it is not so" (for example in the *An˙ guttara Nikāya* [Morris 1888: 2:163]), and sometimes by the phrase *mā h' evam*, "do not say so" (*Sam. yutta Nikāya* [Feer 1888: 2:19–20]). Some have argued that there is a semantic distinction between the two uses and that "it is not so" is employed when the predicate in question is applicable to the situation discussed but giving an affirmative answer to any one alternative would be misleading, where as "do not say so" is used where the predicate is not applicable to the situation (Jayatilleke [963: 346], Gunaratne [1980: 231–231], Bharadwaja [1984: 312–313]). This second use corresponds to the illocutionary negation just introduced; interestingly enough, this is employed in the passage from the *Sam. yutta Nikāya* just cited to reject the four alternatives claiming that suffering is produced by oneself, by others, by both, or by neither.

53. Tillemans (1990: 74).

54. Tillemans (1990: 74).

have to consider this contradictory option as well, as if it constituted a real possibility?[55]

Robinson suggests that a way of dealing with this problem is to interpret the four alternatives not in a propositional but in a quantificational way.[56] If *F* is the property under consideration, the four alternatives to be rejected become:

1. Everything is *F*.
2. Everything is not *F*.
3. Something is *F* and something is not *F*.
4. **Not:** Something is *F* or something is not *F*.

Here all negations are *paryudāsa*, apart from the one in the fourth alternative, set in boldface, which is a *prasajya*-negation.

It is evident that when formulated in this way, the third alternative is ambiguous, depending on whether we take the two occurrences of "something" to refer to the same object. If we take them to refer to different objects, the third alternative is not any more problematic than saying that chess pieces are both white and not white, where this statement is to mean that some are white and some are not white. This interpretation, however, does not fit well with the employment of the tetralemma by Nāgārjuna. His aim is to investigate the applicability of various concepts (such as emptiness, permanence, finitude, etc.) to objects. If the third alternative was taken to mean "the concept under discussion is applicable to some objects and not to others," this would not be an argumentationally interesting option for Nāgārjuna, because the application of the concept to some objects and its non-application to the others would then have to be investigated individually in any case. On this interpretation the third alternative would merely present a complex statement of two argumentative options which Nāgārjuna will want to investigate separately. Richard Robinson remarks:[57]

It is a striking feature of the *Stanzas* that all predicates seem to be asserted totally of the whole subject. Existential quantifications are denied because the discussion is concerned, not with the denial or affirmation of commonsense assertions such as "Some fuel is burning and some is not," but with the concepts of own-being and essence. What pertains to part of an essence must of course pertain to the whole essence.

55. There are clear cases of *paryudāsa*-negation in the MMK where Nāgārjuna assumes the Law of Noncontradiction (e.g. 7:30 and 8:7). The third contradictory alternative should therefore not constitute a genuine possibility. See also Robinson (1967: 50–52); Ruegg (1977: 48–49); Galloway (1989: 19–22).

56. Robinson (1967: 57–58).

57. Robinson (1967: 54). See also Gunaratne (1986: 225–226).

To put it briefly, given that Nāgārjuna wants to inquire into the applicability of particular concepts to objects *tout court*, we should also consider the four alternatives as giving alternative ways of the application of particular concepts to objects *tout court*, rather than as implying their application to some objects but not to others.

We therefore have to interpret the two occurrences of "something" as pertaining to the same object, that is, the third alternative claims that "something is *F* and the same something is not *F*." Whether this statement is contradictory depends on how we understand the application of the properties *F* and not *F*. For example, it is straightforward to assert that a chess board is black and not black if we mean by this that some parts of it are black and others are not black. On this reading the contradiction is avoided by relativizing of the two properties involved to different mereological parts. The same result can be achieved by relativizing to different respects or perspectives under which the object is considered, for example if we assign different utilities to an alternative in a decision problem under different descriptions.[58]

To see that these kinds of relativizing interpretations are present in Nāgārjuna, it is instructive to look at the reasons by which the third alternative is generally rejected. Here we can distinguish two varieties. In the first case Nāgārjuna rejects it because its claim is as contradictory as asserting of a single object that it is wholly black and not black. For example, we read in MMK 25:14:[59]

How could nirvāṇa exist and not exist? Like light and darkness these two [i.e., existence and non-existence] cannot be at the same place.[60]

In the second case Nāgārjuna rejects the third alternative since it would combine the difficulties facing the first and second alternatives (which have already been rejected earlier in the argument). This point is clearly made by Candrakīrti:[61]

Things do not originate both from [themselves and from other things]. This is because the problems stated for both positions [i.e., the first and second alternative] will arise together one by one.

58. The *Dīgha Nikāya* (1:31) asserts that the world is both not existent and not non-existent—the former because it ceases, the latter because it arises. See Jayatilleke (1967: 79); Robinson (1969: 75); Gunaratne (1980: 221).

59. Further examples can be found in 7:30, 8:7, and 27:28.

60. *bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayaṃkatham. / tayor abhāvo hy ekatra prakāśatamasor iva.*

61. *dvābhyāmapi nopajñāyante bhāvāh. ubhayapakṣābhihitadoṣaprasan˙gāt pratyekam utpādāsāmarthyāc ca*. PP 38:1–2, Ruegg (2002: 73). Candrakīrti makes the same point when commenting on MMK 12:9. See Schayer (1931: 20).

It is clear from this way of rejecting the third alternative that it is here not understood to be contradictory but that Candrakīrti takes it to be perfectly possible that something could be caused partly by itself and partly by other things. (One straightforward account of this idea consists in conceiving of an effect as a potential in a cause that is actualized only given the right background conditions.)[62] This possibility is rejected because the presence of these two ways of causing would imply the difficulties of both causation from itself and causation from other things, both of which Nāgārjuna has already rejected as unsatisfactory.[63]

We therefore have to conclude that Nāgārjuna applies the argumentative figure of the tetralemma both to cases where he takes a concept and its *paryudāsa*negation (i.e., the conjuncts of the third alternative) to be contradictory, as in the first case just mentioned, and also to cases where he considers it to be possible that both can be applied to an object, as in the second case.

Obviously it is only in the second case that recourse to the tetralemma would have been strictly necessary, since in the first case a consideration of two alternatives (of the concept and its *paryudāsa*-negation) would have been sufficient, given that both of them together are regarded as contradictory anyway. We might perhaps explain the fact that Nāgārjuna uses the four alternatives nevertheless on rhetorical rather than on logical grounds. If it was assumed that all four alternatives of the tetralemma applied to a particular notion were positions actually propounded by some school of thought,[64] it would be heuristically useful, if not logically necessary, to go through all of them individually, even if doing so included an alternative that the Mādhyamika regarded as logically contradictory.

But if we thus regard the second case as the domain of the tetralemma proper (and the first only as a rhetorical expansion of the rejection of two alternatives), it is clear that in the tetralemma proper the third alternative does not entail the first. Consider the case of the tetralemma applied to causation. Here the first alternative claims that things are caused exclusively by themselves, the second that they are caused exclusively by others. The third alternative constitutes a compromise between the first and second: it says that things are partly self-caused and partly caused by other objects. But this possibility obviously does not imply the first alternative, any more than saying that a chess board is partly black and partly white implies that it is black all over. For this reason the illocutionary negation of the first alternative also does not imply that of the third, since the third is not a truth-functional conjunction of the first alternative and something else.

We should also note that according to the quantificational reading given above, the third and fourth alternatives are logically distinct, since number 3 says that some objects instantiate both the property *F* and its complement, whereas number 4 says that neither is in fact instantiated. Finally, as we conceive of the initial two negations in the negated fourth alternative as illocutionary negations, so that they do not cancel each other out, the rejection of the fourth alternative is not equivalent to "Something is *F* or something is not *F.*"

It therefore becomes evident that what Nāgārjuna wants to say in MMK 22:11 is that the following four alternatives should all be rejected:[65]

1. "Empty" should be asserted of all objects.

2. "Empty" should be denied (in a *paryudāsa* fashion) of all objects.

3. "Empty" should be asserted of some objects and should be *paryudāsa*-denied of the same objects.

4. **Not:** "Empty" should be asserted of some objects, or "empty" should be *paryudāsa*-denied of the same objects.

Nāgārjuna's usual argumentative procedure (as we will see) is to argue that each of the four alternatives leads to an absurd consequence, so that the whole set is to be rejected. In this case, however, he does not discuss the four alternatives individually but dispatches them with a single argument, namely by saying that all assertions listed in the four alternatives "are only names."[66] Nāgārjuna is therefore making a semantic point: while it is of course true for the Mādhyamika that every right-minded person should assert the emptiness of all objects, this should not be done by assuming that there are some objectively existent objects out there, referred to by a similarly objective reference

62. Garfield (1995: 106–107).

63. These two ways of rejecting the third alternative are also distinguished in Ghose (1987: 296–297). He also mentions a third way in which the third alternative is rejected because "it attributes to the conjunction some properties which are common to both the conjuncts." As an example Ghose discusses verse 25:12 from the MMK, where Nāgārjuna claims that "if nirvāṇa was both existent and non-existent, it would not be non-dependent, as it would depend on both." Nāgārjuna here refutes this alternative not by not saying that it is contradictory for something to be both existent and non-existent, but by arguing that since existence and non-existence both presuppose dependence, nirvāṇa would be dependent, which it is not. However, it is evident that this is just an example of the second way of rejecting the third alternative too. Nāgārjuna has already rejected (in verses 6 and 8) that nirvāṇa is either existent or non-existent, because it would be dependent in each case. The third alternative is thus rejected because it implies the difficulties of both the first and second alternative, which happen to be the same difficulty in this particular case.

64. See note 77 to this chapter.

65. The boldface "not" indicates illocutionary negation.

66. Since Nāgārjuna does not give reasons for the rejection of the four alternatives individually, we cannot say whether he would have wanted to reject the third alternative because he considers it to be contradictory ("nothing can be empty and not empty at the same time") or because it would combine the difficulties inherent in the first two alternatives. It is certainly conceivable that someone might adopt the third alternative by arguing that phenomena are empty in some respects but not in others; for example, one might claim that they are empty insofar as they are causally produced, but not empty insofar as they exist independently of us.

relation, and that these objects have the property of emptiness.[67] Statements of emptiness should not be understood according to the standard semantic theory.[68] With such a theory in mind, it is neither correct to say that all things are empty or to say that they all lack emptiness, or that some are both empty and not empty, or that the predicate "empty" is not applicable to objects at all, in the same way as the predicate "yellow" is not applicable to numbers.

Before we leave the subject of the quantificational interpretation of the tetralemma, it might be useful to have a brief look at the analysis presented by Tillemans in an appendix to (1990). There the four alternatives are formalized as

1. $\neg(\exists x)(Fx)$.
2. $\neg(\exists x)(\neg Fx)$.
3. $\neg(\exists x)(Fx \wedge \neg Fx)$.
4. $\neg(\exists x)(\neg Fx \wedge \neg\neg Fx)$.

Tillemans argues that it is straightforward to make sense of the simultaneous rejection of all four positions if we assume that there is no *x*, that is, if the domain of quantification is empty.[69] While this reading makes superfluous the distinction between different kinds of negation in the tetralemma, it also has a number of problems. On the one hand there is the familiar difficulty that the third and fourth possibilities come out as logically equivalent. On the other hand (as was noted by Tillemans himself), this interpretation implies that the Mādhyamika would also have to *accept* all four positions of the tetralemma, since the corresponding universal statements are also true in the empty domain. But there is no textual evidence in Madhyamaka literature that the four positions of the tetralemma are simultaneously to be rejected and accepted.[70]

Tillemans continues to argue that quantified statements accepted by the Mādhyamika are generally to be interpreted substitutionally rather than referentially. Interpreted referentially, the statement "All *x* are F" means that there is some set of objects such that every single one of them is F. Interpreted substitutionally, it means that for every name substituted for "*x*" in "F*x*" we get a true statement. The Mādhyamika can therefore "use the world's language to communicate about whichever day-to-day affairs the world concerns itself with: his *śūnyavāda*, however, dictates that he never accepts a referential interpretation of such language."[71]

The difficulty with this interpretation is that the difference between referential and substitutional quantification is simply that between quantifying over objects in the world and quantifying over pieces of language. The Mādhyamika distinction between the two truths, however, which Tillemans wants to spell out in this way, is concerned with two different ways of interpreting the ontological status of objects, or, to put it differently, with two different accounts of what it means for a statement to be true. At the conventional level a statement is true if what it says is indeed the case, that is, if there are objects taken to exist with *svabhāva* which are related in the necessary ways. At the absolute level, however, the notion of *svabhāva* is to be found to be deficient and *svabhāva* is seen to be nonexistent. But both the referential and the substitutional interpretation of a statement can be read either way: the objects quantified over can be seen as either existing with *svabhāva* or being empty; similarly the truth of the sentences featuring in the substitutional interpretation can be regarded as being made true by situations regarded at the level of conventional truth or by situations regarded at the level of absolute truth, which are then seen as empty. It seems to be that what is important from the Madhyamaka perspective is not so much whether a quantified statement is read referentially or substitutionally, but the way in which the notions of "object" and "true statement" contained in these readings are spelled out.

4.3.3. Rejection of Four Alternatives: The Case of Relations

All of the examples of the rejection of four alternatives discussed concerned the rejection of one-place properties, such as emptiness,[72] permanence, or finitude. Nevertheless, some of Nāgārjuna's most famous arguments in fact involve the rejection of four alternatives concerning relations.

A very clear example of the employment of the tetralemma in this way can be found in the twelfth chapter of the MMK. Nāgārjuna starts out by listing the four possibilities available when the concept of causation is applied to suffering: Some say that suffering is caused by itself, or by something else, or from both, or that it arises in an uncaused way.[73]

Now we could interpret this statement along the lines of the tetralemma concerning properties by just regarding it as being about the *property* of self-causation

67. It should therefore be noted that the last three alternatives are in a way more deficient than the first one. For a Mādhyamika the first assertion would be true if interpreted according to the right semantics, whereas the final three would still have to be rejected, because even with the right semantics they would be false.

68. Garfield (1995: 280).

69. Tillemans (1990: 75).

70. As we will see in the final section of this chapter, there are cases in which all four positions are affirmed (the so-called positive tetralemma). This, however, serves a very different purpose from the negative tetralemma.

71. Tillemans (1990: 75).

72. Garfield (1996: 6) is of course correct in pointing out that "empty of " denotes a relation. But what Nāgārjuna has in mind is clearly emptiness of inherent existence, which is a one-place property.

73. *svayaṃkṛtam. parakṛtam. dvābhyāṃkṛtam ahetukam. / duh. kham ity eka icchanti. . . .*

rather than about the *relation* of causation. The above verse would then amount to a rejection of the following four alternatives:

1. Everything is self-caused.

2. Everything is not self-caused (i.e., is caused by others).

3. Something is self-caused and (the same) something is not self-caused.

4. **Not:** Something is self-caused or (the same) something is not self-caused.

While this move allows us to treat the forms of the tetralemma dealing with properties and relations as exactly parallel, I think a more natural way of reading the above argument would run as follows.

The essential difference between a property and a relation is that a property (such as yellowness) will divide the set of objects it is applicable to (spatiotemporal objects) into two subsets, those that have the property (such as lemons, bananas, curry powder, and so on) and those that lack it (such as strawberries, apples, chili powder, and so on). A relation,[74] however, divides the set of objects it is applicable to into pairs of objects from the set that are related by the relation. There are various ways in which this set of pairs can be made up; it can consist

1. exclusively of pairs containing the same object twice, or

2. exclusively of pairs containing two different objects, or

3. of both pairs of identical and distinct objects, or finally

4. it can consist of nothing at all, that is, it can be completely empty.

Which of these possibilities obtains determines the way in which the objects in the set are related by the relation. If, for example, we consider the "loves" relation and a set of human beings, then in the case of number 1 we are dealing with a set of egoists, where people only ever love themselves, in number 2 we deal with a set of altruists, where people only ever love other people, in number 3 we have the (normal) situation of some people loving both themselves and others, and in number 4 we have an emotional vacuum: nobody loves anybody, neither themselves nor others.[75]

If we thus wanted to argue for the deficiency of the concept of a particular relation along the lines of the above argument, we would consider the four possibilities of that relation: relating an object to itself, relating an object to something that is not itself (where the notion of negation involved is again of the *paryudāsa*-kind), relating an object both to itself and to other objects, and relating it neither to itself nor to other objects, that is, relating it to nothing at all. If we succeed in showing all four possibilities to be unsatisfactory, we can then deny all four alternatives by a *prasajya*-negation and thus apply illocutionary negation to them. In this way we demonstrate the inapplicability of the concept of the relation to the objects under consideration.

We can therefore read the first verse from the twelfth chapter of the MMK as arguing that if it makes sense to use the concept of causation when talking about suffering at all, it would have to be the case that causation related suffering either to itself (i.e., that it was self-caused) or to another thing, or to both, or that suffering was not causally related to anything. As is hardly surprising, Nāgārjuna sets out to argue that the concept of causation is not applicable in this context, and he ends the verse by stating the conclusion to be established:

To consider [suffering] as produced is not appropriate.[76]

In the remainder of the chapter Nāgārjuna then sets out to refute each of these possibilities. Verse 2 attempts to refute suffering's self-production, verses 3 to 8 production from another, and verse 9 the final two possibilities.[77] Since this chapter is concerned primarily with the argumentational mechanics of the tetralemma we can disregard the precise contents of these arguments. It is, however, important to note the generalization stated in the final verse of the chapter:

Not only does suffering not exist in any of the four possible ways described, but no other external entity exists in these ways either.[78]

Thus, apart from being a specific argument about the suitability of using the concept of causation to talk about suffering, Nāgārjuna takes the contents of this chapter also to be an argument-schema, that is a framework which can

74. For the sake of simplicity we will confine ourselves here to two-place relations.

75. It is important not to confuse this fourth case with the inapplicability of a relation to a set: in a set of people nobody may stand in the "loves" relation, and nobody will stand in the "is the square root of " relation. But it is at least possible that people could stand in the former relation, whereas it is impossible that they stand in the latter.

76. . . . *tac ca kāryam. na yujyate.*

77. It is sometimes argued (e.g., in Wayman [1977: 11–12]) that the four possibilities concerning causation mentioned in MMK 12:1, and more generally in 1:1, represent the views of four different Indian schools of philosophy. Self-causation is ascribed to the Sāṃkhyas (Murti [1955: 168–169]), causation by others to the theory of divine causation expounded in the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas (see Kalupahana [1975: 5] for some other examples of what he calls "external causation"), causation by itself and by others to the Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas (Dasgupta [1942: I:320]), King (1999: 208), and finally absence of causation to the Lokāyatas (Kalupahana [1975: 25]). This last identification is denied by Schayer (1931: n. 16, 20–21), who argues that the view of the Cārvākas denies causality only in the context of karma but not in all causal determinations, because they assert that things are determined by their intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*).

78. *na kevalam. hi duh. kasya cāturvidhyam. na vidyate / bāhyānām api bhāvānām. cāturvidhyam. na vidyate.*

be employed to demonstrate the deficiency of other concepts when referring to external entities.[79]

4.4. Affirming Four Alternatives: The Positive Tetralemma

As we saw, the tetralemma is usually employed in Madhyamaka argumentation to provide an enumeration of four exclusive and exhaustive logical alternatives all of which are then shown to be deficient and thus rejected. There is, however, one notorious exception in Nāgārjuna's writings, in verse 18:8 of the MMK. There Nāgārjuna seems to *affirm* all four alternatives by claiming that

All is so, or all is not so, both so and not so, neither so nor not so. This is the Buddha's teaching.[80]

In the commentarial tradition following Candrakīrti this verse is generally understood as indicating the graded nature of Buddha's teaching (*anuśāsana*).[81] The idea is that "all is so" is taught to ordinary disciples in order to convince them of Buddha's insight into the nature of phenomena. "All is not so" is taught subsequently to inform them about the impermanence and momentariness of all phenomena. "All is both so and not so" is taught to show that what appears to be genuine and substantial from an ordinary perspective might not do so from the perspective of a Buddha's disciple. Finally, "All is neither so nor not so" is taught to show that neither of these terms is applicable to reality in ultimate terms, in the same way, Candrakīrti observes, as the adjectives "pale" or "dark-skinned" are not applicable to the son of a barren woman.[82]

Neither of the four alternatives is therefore to be rejected in this context. They rather form an ascending series of views of increasing conceptual sophistication, each suitable for the purposes of a specific audience.[83]

79. As Robinson (1967: 50) points out, Nāgārjuna frequently indicates that his arguments function as patterns into which other terms can be substituted. For examples from the MMK see 3:8, 16:7, 19:4, and 10:15.

80. *sarvam. tathyam. na vā tathyam. tathyam. cātathyam eva ca / naivātathyam. naiva tathyam etad buddhānuśāsanam. .*

81. See Ruegg (1977: 5–7). Further references to graded teaching by Nāgārjuna are in RĀ 3:94–96, YS. 30.

82. PP 371:11–12.

83. Robinson (1967: 56–57), Ng (1993: 94–99). Ruegg (1977: 6–7, 63–64, n. 71) argues that since each alternative improves on the preceding one and even the fourth alternative is intended only for the "scarcely obscured," all four alternatives should nevertheless be rejected. (This interpretation is criticized by Wood (1994: 140–146)). Even if we accept Ruegg's position, it is clear that the four alternatives given in 18:8 are quite distinct from all the other uses in Nāgārjuna's writings, since in all other instances all four alternatives are negated and are not even assigned a heuristic value.

Garfield offers a different interpretation based on the dGe lugs interpolation procedure already discussed here.[84] Here the conflict between the four alternatives is dissolved not by relativizing them to different perspectives, as Candrakīrti does, but by adding the modifiers "ultimately" and "conventionally." The passage is thus interpreted as saying that

1. Everything is *conventionally* real.

2. Nothing is *ultimately* real.

3. Everything is both *conventionally* real and *ultimately* unreal.

4. Nothing is either *conventionally* unreal or *ultimately* real.

While Garfield does not deny that the conception of graded teaching is something "with which Nāgārjuna would agree," he argues that such a discussion seems "out of place" in the argumentative context of chapter 18. The reason is not quite clear. After all, the sixth verse asserts that Buddha taught the teachings of self, non-self, and neither self nor non-self, and Garfield himself asserts that these three were meant to counteract specific wrong conceptions of the self in the mind of the listeners.[85] On the whole the reading of the positive tetralemma in terms of graded teaching seems to be more satisfactory, because it does not commit us to making any additions to the text itself.[86]

I hope these remarks have made it plausible that to understand the *catuṣkoṭi* it is essential to keep apart the different kinds of nested negations involved. In this way it is possible to see that the four alternatives of the tetralemma are logically independent, as well as to understand how the rejection of the four alternatives (as illocutionary negations based on a presupposition failure) fits in with Nāgārjuna's general philosophical attempt to demonstrate the nonexistence of *svabhāva*.

Compared with some accounts in the contemporary commentarial literature, the interpretation presented in this chapter is logically very conservative. It does not involve anything beyond the resources found in classical logic and in particular gets by without rejecting the Law of the Excluded Middle or adopting a paraconsistent logic. While I think there are some aspects of Nāgārjuna's works (for example, the notoriously complex issue of the emptiness of emptiness) that can perhaps be fruitfully interpreted by reference to some variety of dialetheism, such as the one put forward by Priest and Garfield,[87] this approach does not apply to the methodological foundations of Nāgārjuna's arguments in the *catuṣkoṭi*. These can be explained entirely within the framework of classical logic.

84. (1995: 250–251).

85. (1995: 249).

86. See Tillemans (1990: 73).

87. (2002).

[NOTE:

Chapters 5-9 of Westerhoff can be found in the study below as follows:

Westerhoff Ch 5 Causality

– under MMK Chapter I Supplemental Commentary

Westerhoff Ch 6 Motion

– under MMK Chapter II Supplemental Commentary

Westerhoff Ch 7 The Self

– under MMK Chapter XVIII Supplemental Commentary

Westerhoff Ch 8 Epistemology

– under MMK Chapter III Supplemental Commentary

Westerhoff Ch 9 Language

– under MMK Chapter XIII Supplemental Commentary]

10

Conclusion: Nāgārjuna's Philosophical Project

This chapter is to serve three purposes. First I will summarize the main philosophical conclusions for which Nāgārjuna argues. The arguments in support of these have been analyzed in detail in the preceding chapters, so I will confine myself to a concise statement of the conclusions themselves. Second, I set out to show that these are not just isolated philosophical statements but fit together as a unified philosophical theory which is Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka. Finally I will assess some systematic aspects of the emerging theory, its theoretical appeal as well as some connections with contemporary philosophical debates.

10.1. Metaphysics

Nāgārjuna's central metaphysical thesis is the denial of any kind of substance whatsoever. Here substance, or more precisely, *svabhāva* when understood as substance-*svabhāva*, is taken to be any object that exists objectively, the existence and qualities of which are independent of other objects, human concepts, or interests, something which is, to use a later Tibetan turn of phrase, "established from its own side."[1] To appreciate how radical this thesis is, we just have to remind ourselves to what extent many of the ways of investigating

1. *rang ngos nas grub pa*.

the world are concerned with identifying such substances. Whether it is the physicist searching for fundamental particles or the philosopher setting up a system of the most fundamental ontological categories, in each case we are looking for a firm foundation of the world of appearances, the end-points in the chain of existential dependencies, the objects on which all else depends but which do not themselves depend on anything. We might think that any such analysis that follows existential dependence relations all the way down must eventually hit rock bottom. As Burton[2] notes, " The wooden table may only exist in dependence upon the human mind (for tables only exist in the context of human conventions) but the wood at least (without its 'tableness') has a mindindependent existence." According to this view there is thus a single true description of the world in terms of its fundamental constituents, whether these are pieces of wood, property particulars, fundamental particles, or something else entirely. In theory at least we can describe—and hopefully also explain— the makeup of the world by starting with these constituents and account for everything else in terms of complexes of them.

The core of Nāgārjuna's rejection of substance is an analysis which sets out to demonstrate a variety of problems with this notion. The three most important areas Nāgārjuna focuses on are causal relations between substances, change, and the relation between substances and their properties.

10.1.1. Causation

Supposing there were such things as substances, Nāgārjuna argues that they could not stand in the relation of cause and effect. The first and simplest argument to this effect is of course to point out that if one substance caused another, the latter being an effect would be existentially dependent on the first and therefore could not be a substance, since it is an essential property of substances not to be dependent in such a way.

But Nāgārjuna also employs a different argument which can be used against an opponent who does not want to rule out *all* dependence relations between substances. Like the Ābhidharmikas, he might want to assert that substances can form a causal network but still claim that they are independent in important other respects (for example not being dependent on their parts or on human interests or concerns).[3] This argument proceeds as follows.

2. Burton (1999: 115). Compare Siderits (2004: 395).

3. See Siderits (2004: 396); Burton (1999: 90); Walser (2005: 241–243).

Nāgārjuna agrees with the Abhidharma analysis that any substance, any object that exists by its own intrinsic nature, has to be atomic, for if it consisted of parts it would be existentially dependent on them. But as the Ābhidharmika's mereological argument aims to demonstrate, a partite entity cannot be regarded as ultimately real. It is rather to be conceived of as a conceptual construction from (or as a superimposition on) its parts, which may be ultimately real, presupposing that they do not depend for their existence on anything else. It is obvious that the demand for the atomicity of substance cannot just be restricted to mereological atomicity but must include temporal atomicity as well. For in the same way in which we can argue that a house is conceptually constructed from its proper mereological parts, such as bricks, beams, tiles, and so on, we have to regard it as being constructed as a collection of temporal moments, namely from its temporal part which exists now, from that in the next second, from the one after that, and so forth.

We now already see the problem for the causal relation between substances on the horizon, since causation is a relation which is necessarily located in time. We will recall that Nāgārjuna considered the different possible temporal relations between cause and effect and rejected them all as problematic when dealing with substances. Clearly it makes no sense to assume that the cause exists only after the effect, for once the effect exists there is no further necessity for the cause to bring it about. It might initially seem more plausible to assume that the cause exists first and is succeeded by the effect. But after a moment's thought it becomes apparent that within the presentist framework in which the argument is set up this idea means that only one relatum of the causal relation will exist at one time, for while the cause exists, the effect, being future, does not yet exist, and after it has come about, the cause, being past, exists no longer. In this case it should be apparent that we cannot deal with a relation between two substances or ultimately real things, since one of the relata is provided only by our expectation[4] (or our memory in the retrospective case). On this understanding, causation cannot be regarded as a relation between items "which are there anyway" but has to be seen as essentially dependent on the mind, which supplies it with the missing relatum. The final possibility, that cause and effect are simultaneous, does not fare much better, because discussions of causation commonly accept that it makes not much sense to speak of two simultaneous events (such as the rising and falling of the opposite ends of a perfectly rigid see-saw) in terms of cause and effect, for each argument we could produce for one event being the cause can equally well be used to claim that it is the effect. Even if we could get around this difficulty somehow, we would certainly not want to say that simultaneity of cause and effect is something to be found in all instances of causation.

4. As noted by Bhāviveka in his commentary on MMK 1:3 in the *Prajñāpradīpa* (Pandeya [1988– 1989: 26]).

At this place in the argument we might want to accuse Nāgārjuna of having neglected a crucial case: that of the cause and effect overlapping. After all, this is the most straightforward model of causation we have. When we see a potter make a pot, we see the pot during the process of its production, at a time when both the cause (the pot-making potter) and the effect (the pot being produced) exist. So cause and effect appear to be able to exist as temporally overlapping events. But the problem is that this commonsense model of causal production cannot be used to account for the causation between substances. Because substances are temporally atomic, they cannot undergo a temporally thick process of gradual emergence we observe in objects that are not part of the fundamental furniture of the world (such as pots). At any particular moment either there is such a substance or there is not. For this reason the three temporal relations examined by Nāgārjuna are really all there is for substances to which the concept of gradual emergence does not apply.[5] Assuming we accept Nāgārjuna's argument that causation is conceptually constructed, it is clear how this can be employed against the Ābhidharmika's view of primary existents. For even though the Ābhidharmika can accept that primary existents possessing *svabhāva* can be dependent on causes and conditions, they should not be dependent on the human mind. But then the existence of one primary existent should not be dependent on another one by a relation that is minddependent. So assuming these objects are connected by causation, they cannot be primary (*dravya*) but must be secondary existents (*prajñapti*).

10.1.2. Change

It is an obvious fact that the world around us is always changing. Now a substance, an object that has its properties intrinsically, could not change with regard to these properties, for in this case the existence of the properties would rely on the causes and conditions that brought them about, so these properties would turn out to be dependent after all. For the same reason, substances could

5. Siderits (2003: 131), (2004: 418, n. 30) notes that during a process of gradual production such as that of a pot, we find that there will always be a stage at which it is vague whether or not the pot has been produced yet. According to some views of pots, the produced entity is already a pot, but not according to others. This is unproblematic, as we accept that there are different ways of conceptualizing pots. But we would not countenance a similar vagueness in the case of substances, for here it should precisely not depend on our conceptualizing whether a particular substance exists or not. This should be something settled by the world on its own. Arguing in this way provides us with another reason why we would not want to accept that the causal relation between substances could be conceived of in terms of a temporal overlap.

not come into existence or go out of existence; besides being changeless they also have to be eternal.[6] For the defender of substances it is therefore necessary to regard all the change we observe as a mere difference in rearrangement of the most fundamental constituents of the world. Successive states of the world are just permutations of what is there all the time. An immediate consequence of this view is that the fundamental particles physics studies do not qualify as substances. For suppose such a particle is destroyed in a collision close to the speed of light, and at the same time a burst of energy is detected in the close vicinity. Now either we say that the particle went out of existence and the energy burst came into existence more or less at the same time, in which case neither can be a substance for the reasons just noted, or we say that the particle changed into the energy burst, in which case we have to explain this change in terms of some yet more fundamental elements the rearrangements of which could appear either as a fundamental particle or as a burst of energy. The fundamental constituents of the physical world thereby recede further and further.

We might want to argue that we are acquainted with some eternal, unchanging entities, such as mathematical objects. Of course this argument depends heavily on our ontology of mathematics, and looking at the contemporary discussion, Platonism does not seem to be a position attracting the most convincing defenses. But even if we assume Platonism is true, we would have to argue in addition that all the objects of our experience can be reduced to abstract objects if we follow the downward chain of dependencies for a long enough time. How a complex arrangement of objects without spatio-temporal location could turn out to have such a location in itself would be only one of the startling questions such a theory would have to answer. It therefore appears that the permanent entities we are acquainted with are not quite the right kind of thing for playing the role of fundamental parts of reality, while those that seem to be the right kind of thing (such as the fundamental particles of physics) cannot be regarded as fundamental as long as they are subject to change as well. Once more the notion of objects existing with *svabhāva* seems to have slipped our conceptual grasp.

10.1.3. Substances and Their Properties

Another difficulty arising if we assume there are substances is the relationship between such substances and their properties. We cannot just conceive of some substance as an individual instantiating properties. For the sake of illustration (and using an Indian example), suppose that water-atoms are substances and that their only intrinsic property is wetness. Now what is the individual in which wetness inheres? Since it is not characterized by any other properties, it must be some kind of propertyless bare particular. What makes it a bare particular? Given that we are dealing with substances here, it had better not depend on some other object. But if it is a bare particular by *svabhāva* and being a bare particular is therefore its intrinsic nature we are in the same situation as we were with the water-atoms and their wetness. For now we can ask what the individual is in which being a bare particular inheres, and then we are well on our way to an infinite regress. Note that this problem does not go away if we feel uneasy about the property "being a bare particular" and do not want to admit it. For we have to assume that the individual has some determinate nature due to which it is a bearer of its properties and the difficulty will just reappear with whatever we take such a nature to be.

It does not help much if we conceive of substances as particularized properties or tropes instead, for then it is unclear how we can individuate one wetness-trope from another. We cannot differentiate them according to the individuals in which they inhere, because we have just rejected the existence of individuals at the level of substances. We cannot say that this wetness-trope is different from that because they turn up in different samples of water, since the samples of water are just collections of tropes. Of course we could try to tell apart the various trope-substances by the collections in which they occur (or, more precisely, by which other tropes they are related to via a higher-order compresence-trope). The difficulty for this solution is that it introduces dependence-relations via the back door, for every trope will existentially depend on being connected to just these other tropes via a compresence-trope—we cannot take a trope and "move" it to another collection. Since we want to conceive of substances as entities that are not existentially dependent on one another, this approach inevitably introduces a certain tension into our system.

It thus becomes apparent that once more a conceptual scheme which can be more or less straightforwardly applied to non-substances breaks down once we attempt to analyze the supposedly foundational objects of our world in terms of it. This happened in the case of causation and can be observed once again in the case of individuals and properties. While there is no difficulty in analyzing the relation between a potter and a pot in terms of cause and effect, various problems ensue if we try to transpose this procedure to an analysis of the relation of substances. Similarly while the analysis of a red apple into an individual and the property it instantiates is at least on the face of it

6. This presupposes that the annihilation of a substance does not imply any change regarding its properties, since both the substance and its properties cease to exist.

unproblematic, the same analysis cannot be carried out when one is dealing with ultimate existents.

After the criticism of the distinction between individuals and properties in Nāgārjuna's discussion of motion, this problem should not be too much of a surprise. There he attempted to show that the distinction between individuals and properties is not one that exists independent of our conceptualizations. Just as the talk about the "property" instantiated by a thin individual (such as a clap of thunder) had to be explained in terms of a single feature seen in two different ways—as constitutive and as instantiating—in the same way talk of the properties of ordinary thick individuals (such as Farinelli) could be seen to be equally a reflection of the division of their features into constitutive and instantiating properties, something that is just a reflection of our pragmatic concerns in conceptualizing the individual in question, but not a reflection of its intrinsic nature.

We could now imagine that somebody would argue as follows. Nāgārjuna has shown that we run into difficulties if we attempt to analyze the fundamental constituents of reality, objects that have an intrinsic nature in terms of such notions as cause and effect, change, or individual and property. Such objects cannot stand in causal relationships, they do not change, they cannot be thought of as bearers of properties. The most fundamental bits of reality therefore fail to be grasped by the familiar conceptual schemes we employ in our everyday lives in order to get around in the world. We therefore have to assume that substances are acausal, atemporal (since for them there is neither beginning, end, nor any change in between) entities which cannot be regarded as objects having properties. Given the fundamentality of the above conceptual schemes to our cognitive lives, this statement seems to be nearly as good as saying that the nature of substances transcends conceptualization. Since the fundamental constituents of reality cannot be grasped by concepts that are our nearest and dearest, they constitute an ineffable reality to which we can have no cognitive access.

This interpretation was favored by some Indian commentators. A particularly well-known example can be found in Dharmapāla's debate with Bhāviveka.[7]

There the Yogācārin Dharmapāla takes Bhāviveka to task for asserting that even though things exist at the conventional level, nothing exists at the ultimate level. Dharmapāla argues that it would be mistaken to assume that at the ultimate level there was no *svabhāva* at all, leaving the knowledge of ultimate reality without an object, like knowledge of a non-existent flower in the sky.[8] It should rather be understood in terms of the Yogācāra theory of the "three natures" (*trisvabhāva*) by claiming that only the imagined nature (*parakalpita svabhāva*), the mistaken projection of things as sustantial, was completely non-existent. Both the dependent nature (*paratantra svabhāva*)—the appearances—and the absolute nature (*parinis. panna svabhāva*)—the fact that the dependent nature is empty of the imagined nature—do, however, exist.[9] Moreover, the true nature of things is completely beyond concepts.[10]

The difficulty with this interpretation is that if we regard the true nature of things as ineffable, we still assume that there are objects with a mindindependent[11] intrinsic nature, namely that of ineffability. This position assumes that there is a way things are from their own side, by *svabhāva*, which is not in any way affected by us. The key difference between this kind of realism and the more familiar kind of realism which provides the background to much contemporary philosophy (and much of our everyday life) is an epistemological one. Common-or-garden realism asserts that there is a way the world is which is independent of all description, and that we can know at least a substantial part of it. Its less plain cousin agrees with the first part of the statement but holds that this state of things forever eludes our grasp. But it is clear that for Nāgārjuna neither form of realism is acceptable. The doctrine of emptiness tries to establish that there are no objects with intrinsic natures, whether they are knowable or not. The view of substances as ineffable which introduces entities with *svabhāva* through the back door is therefore to be firmly resisted.

A key element of the rejection of the view of ineffable substances is denying that it makes any sense to speak of objects lying beyond our conceptual frameworks, or, as Dharmapāla put it, as "inaccessible to differentiating consciousness and words" and "suspending all speech."[12] These frameworks are all we have, and if we can show that some notion is not to be subsumed under

7. See Hoornaert (2004); Tillemans (1990). For modern defenders of the ineffability thesis which do not presuppose a Yogācāra background, see, e.g., Murti (1955); Inada (1970: 24–26); Matilal (1990: 149); Mohanty (1992: 278). Interpreters who accept the ineffability thesis may or may not accept that there is a non-conceptual form of cognition through which substances can nevertheless be known.

8. Hoornaert (2004: 132–133).

9. Hoornaert (2004: 139–140).

10. *rab tu phye ba tshig dang bral ba* (Hoornaert 2004: 141, n. 60).

11. We might think that because ineffability contains a reference to the conceptual frameworks we use, it is in fact a mind-dependent quality. But its dependence is only notional, not existential. Compare it with the property "is so long that it cannot be measured by any measuring-rod on earth." If any object had this property, it would obviously not make sense to *describe* it in this way if our planet ceased to exist. But the annihilation of the earth would not affect its length. In the same way the ineffable nature of a substance remains the same whether or not there is anyone around trying to eff it.

12. Hoornaert (2004: 148–149).

them, we must not conclude that it therefore has some shadowy existence outside of the framework. To this extent our conceptual framework is to be thought of not so much as a map of a country, but as a set of rules for a game. If a traveler brings us news from a city in some far-off land which we cannot find on our map, we conclude (if we regard the traveler to be truthful) that it must be located somewhere outside of the area covered by our map. But if somebody told us he had found a new opening gambit in chess but that this could not be written down using the familiar notation, we would be justified in being puzzled. After all, the notation allows us to describe all the legal moves of chess (as well as some illegal ones), so how could something that is part of a game not be constructed in accordance with the rules of the game? In this case we would conclude not that because of the limited nature of the expressive resources of chess notation this gambit was beyond its grasp, but rather that there was no such gambit. It is not that there are some objects within the grasp of our cognitive capacities as well as some beyond them, but rather that the very concept of an object is something established by these capacities. It is not that parts of the world might not correspond to our linguistic and conceptual frameworks but that the idea of a structure of reality independent of these practices is incoherent. [13] Our ability to grasp the world by concepts is acquired by our knowledge of language (or, as some might argue, is the very same thing as that knowledge). Language is a public phenomenon, an ability we display in interaction with other speakers. We would therefore want to claim that we can be taken to have understood the meaning of a word or to have mastered some concept only if we can give a public display of its use or application. A concept for which we could not give the application conditions even in principle, where we could not even tell in the abstract what kinds of objects would fall under it, is not a concept at all. But this seems to be exactly the situation with the concept of substance when seen as ineffable. Because what falls under this concept is understood to transcend all our conceptual resources, we would be necessarily unable to apply this concept to anything. It is for this reason that the Mādhyamika claims that the concept of an ineffable substance is necessarily empty. And once this concept is ruled out, the only remaining conclusion to draw from Nāgārjuna's criticism of substance is that there is no such thing, not even an ineffable one.

The metaphysical anti-realism defended by Nāgārjuna is not just of historical but also of considerable systematic interest. One reason is its wide scope. While most of the discussion of anti-realism we find in the contemporary literature is concerned with particular local phenomena (such as mathematical objects or moral values), the Mādhyamika's anti-realism takes the form of a general anti-foundationalism which does not just deny the objective, intrinsic, and mind-independent existence of some class of objects, but rejects such existence for *any* kinds of objects that we could regard as the most fundamental building-blocks of the world. A second interesting point is the fact that Nāgārjuna does not regard his metaphysical theory to imply that anything is up for grabs. That there are no substantially existent entities does not entail that there are no selves responsible for their actions, no distinction between the moral worth of different actions, no difference between true and false theories. The Mādhyamika therefore has to come up with an account of convention which is solid enough to ground our ethical, epistemic, and semantic practices but not so rigid as to re-introduce some sort of realism regarding any of these.

13. Candrakīrti makes this point criticizing the Yogācāra view of the mind as self-illuminating (*svaprakāśa*). See Siderits (1989: 243). This, however, does not imply that these frameworks would not be susceptible to criticism or change. See Tillemans (2003: 123, n. 47).

10.2. Personal Identity

Nāgārjuna's rejection of entities existing by *svabhāva* is not restricted to the study of the external world around us. At least as important as refuting the existence of fundamental substances which provide the basis for a world independent of human interests and concerns is the refutation of a substantial self, which constitutes the fixed point around which our internal world revolves. Such a substantial self is an essentially unchanging entity, distinct from our physical body and psychological states, which unifies our sensory input and mental life and acts as a foundation of our agenthood in the world. Nāgārjuna wants to replace this *prima facie* plausible and compelling view of a self, which, however, he claims to be mistaken, by a conception of the self as a set of causally interconnected physical and psychological events. He sets out to account for the fact that we normally do not see ourselves in this way by arguing that this set of events is usually under the misapprehension of its own properties: it sees itself as a substantial self, even though it is not.

It is interesting to note that this alternative view of the self presented here (which, to be sure, is not a Madhyamaka speciality but widely shared between different Buddhist traditions), despite its intuitive implausibility, finds a surprising amount of support in recent research on cognitive science. Of particular interest in this context is the so-called narrative view of the self, a theory that has been explored in detail by Daniel Dennett,[14] who also presents supporting evidence from our current knowledge of how the brain works. One of Dennett's

14. Most famously in Dennett (1991).

central observations is that the processing of neurophysiologically encoded information is spread out across the entire brain. There is no place in the brain where "it all comes together," no "Cartesian theater" where the stream of sensory information is unified into mental content and presented to consciousness. He argues that not only is there no neurophysiological analog to the self anywhere in the spatial organization of the brain, also the temporal sequence of events in the brain cannot be used as a foundation of a continuous self. Dennett shows that in certain cases the order of events as they appear in our consciousness does not line up with the temporal order of their underlying neurophysiological bases.[15] The view of our selves as continuous, temporally extended entities therefore cannot be seen as a mere reflection of a series of events in the brain, but requires a significant deal of conceptual construction. Our subjective feelings of spatial and temporal location cannot be grounded on the spatially and temporally spread out, discontinuous series of events in the brain in a straightforward manner. Our view of the self as an essentially unchanging unifier and agent cannot be based on our biological makeup in the same way as our view of the nature of the center of gravity (another conceptual construction) of some object cannot be based on the structure of the piece of matter that occupies the space where we locate the center of gravity.

Dennett argues instead that the self is a product of our linguistic capacities. The capacity to use language is hard-wired into our brain, and once we start using language, we tell stories, including stories about ourselves which continuously create that very self. The self emerging on this theory is not the author, but the authored. Dennett notes that "our tales are spun, but for the most part we don't spin them; they spin us. The human consciousness, and our narrative selfhood, is the product, not their source."[16] For this reason there is no fundamental difference between the self created by our own narrative and the selves created in works of fiction.[17] It is not the case that the former are intrinsically more real than the latter; in fact they belong fundamentally to the same class of things (even though the fictional selves, unlike our own narrative selves, are usually not open-ended). Both are conceptual constructs produced by our regarding a narrative, our own or that in some text, as revolving around a single fixed point.

Assuming we accept the view of the self as a conceptual construction superimposed on a collection of physico-psychological events, we might still ask ourselves what the *point* of all this constructing is. Why do we spin these narratives which in turn cause us to misapprehend the nature of the self, thinking that there is a substantial self where in fact there is only a set of intersecting narratives? Some cognitive scientists have proposed evolutionary reasons for this phenomenon. Thomas Metzinger suggests that we should

> look at the human self-model as a neurocomputational weapon, a certain data structure that the brain can activate from time to time such as when you have to wake up in the morning and integrate your sensory perceptions with your motor behaviour. The ego machine just turns on its phenomenal self, and that is the moment when *you* come to be. To have a good self-model means to be successful in a certain environment. It starts with simple properties: you need to know how far you can jump, what your body can do, how big you are, what your boundaries are, so that you don't start to eat your own legs, as some primitive animals may actually do, or as some psychiatrically disturbed people do.[18]

According to this interpretation, our intuitive view of ourselves as substanceselves is to be understood as a pragmatically successful self-deception. A selfmodel along the lines of a substance-self allows us to respond to many tasks more quickly than would a more cumbersome one based on the notion of a process. This is the reason why this sense of the self has spread so widely, since it provides the minds who hold it with an evolutionary advantage. It thus became the dominant and most natural way to see ourselves.[19]

Despite its popularity with cognitive scientists, the reductionist view of the self as nothing but a causally connected chain of physical and psychological events faces some obvious philosophical problems. The first problem concerns the *unity* of a person. It is not clear whether reductionism can actually account for the boundaries between different persons in the right way. For suppose I decide to make a sound. This means that there is a causal sequence involving a psychological event (the decision) and a physical event (my making the sound). You hear that sound and later remember it. Given that all these events are causally connected to one another, how do we draw the line between the causally connected chain which constitutes "me" and that which constitutes "you" without already presupposing the concept of a person? If we think of causally connected chains of physical and psychological events, it seems as if there is only one big network of these, without any obvious way of dividing them into

15. Dennett (1991: 134–138).

16. Dennett (1991: 418).

17. Dennett (1991: 410–411); Dennett (1992: 105–111).

18. Blackmore (2005: 153).

19. An interesting account of the psychological consequences of the loss of such a self-model from the first-person (!) perspective is given in Segal (1998).

persons. A second problem arises with the *rationality of prudential concern for ourselves*. We usually think that it is rational to show concern for future stages of our selves, so that, for example, we buy an umbrella today so that we don't get wet tomorrow. Similarly arguments built around the notion of karma presuppose in the same way that we should care about what happens to us in the future. But if a person is nothing but a logical fiction built on a succession of momentary psycho-physical events, how could such a fiction exhibit prudential concern? After all, the person is never present at any particular temporal stage to function as a potential subject of such concern.

Addressing these difficulties would obviously require a long and careful discussion of the implications of a reductionist theory of persons. This will not be attempted here, for two main reasons. First of all there exists now a philosophical literature of considerable depth and sophistication dealing with issues arising from a reductionist view of persons. In Western philosophy this developed as a reaction to Derek Parfit's influential monograph *Reasons and Persons*. This describes a reductionist view of persons which the author regards as fundamentally the same as the one found in Buddhist texts.[20] It would be neither possible nor desirable to repeat the resulting discussion here. Second, the theory of persons described above is no position specific to Mādhyamikas, but something shared by all main Buddhist schools. A prolonged discussion of these matters would therefore take us away from the main Madhyamaka focus of this study.

At this point I would like to sketch briefly two key concepts one could use to address the problems of unity and prudential concern, based on the discussion in Siderits (2003). In dealing with the first problem, it is useful to establish the concept of a *maximally causally connected set* of psycho-physical events.[21] This is a set which we make as large as possible while maximizing the causal connectedness of the set. For example we will include events connected with specific body parts (such as the vocal chords and the ear) only if they stand in continuous causal connection over time. While your ear-event might be causally connected to my vocal-chord event (because you hear me) and could therefore be included in the set, doing so would reduce the overall causal connectivity of the set, since over time there will be fewer causal connections between my voice and your ear than between my voice and my ear. Such sets could then be made more and more comprehensive and could be regarded as reductionist substitutes for the notion of a person.

20. Parfit (1984: 273, 280). More recent discussions of the issues involved here can be found in Siderits (2003), particularly in chapters 2 and 3, as well as in Albahari (2006).

21. Siderits (2003: 45–46).

One avenue to explore for the establishment of prudential concern is the idea that the concept of a person as a trans-temporal, non-momentary entity is a convention accepted *because of its consequences*. Given that there are several conventions we could have adopted (such as the convention of momentary beings without temporal extension, or the convention of one overarching mind of which everything else forms a part), the one we chose in the end must have something to recommend it. This something either might be cashed out in evolutionary terms, arguing that this person-convention just provided its bearers with the greatest survival value,[22] or it could be given a normative justification. Here the idea is that conceptualizing a causal sequence of psycho-physical events using the concept of a person rather than some other one maximizes utility. For example, under such a conceptualization it is much less likely that minor immediate pleasures will be traded in for major future pains. Moreover, the idea of future pain could be used as a deterrent, whereas under the conception of a person as a momentary entity this idea of punishment would not have much force.[23] This utilitarian defense of the concept of a person of course presupposes that the concept of pain (which is what is to be minimized) does not bring in persons again through the back door. But assuming this could be done, this approach seems to leave us with a sensible way of accounting for prudential concern against a reductionist background.

10.3. Ethics

Very little has been said here so far on Nāgārjuna's ethical theory. Apart from the RĀ and some verses in the MMK, most of his remarks on ethics are found in such works as the *Suhr. llekha*[24] and the *Shes rab sdong bu*.[25] The former text, which enjoyed considerable popularity in Tibet,[26] presents the reader with concrete ethical advice for the layman; it stresses the importance of compassion and describes karmic consequences of various kinds of behavior. The *Shes rab dong bu*, or "Tree of Wisdom," is a collection of aphorisms dealing with maxims for ethical behavior, drawn from the Mahābhārata, the Pañcatantra, and the

22. Siderits (2003: 43).

23. Siderits (2003: 39).

24. Nāgārjuna (2002); Nāgārjuna (1979); Lindtner (1982: 218–224).

25. Nāgārjuna (1919). Lindtner (1982: n. 29, page 15) regards this text as "dubious" but "perhaps authentic." Pathak (1974: 38) disagrees and ascribes this as well as some other *nīti* texts not to Nāgārjuna the Mādhyamika but to a pre-eighth-century compiler of the same name. See also Ruegg (1981: 27).

26. Nāgārjuna (2002: 1–2).

Purāṇas,[27] reminiscent of Sa skya Pandita's *Legs bshad rin po che'i gter* [28] which may have borrowed from it.[29]

While these works contain a considerable amount of discussion of ethical topics, I have chosen not to analyze them in detail but to confine my treatment to the remarks in this section. To see why, we have to note that we can distinguish three different kinds of ethical statements in Madhyamaka texts. First of all there are the ethical pronouncements made by a Mādhyamika such as Nāgārjuna as part of an exposition of the Buddhist doctrine which he, as a Buddhist, incorporates into his teachings. These will include remarks about the relative consequences of meritorious and non-meritorious actions, attachment as the primary cause of suffering, the importance of compassion, and so on. Second, we find an ethical discussion in connection with the concept of emptiness, in particular with the emptiness of persons. If there is no substantial self, we might wonder who the agent of an action or the experiencer of a result, or the subject and object of compassion, really are. The Buddhist propounder of a non-self has to give a re-interpretation of these notions without the tacit presupposition of a substantial self underlying all of them. We should note that this challenge is not one that applies specifically to the Mādhyamika, but it applies to any theorist holding a non-self view in conjunction with the common Buddhist ethical view. It is thus equally a task for a Vaibhāṣika, Theravādin, or Sautrāntika to give a theoretical account of this issue. The third kind of statements deal with the specific ethical consequences of Madhyamaka views. For example, the particularly Nāgārjunian view that there is no ultimate difference between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa demands an explanation of why we should engage in meritorious rather than non-meritorious actions, or Buddhist practices in general: if there is no difference between the liberated and the non-liberated state in any case, why bother?

Most of Nāgārjuna's ethical remarks fall into the first, and some also into the second class. Those in the first class, though interesting in the context of Nāgārjuna's Buddhist worldview, shed relatively little light on philosophical problems, especially concerning Nāgārjuna's most original thoughts, that is, the metaphysical and epistemological considerations which form the heart of Madhyamaka philosophy.

In the context of remarks in the second class, dealing with the relationship between ethical issues and the concept of emptiness, Nāgārjuna extends his analysis of phenomena also to such key ethical notions as pleasure and pain and notes that these too do not exist by substance-*svabhāva*. In the RĀ he observes:[30]

Physical feelings of pleasure are only a lessening of pain. Perceptions [and the pleasures they produce] are made of thought, they are created only by conceptuality.

Pleasure and pain therefore cannot be treated as basic reals on which our system of ethics could be based (for example in the form of some sort of utilitarian calculus aimed at maximizing pleasure), since they exist interdependently. There could be no pleasure in the absence of pain, or vice versa. But this fact then implies that neither could exist by substance-*svabhāva*. Furthermore, if the extent to which a certain situation is regarded as painful or pleasurable depends on the way it is conceptualized, being painful or pleasurable is shown to be no intrinsic property of a part of the world out there, but something arising from the interaction between a conceptualizing subject and a conceptualized object.[31]

The question of the compatibility of the emptiness of the self and the notion of karma is raised in the MMK. Nāgārjuna notes:[32]

If an action were uncreated fear would arise of encountering something not done. . . . It would be impossible to draw a distinction between merit and demerit.

The worry here is that if there was no substantial self creating actions, there would be no way of ascribing individual actions to individual selves, since there are no such selves, but only complexes of psychophysical events. But then it may happen that one experiences the consequences of a deed that one did not do, that is, one arising from a different such complex. This would then not give us any way of differentiating actions into wholesome actions as those that have pleasant consequences, and unwholesome actions as those that have unpleasant consequences. Moreover, on the analysis in terms of psychophysical complexes the entire set of distinctions into action, agent, consequence, and experiencer of the consequence,[33] which are of central importance for the system of Buddhist ethics disappears.

27. Pathak (1974: 38).

28. Pathak (1974: 78).

29. Nāgārjuna (1919: iv).

30. *duh. kapratikriyāmātram. śārīram. vedanāsukham / sam. jñām ayam. mānasam. tu kevalaṃkalpanākṛtam*. RĀ 3:47.

31. See also RĀ 3:50.

32. *akṛtābhyāgamabhayaṃsyāt karākṛtakam. yadi* / [. . .] / *pun. yapāpakṛtor naiva pravibhāgaś ca yujyate*. MMK 17:23a, 24b.

33. MMK 17:29–30.

As was already noted in chapter 7, this worry may be answered by the example of the illusion created within an illusion. The fundamental mistake of an insubstantial self to regard itself as substantial creates the concepts of agent, action, consequent, and experiencer, which then in turn bring with them the whole system of karmic interrelations. Unfortunately this belief is so fundamental that mere intellectual understanding of the non-existence of substantial selves does not stop such selves from appearing to us. In the same way, the understanding that some phenomenon is an optical illusion generally does not alter the way it appears to us, but at best how seriously we take this appearance. What is needed for the disappearance of such concepts as agent, action, consequence, and experience is the *realization* of the non-substantiality of the self, that is, the attainment of a cognitive shift which keeps the mistaken notion of the substantial self from arising.

Remarks dealing with the ethical repercussions of emptiness such as those just discussed are relatively rare in the works of Nāgārjuna. Analyses belonging to the third class; those dealing with the specific ethical consequences of Madhyamaka thought are virtually absent. A major issue presenting itself at this point is the question as to which extent there is fundamental relation between the Madhyamaka theory of emptiness and the ethical theory of compassion centered on the ideal of the *bodhisattva*. After all, it seems that a case for such an ethical theory can already be made from the perspective of the "lower schools." If there are no substantial selves and therefore no psychological states—such as pains—essentially attached to selves, all these unpersonal pains can be regarded as equally bad, irrespective of their location. But in this case my reason for removing my own pain is not more pressing than that of removing the pain of other beings; in fact it is considerably less pressing, since the pains of other beings outnumber my own. We thus seem to be able to get relatively close to Mahāyāna ethics on the basis of Hīnayāna metaphysics. So what is the distinctive advantage of the Madhyamaka theory of emptiness for establishing the ethical ideal of a *bodhisattva*?

There is much to be said about this question as well as others arising in the same context,[34] but the basis of such answers in Nāgārjuna's writings on Madhyamaka is at best implicit. The examination of these issues becomes considerably more interesting when we take into account later Madhyamaka texts which address questions dealing with the distinctive Madhyamaka consequences for ethics explicitly and in greater detail.[35] We can imagine a variety of reasons why we find so little discussion of these matters in Nāgārjuna's works. One obvious possibility is that the respective text or texts were lost relatively early in the tradition. Alternatively Nāgārjuna's focus of interest when developing the Madhyamaka approach may have been a set of metaphysical and epistemological questions, and its ethical dimensions may have been explored in detail only by later writers. A final possibility is that discussions of the point where the perfections of wisdom and compassion join may have been regarded as too advanced to be put down in writing and were transmitted only orally. Whatever the explanation, the fact remains that the investigation of Madhyamaka ethics will find a more extensive set of data in later writers than in what is preserved in Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka.

34. For example Siderits (2003: chapter 9).

35. An obvious source in this context is the BCA. See Williams (1998).

10.4. Epistemology

Nāgārjuna's account of epistemology is supposed to fulfill a purpose both at the object-level and at the meta-level. At the object-level, means of knowledge and their objects are just another set of central concepts which have to be investigated as entities potentially existing with *svabhāva*. At the meta-level, Nāgārjuna's theory of epistemology is supposed to present the theoretical background of his own account of emptiness. Since the theory of emptiness is something we are supposed to acquire knowledge of, it is essential to get clear about the means by which we are supposed to do so, and indeed about what our object of knowledge consists of in this case.

These two projects are inherently interconnected, for according to the standard Nyāya theory of epistemology Nāgārjuna encountered, knowledge is acquired by use of a set of procedures (such as perception or inference) the nature of which is to produce knowledge and which convey information about a set of objective, mind-independent individuals which are the bearers of specific qualities. But a theory that thus presupposed the existence of objects of knowledge with distinct natures which the means of knowledge could adequately represent could hardly be used as a basis for knowing emptiness, for it presupposes exactly what the theory of emptiness denies.

A substantial part of Nāgārjuna's epistemological discussion is therefore dedicated to a criticism of the standard Nyāya theory of knowledge. Nāgārjuna sets out to establish that nothing can be regarded as intrinsically a means or object of knowledge. Means of knowledge and their objects have to be mutually established: the means of knowledge establishes the object by giving us cognitive access to it, and our successful interaction with the object establishes the means of knowledge as a trustworthy route to the object. Something will

therefore be classified as a means or object of knowledge not because of its intrinsic nature, but because it is regarded as such once a reflective equilibrium has been reached. We use beliefs about the nature of the object in order to test our hypotheses concerning the means of acquiring such beliefs; these hypotheses are then in turn used to assess our view of the nature of the object.

The reason why this approach could not lead to an establishment of the means of knowledge in the way the Naiyāyika wants is that a different initial set of beliefs could have led to a different reflective equilibrium as a result. But given that each would have led to a different view of reliable means of cognition and of the objects known, we would not be able to determine which of the two faithfully reflects the nature of the means and objects of cognition. Assuming that establishing a reflective equilibrium is the only way of arriving at an account of the means and objects of cognition, it is therefore impossible to establish the true nature of either.

This criticism of the Nyāya position has been considered to be unsatisfactory by Mark Siderits in recent work.[36] Siderits's main point is that it relies on an internalist conception of knowledge according to which the justification for a knowledge-claim also has to be known to the subject. For the internalist it is not just sufficient to respond to a sceptical threat by demonstrating that the subject is justified, it also has to know to be justified. It is thus not sufficient that the method of the reflective equilibrium might as a matter of fact supply us with the right account of means of knowledge and their objects, but we also have to *know* that it is the right account. But given the fact that there can be several such equilibria, the internalist fails to be justified. Siderits argues that the Nyāya view of veridical cognition as the product of a reliable causal process cannot be subsumed under such internalism;[37] indeed it is a typical externalist position where the justification for knowing something is located outside of the body of the subject's knowledge. But if this is the case then the Mādhyamika's criticism loses its force, for it is now based on an assumption—namely epistemic internalism—which its opponent does not share.

The force of this criticism is undermined to a certain extent by the fact that the identification of the opponent Nāgārjuna criticizes in individual arguments is notoriously difficult to establish by any but systematic reasons. While the heavy influence of Nyāya thought on the epistemological discussion in the VV is obvious, this fact does not necessarily entail that the opponent addressed in the passages dealing with the mutual establishment of means and objects of knowledge[38] is a Naiyāyika as well. We might equally use Siderits's argument to claim that the implicit internalist position entails that he cannot have been one, since the criticism would not have applied to him otherwise.

36. (2000: 227).

37. (2000: 223).

While such questions are impossible to decide on the basis of the textual evidence available to us, it is interesting to consider what kind of argument Nāgārjuna could have used in his criticism of an externalist position. Siderits[39] makes the interesting suggestion of employing Nāgārjuna's analysis of causation, which does not feature much in the VV and is not put to any epistemological use in the MMK. As the reader will recall, Nāgārjuna argues that causation, far from being a mind-independent relation which establishes objective connections between phenomena, is itself intricately bound up with conceptualization. As was argued above, we cannot conceive of a causal relation between two entities without a substantial mental contribution. If we plausibly assume that the cause precedes the effect, then at the time of the existence of the cause, when the effect does not yet exist, our mind will have to supply the missing relatum in our expectation. Moreover, it is not just the causal relation that cannot be regarded as mind-independent, since it also plays an essential part in the construction of objects. This is so because the very establishment of miscellaneous collections of entities as unified items called "cause" (or "causal field") and "effect" could not proceed without the notion of causation in the first place. Causation cannot be regarded as a relation connecting items which are "there anyway" in a mind-independent way.

But now it is clear that if this criticism goes through, then causation cannot be made to bear the epistemological weight the Naiyāyika wants it to bear, for the externalist regards causation as a guarantor transmitting features of the object to perception in a reliable way because the nature of the causing object will determine the nature of the perception which is the effect. As the Mādhyamika has argued, however, causation is itself conceptually constructed. A reliable means of cognition which incorporates causation as a central element therefore has to be conceptually constructed in the same way. There is therefore no way in which we can regard it as providing us with accurate knowledge of an objectively existent world independent of human conceptual practices.

Nāgārjuna therefore argues for an epistemology in which nothing is intrinsically a means or an object of knowledge. And if nothing is intrinsically a means of knowledge, there is also nothing that could function as such a means in any context; it is only against a specific background that it could fulfill such

38. VV 46–48.

39. (2000: 229).

a role. Such an epistemology is able to provide a background for the knowledge of emptiness, since means and objects of knowledge are no longer regarded as being means and objects of knowledge intrinsically. Means of knowledge are such means only in specific contexts, and they are not supposed to adequately reflect the properties that objects have from their own side, but provide the basis of successful interaction with them. The theory of emptiness therefore no longer contradicts the epistemology on the basis of which it is to be known.

10.5. Language and Truth

As was mentioned earlier, there exists no fully formed Madhyamaka theory of language or truth in Nāgārjuna's extant writings. This omission does not mean, however, that his works do not give us a fairly good indication of what his views on some of the key questions within this area were.

First of all, it is apparent that the Madhyamaka theory of emptiness is not compatible with the idea of a "ready-made world," that is, of a world that exists independent of human interests and concerns and already shows a particular kind of structuring which our structured language could then set out to reflect. If nothing exists with substance-*svabhāva*, nothing in the world could exist from its own side and nothing could bear a structure that is intrinsic to it rather than something ascribed to it from the outside.

Moreover, the Mādhyamika will reject the classic correspondence account of truth, according to which the truth of a statement is grounded in a similarity of structure between a statement and the bit of the world to which it refers. This also entails a rejection of the corresponding view of how language works, namely that our sentences manage to connect with the world via a set of objectively existent structural similarities. The main reason for this rejection is that the Mādhyamika cannot find any sufficiently substantial relation that would allow us to bind together world and word at the most fundamental level. The most plausible candidate for linking words and their referents is the causal relation, such as by using it to construct a causal chain from an "initial baptism" to our present use of the term. But as Nāgārjuna has argued in detail, the causal relation itself is conceptually constructed. But if causation cannot be regarded as a relation that functions objectively, independent of the concepts we employ, then it can hardly be regarded as a mind-independent way of founding the relationship between language and the world.[40]

40. See Siderits (2003: 166).

An alternative account which the Mādhyamika might want to adopt conceives of truth not in terms of correspondence with an exterior reality but rather in terms of assertability conditions. In this case a statement is regarded as true if conditions obtain which warrant our asserting the statement. What makes the statement that water is wet true is not a structural correspondence between it and a fact about water, but rather the fact that we have something that justifies us in making this statement. What this justification consists in depends on the further details of our theory of truth; it might be based on facts about empirical observation, about coherence with other beliefs, about pragmatic success, and so forth. This view of course implies that there could not be any truths that are *in principle* beyond our ability to verify them. This is so because we could never have a warrant for asserting such statements, and the existence of such a warrant is precisely what we consider the truth of the statements to consist in. Such statements would have to be regarded as lacking a truth-value. This kind of denial of verification-transcendent truths in turn agrees very well with Nāgārjuna's contextualist epistemology. For if nothing is intrinsically a means of knowledge, nothing can be intrinsically beyond the grasp of such means of knowledge either. Because what constitutes a means of knowledge is context-dependent, that a certain truth cannot be accessed by some means of knowledge is context-dependent too. There is no context-independent concept of knowledge we could use to form the idea of a truth that lies beyond all epistemic contexts.

According to the Madhyamaka view of truth, there can be no such thing as ultimate truth, a theory describing how things really are, independent of our interests and conceptual resources employed in describing it. All one is left with is conventional truth, truth that consists in agreement with commonly accepted practices and conventions. These are the truths that are arrived at when we view the world through our linguistically formed conceptual framework. But we should be wary of denigrating these conventions as a distorting device which incorporates our specific interests and concerns. The very notion of "distortion" presupposes that there is a world untainted by conceptuality out there (even if our minds can never reach it) which is crooked and bent to fit our cognitive grasp. But precisely this notion of a "way things really are" is argued by the Mādhyamika to be incoherent. There is no way of investigating the world apart from our linguistic and conceptual practices, if only because these practices generate the notion of the "world" and of the "objects" in it in the first place. To speak of conventional reality as distorted is therefore highly misleading, unless all we want to say is that our way of investigating the world is inextricably bound up with the linguistic and conceptual framework we happen to employ.

There are two worries one might have with the rejection of the notion of an ultimate truth. First of all one might think that progress in human inquiry requires that we question what we now believe to be truths and perhaps replace them by other beliefs. Even a cursory acquaintance with the history of science will show that we are where we are now only through a persistent process of replacing beliefs we once held to be true but no longer do. But it seems hard to explain what our justification for this shift is if it is not trying to bring our beliefs into greater accordance with the way things are. All we ever seem to be dealing with according to the Madhyamaka view is a purely immanent notion of truth where the only kind of truth we have access to is a reflection of conventional human practices and agreements.

In response to this problem, the Mādhyamika might want to make the point that it is at least sometimes advantageous to treat truths as if they had a more than conventional grounding, that is, as if they were not just the product of agreement with commonly accepted practices and conventions. This is so precisely because such practices need improvement from time to time and because a spirit of inquiry is facilitated more by the idea that there is a mindindependent truth waiting to be discovered.[41] The Mādhyamika could thus argue that *for pragmatic reasons* we should conceive of truths as reflections of an objective, external reality even though we do not think that there are any such truths in fact. We might object at this point that if the notion of the existence of at least some verification-transcendent truths is pragmatically useful, whoever believes in truth as warranted assertability then has to believe that some truths are not conventional, since asserting this is now supported by a warrant. But this thinking will not just turn the anti-realist into a realist against his will, since his embracing of non-conventional truths is dictated by purely practical concerns: we are considerably better off if we build our inquiries on the convenient fiction of non-conventional truths. But they remain just that—conventional fictions; the anti-realist does not think, as the realist does, that the existence of such truths is in any way grounded in the way the world is, independent of our interests and concerns.

Another worry with the Mādhyamika's rejection of an ultimate truth is that emptiness cannot then be regarded as the ultimate truth either. But surely, one will argue, for the Mādhyamika emptiness is the end-product of the correct analysis of phenomena, and thereby indicative of the way things really are. As was argued in section 2.1.3 of chapter 2 the theory of emptiness is not to be seen as a description of reality as it is independent of human conceptual conventions, because its main purpose it to combat the wrong ascription of *svabhāva* to things. The absence of *svabhāva* is nothing that phenomena have within themselves, but only something that is projected onto them from the outside in an attempt to rectify a mistaken cognition. Therefore the theory of emptiness is not to be regarded as an ultimately true theory either. Such a theory would describe things as they are independent of human interests and concerns. But the theory of emptiness is intricately bound up with such interests and concerns: if there were no human minds who mistakenly read the existence of *svabhāva* into phenomena that lack it there would be no point in having a theory to correct this. It is only because of our erroneous view of things that the theory of emptiness is required as a corrective.

41. Siderits (2003: 183–184).

A final problem with the Madhyamaka focus on conventional truth might be the fact that it entails a form of relativism we find unacceptable.[42] If we regard truth as being a matter of warranted assertibility and not as something settled by "what the facts are," we will have to agree that as human practices change, so do standards of warranted assertibility. But then it might be the case that what one culture regards as true, or as rationally acceptable, or for that matter as ethically acceptable, is very different from what *we* regard as true or acceptable. We will not then be in any way justified in criticizing their practices, since there is no objective reality according to which they could be regarded as wrong. If some culture's standards of warranted assertibility lead it to believe that the earth is hollow, that counter-induction is the best methodology for natural science, and to believe that female infanticide is morally commendable, there is nothing for us to do save observing that these practices differ from ours.

What the Mādhyamika should want to argue at this point is that any culture with which we can interact at all, that is one that shares a form of life with us, is one that shares with us at least some evaluative standards. If it did not, we would not be able to ascribe to it anything like rational forms of belief formation or ethical norms, so that the whole idea of rational or ethical divergence

42. This is a problem which, despite its considerable complexity, has not been explicitly discussed in Indian sources. It is tempting to speculate why relativism does not seem to have been a prominent problem for Indian Madhyamaka authors. Siderits (1989: 240) suggests that "the hegemonistic strategy which Brahmanic culture used to subsume the other cultures of the Indian subcontinent" might have been responsible for this. Bharati (1965: 18) notes that "the element common to Hindu and Mahāyāna philosophy is what Indian scholastic terminology calls *samanvaya*, i.e., the institutionalized attitude of reconciling discursively contrary notions by raising them to a level of discourse where these contradictions are thought to have no validity." It is true that if diverging perspectives are incorporated into one's own view (perhaps as displaying a restricted understanding of some aspect of this view) rather than seen as independent and incommensurable views of the same subject-matter, the problem of relativism loses much of its force.

and rational or ethical criticism would lose its point.[43] The Mādhyamika could then argue that even though different cultures can have different standards none of which can be regarded as ultimately true (since there is no such thing as ultimate truth), still some standards can be seen to be better than others, for example in terms of overall coherence with our practices (which are also a part of conventional truth) or in terms of their ability to reduce pain. Siderits[44] discusses the interesting example of the conception of the self by Prāsan˙ gika and Svātantrika writers. While for the Prāsan˙ gikas the self is a mere label superimposed on the group of elements, the Svātantrika regards it as a continuous series of inner moments of consciousness which take their inner states as objects. Of course the latter do not think that the self has any degree of ultimate reality but believe that among the variety of aggregates which make up the self we can identify one candidate (i.e., that part of our mind is aware of its own psychological states) that best coheres with our cognitive practices. So while there is no "best" candidate among the entities that we might potentially identify with the self, because ultimately there is no such thing, according to the Svātantrika reading at least some candidates may be better than others.

Tillemans[45] mentions the interesting example of the wine-taster in illustration of this point. It is generally agreed that secondary properties, and particularly olfactory and gustatory properties, do not have a mind-independent existence. If there were no human beings around, there would not be the properties of tasting sour or smelling sweet, since these are not properties existing in the objects themselves but are produced only by interaction of the objects and our sensory faculties. Nevertheless, despite this mind-dependence, we might want to argue that some ascriptions of secondary properties have more than a subjective validity. A wine-taster describing a wine as tasting acidic may be wrong, even though ultimately there is no property of tasting acidic which the wine has or lacks. Even within the realm of conventional truth we therefore do not "make it all up," but there are ways of ranking different conventional statements in terms of better or worse, even though there is no best, or ultimately true account.

While this is an enlightening example, the case that the critic who is worried about relativism is concerned with is probably less like the case of wine and more like that of phenolthiourea. For genetic reasons this substance tastes bitter to about three-quarters of the population while it is tasteless to the rest.

43. This is essentially the point argued in Davidson (1973–1974: 19): "Whether we like it or not, if we want to understand others, we must count them right in most matters."

44. Siderits (1989: 241–243). See also (2003: 206).

45. (2003: 110–111).

Now if we separated the two populations, we seem to end up with a case in which one group has no reason to criticize the other's taste-judgment as incorrect, because ultimately there is no fact to the matter of what phenolthiourea tastes like. And in this case it seems impossible to rank one taste-judgment as conventionally better or worse than another one. The only thing we could bring forward in response to this point seems to be the familiar Davidsonian observation that if such disagreement between two cultures was widespread, that is, if it did not concern just simple taste sensations but also more complex factual and moral judgments, there would be no basis for the two cultures to interact at all. Since their standards of rational justification or morality would be so different from ours, the whole notion of factual and ethical criticism would lose its meaning. We would therefore have to rely on the assumption that no two cultures that can interact would differ as radically in their conventions as illustrated by the example of phenolthiourea.

In order to understand Nāgārjuna's project as a philosophically coherent enterprise it is useful to take into account the ethical and soteriological implications of different standards one of which might be better than another but none of which can be best in the sense of corresponding to the way reality really is. For Nāgārjuna the conception of truth supported by the way things really are presents a subtle object of clinging and thereby ultimately a source of suffering. Such clinging is not as coarse as clinging to possessions, to one's body, or to one's self, but it still generates a kind of attachment which in turn supports a sense of selfhood as a subject who has realized the way things really are. For the Mādhyamika, in order to become truly selfless, one has to give up the view that we can obtain anything more than conventional truths, some of which might be evaluated as better than others but none of which can constitute the last word. The resulting epistemic humility is therefore a product of considerations of selfhood and ethics seen as interlinked with considerations of truth and reality.

Title of the Text:

मध्यमकशास्त्रम्

中論

༄༅།དབུ་མ་རྩ་བའི་ཚིག་ལེའུ་བྱས་པ་ཤེས་རབ་ཆེས་བྱ་བ།༄༅

Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Title

मध्यमकशास्त्रम्

中論

༄༅དབུ་མ་རྩ་བའི་ཚིག་ལེའུར་བྱས་པ་ཤེས་རབ་ཅེས་བྱ་བ།༔༄

རྒྱ་གར་སྐད།༔ *pra dzny'a n'a ma m'u la ma dhy'a ma ka k'a ri ka* བོད་སྐད་དུ།༔ འཇམ་དཔལ་གཞོན་ནུར་གྱུར་པ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།།

mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ

zhōng lùn juǎn;juàn dì yī

(1a1)|| rgya gar skad du | |

pra dzñ’a n’a ma m’u la ma dhy’a ma ka k’a ri ka | bod skad du | |

dbu ma rtsa ba’i tshig le’ur byas pa śes rab ces bya ba |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Mulamadhyamakakarika of Nagarjuna

JONES (Skt):
The Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way (Mula-madhyamaka-karikas)

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
[The Philosophy of the Middle Way]

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Treatise on the Root of the Middle Way

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
A Song of The Fundamental Truth on The Middle Way (An interpretative translation of MMK.)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Mūlamadhyamakakārikā – Verses on the Principles of the Middle Way

STRENG (Skt):
Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamaka Karika - Fundamentals of the Middle Way

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
A TREATISE ON RELATIVITY

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way

BOCKING (Ch):
The Middle Treatise Verses by the Bodhisattva Dragon-Tree (Nagarjuna).

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Herein lie the Root Verses of the Center called “Intelligence”. In the language of India: *Prajnanamamulamadhyamakakarika*. In the language of Tibet: *dBu ma rtsa ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa shes rab ces bya ba*.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Insight –The Stanzas of the Root of the Middle Way

GARFIELD (Tb):
Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way - Nagarjuna’s Mulamadhyamakakarika

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
Mūlamadhyamakakārikā

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The Middle Way Plain and Simple

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Root Verses from THE FUNDAMENTAL WISDOM OF THE MIDDLE WAY

ROBINSON (Ch):
The Middle Stanzas

PINGALA COMMENTARY

Commentary by the Brahman Blue-eyes. Translated by Kumarajiva, Master of the Tripitaka under Yao of Ch'in.

Question: Why was this treatise composed?

Reply: There are some who say that all things arise from the god 'Great Self-Being'. Some say that they arise from Visnu, some say that they arise from combination, some say that they arise from time, some say that they arise from the world-nature some say that they arise from transformations, some say that they arise spontaneously and some say that they arise from atoms. Because they hold to these various errors they fall into false views such as that things have no cause, or some wrong cause, that they are permanent or that they are cut off, and so on. In various ways they expound 'I' and 'mine', but they do not know the true Dharma. The Buddha, desiring to terminate all such false views and to make known the Buddha-dharma, first taught the twelve causal links in the Sravaka-Dharma; but also, for the benefit of those who have already applied themselves, who have the great mind and who are capable of receiving the profound Dharma, he expounded in the Mahayana-Dharma the characteristics of causality, namely that all dharmas neither arise nor cease, are not the same, do not differ and so on; they are utterly empty and devoid of anything which exists. As is stated in the Prajnaparamita Sutra, 'The Buddha told Subhuti: When a Bodhisattva is established in the seat of enlightenment, he views the twelve causal links as like the inexhaustibility of empty space'.

(1b29) After the Buddha's decease, in the second five hundred years of the patterned Dharma, men's faculties became dulled, they became deeply attached to all dharmas, and sought for settled, fixed characteristics in the twelve causal links, the five skandhas, the twelve avenues, the eighteen realms, and so on. They did not know the Buddha's intention and were merely attached to words and letters. Hearing utter emptiness taught in the Mahayana-Dharma they did not know the reason for things being empty, and so conceived doubts and views, such as 'If all things are utterly empty how can you differentiate sin and merit, karmic recompense and so on? If this were so, there would be no worldly truth and no truth of the supreme meaning'. They seized hold of the characteristic of 'emptiness' and produced voracious attachments, generating all sorts of errors about utter emptiness. It was for such reasons as these that the Bodhisattva Nagarjuna composed this Middle Treatise.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Prasannapadā – Lucid Exposition

Candrakīrti's Salutation to Nagarjuna

After making my obeisance to Nagarjuna,

who was born of the ocean of wisdom of the perfectly enlightened one and who rose above the realm of dualities;

who compassionately brought to light the hidden truth of the treasury of Buddhism in Buddha's sense;

who, by the intensity of his insight, consumes the views of his opponents as though they were fuel, and burns up the darkness in the minds of men;

whose utterances of incomparable wisdom, like a shower of arrows, disperse utterly the adversaries of life;

whose words reign majestically over the three realms of the world and over Buddhists and gods as well;

After making obeisance I shall expound the verses of his treatise in correct, comprehensible statements, which will be free of vain argument, and lucid.

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Concern, Method and Assumptions of the Middle Way Philosophy [Chapter I]

Origin, subject-matter and ultimate concern of Nagarjuna's treatise

The great treatise we are to discuss is the one beginning "Not of themselves, nor from another, nor from both..." (fn 1 commencement of the first *kārikā* of Nagarjuna's treatise.)

We have to ask what is the origin, what the subject-matter and what the ultimate concern of this great treatise. In the *Madhyamakavatara* (fn 2 another work of Candrakīrti) it was stated that the wisdom of a perfectly realized one has its origin in an initial vow of dedication issuing from universal compassion and graced with comprehension going beyond all duality. In this sense Nagarjuna, knowing unerringly how to teach transcendent insight (fn 3 *Prajnaparamita*, the consummate awareness of the truth of things.), developed this treatise out of compassion and for the enlightenment of others. So much can be said about its origin. 'To command the hostile afflictions and to inure against

the vicissitudes of life: a genuine treatise has a teaching that is a stronghold. These two qualities are not found in any other treatises.'

Nagarjuna himself gives us a glimpse of the subject-matter and ultimate concern of the exhaustive treatise we are to discuss. With perfect and unerring clarity, having risen to a lofty height of mind, and desiring to honour, by a treatise, the supreme teacher, the perfectly realized one who is inseparable from the existence and truth of such a lofty height of mind, he says

Neither perishing nor arising in time, neither terminable nor eternal,

Neither self-identical nor variant in form, neither coming nor going;

Such is the true way of things (fn 4 *pratitya-samutpada* – Traditionally 'dependent origination'. In Nagarjuna's hands this term comes to mean non-dependent non-origination, that is, the absence of being in things.), *the serene coming to rest of the manifold of named things,*

As taught by the perfectly enlightened one whom I honour as the best of all teachers. (fn 5 This verse, which is given again below, appears to be the dedication of Nagarjuna's treatise.)

The true way of things, as characterized by the eight terms, 'neither perishing nor arising' and so on, is the subject-matter of this treatise.

The ultimate concern of the treatise is clearly stated to be *nirvāṇa*: the serene coming to rest of the manifold of all named things (*sarvaprapancopasama*).

The salutation is given in the words 'I honour the best of all teachers.'

So much for the meaning of these two verses as a whole. The meaning of each term will now be analysed. 'Perishing' means annihilation, the utter perishing of every moment. 'Arising' means origination, the emergence of self-existent things. 'Terminable' means terminating, the disruption of a series. 'Eternal' means permanent, endurance through all time. 'Self-identical' means to be one thing, to be unspecifiable, to be undifferentiable. 'Variant in form' means to be specifiable, to be differentiable. 'Coming' means the very moving toward, it is the arriving at a proximate place of what was in a remote place. 'Going' is the very moving from, it is the movement to a remote place of what is in a proximate place.

The term pratitya-samutpada

The root *i* means motion; the preposition *prati* means arrival or attainment. But the addition of a preposition alters the meaning of the root. 'A verbal root is forced, by the addition of a preposition, to alter its meaning even as the sweet waters of the Ganges on emptying into the ocean.' So, in this case, the word *pratitya*, as gerund, means 'attained' in the sense of 'dependent' or 'relative'. Again, the verbal root *pad* [to go, to fall] preceded by the preposition *samut* [out of] means to arise or to become manifest. *Samutpada*, then, has the meaning 'to arise' or 'to become manifest'. The full meaning of the term pratitya-samutpada is therefore the arising, or becoming manifest of things (*bhava*) in relation to or dependent on causal conditions.

There are others who hold that the term means the arising of things which vanish in the moment. This is bad etymology and cannot explain all uses of the term in the sutras (fn 6 Putatively the discourses of Buddha) and in the Abhidharma (fn 7 Commentaries and expositions of the early sutras). Bhavaviveka (fn 8 An earlier (c. 550 AD) commentator of Nagarjuna's treatise. He represents a rival and relentlessly attacked sub-school of Madhyamika, the svatantrika school.) attacks both this interpretation and our own. If, he says, 'to be dependent on' or 'to be relative to' means there are two separate things, then there can be no origination, because the one thing must already have arisen before it can be dependent on, or relative to, the second. This, however, is agreed to, and so is no objection to our view. Bhavaviveka adds that the term *pratitya-samutpada* consists of two parts because it refers to the conditional statement 'if this exists, that will arise' (fn 9 Putative formulation of Buddha. Cf. Kindred Sayings, vol. 2, p. 23, Pali Text Society, Translation Series, Luzac, London, 1952.). This is erroneous: the term has merely two etymological parts. Again, he says the term is a mere conventional expression, a metaphor. But Nagarjuna insists that the meaning of the entire term 'dependent origination' derives from its parts: 'whatever arises in dependence on something else does not arise in truth'. Bhavaviveka, however, gives an account which is the same as our own, in saying 'the long exists in dependence on the short, so far as there is the short, relative to the long'. Thus he accepts what he had criticized as false, which does not make sense. But enough of this disputation.

The illustrious one showed so clearly that things arise in dependence on causal conditions and he rejected the idea that origination could be without

cause or from one cause or from a variety of causes, or that things could be produced of themselves, from what is other than themselves or from both. By this rejection the true delusive everyday nature (*samvrtam svarupam*) of delusive everyday things (*samvrtanam padarthanam*) is revealed as it really is. Dependent origination (fn 10 In its traditional, causal sense) is thus itself delusive because, in the comprehension of the wise man, nothing self-existent arises in it nor is there actual destruction, and by the same token, no actual movement (fn 11 Change, attainment). It is distinguished by the eight characteristics, 'non-perishing' and the others. That the characteristics 'perishing' and so on do not hold for dependent origination, as the way things are truly, Nagarjuna will expound throughout the whole of this treatise.

Though the characteristics of dependent origination, as the way things are truly, are endless, these eight have been chosen primarily for purposes of argumentation. When dependent origination is seen by the wise (*arya*) as it truly is because the manifold of named things (*prapanca*) — the duality of name and what is named, and so on — has ceased utterly, the manifold of named things comes to rest in it. Nagarjuna holds that dependent origination is nothing else but the coming to rest of the manifold of named things. When the everyday mind and its contents are no longer active, the subject and object of everyday transactions (*vyavahara*) having faded out because the turmoil of origination, decay, and death has been left behind completely, that is final beatitude. (fn 12 This paragraph anticipates the conclusion reached in the '*Nirvāṇa*' chapter.)

That Nagarjuna's primary intention is to expound the nature of dependent origination as we have characterized it, is indicated by the dedication.

Neither perishing nor arising in time, neither terminable nor eternal,

Neither self-identical nor variant in form, neither coming nor going;

Such is the true way of things, the serene coming to rest of the manifold of named things,

As taught by the perfectly enlightened one whom I honour as the best of all teachers.

Nagarjuna, through his understanding of dependent origination as we have described it, that is, as the way things are truly, discerned the unerring teaching of the only perfectly realized one; he looked upon all false doctrines as the idle chatter of foolish people and expressed his surpassing reverence by calling the illustrious one 'the best of all teachers'.

In the dedication 'perishing' is repudiated first. This makes it clear that there is no basis for a fixed order of succession between origination and perishing. Nagarjuna will say later (fn 13 XI, 3. Not included in this translation) 'If birth came first and old age and death later then birth would be free of old age and death and the deathless would be born.' So it is not a fixed rule that what arises is prior and what perishes is subsequent.

The first kārikā

Nagarjuna will now undertake to expound that dependent origination which is characterized as 'non-perishing' and so on. He takes up, first of all, the repudiation (*pratisedha*) of 'arising' knowing that, if it is repudiated, 'perishing' and the other characteristics are more readily repudiated.

When other schools reflect on arising they think of it either as spontaneous, or as from another, or from both, or at random. Nagarjuna says that all these conceptions are, on reflection, unintelligible (*nopapadyate*).

1 No things whatsoever exist, at any time, in any place, having arisen of themselves, from another, from both or without cause. (fn 14 In paraphrase: 'No things whatsoever exist, having arisen spontaneously from self-generation, or from what is other than themselves, from both these sources or at random, from no cause at all.')

In this *kārikā* 'at any time' means 'ever', the expression 'in any place' means 'anywhere at all', the expression 'whatsoever' is equivalent to 'at all'. The formulation therefore is, 'Not as arisen of themselves do any things at all exist, ever, anywhere at all.' The other three assertions make sense in the same way.

Controversy concerning Madhyamika method

Someone may object that one asserting 'Things do not arise of themselves (*svatah*)' is committed, against his will, to the conclusion 'Things arise from what is other than themselves (*paratah*).' One is not so committed, however, because this negation is not intended to imply an affirmation. We will repudiate equally the view that origination is from what is other, and for the same reason for which origination from self is not possible. What that reason is can be ascertained from the *Madhyamakavatara* 'Therefore, if something, of

whatever kind, has arisen there can be no point at all in a subsequent birth of this birth: it would be nonsense.' (VI, 8)

Indeed, Buddhapalita (fn 15 An earlier (c. 500 AD?) commentator on Nagarjuna's treatise whom Candrakīrti attempts to follow.) says: 'Things do not arise of themselves because such spontaneous origination would be purposeless and because it entails an absurdity. There would be no purpose in the repeated origination of things which are in existence already. That is, if something exists it would not arise again and yet there would never be a time when it was not arising.'

Bhavaviveka has pointed out syllogistic faults in Buddhapalita's statement and demands from him more than an exposure of the untenability of the opponent's argument. But Buddhapalita, in arguing against the Samkhya (fn 16 The oldest of the Indian schools of philosophy; the proponent of the theory of spontaneous generation, i.e. that the effect is contained in the cause.) in this matter is not obliged, as a Madhyamika, to do this. It is meaningless for a Madhyamika, because he cannot accept his opponent's premises, to propound a self-contained argument (*svatantra anumana*) from his own point of view (*svatah*). As Aryadeva (fn 17 *Catuhsataka,* XVI, 24. Aryadeva was an immediate follower of Nagarjuna.) expresses it, 'If one makes no claim that something is, or is not, or is not both, it will take a very long time to refute him.'

And Nagarjuna says in the *Vigrahavyavartani* (fn 18 *The 'Refutation of Objections,* a logical work of Nagarjuna, written later than the present treatise. These verses are 29 and 30.), 'If I were to advance any thesis whatsoever, that in itself would be a fault; but I advance no thesis and so cannot be faulted.' 'If, through the means of valid knowledge I cognized any object at all, 1 would affirm or deny its existence; but as I do not do this I am not culpable.'

Bhavaviveka should not, therefore, require Buddhapalita to establish his own argument against the Samkhya claim that the effect pre-existed in the cause and is therefore self-generated.

But Bhavaviveka may be saying that though the Madhyamikas do not establish any thesis by examples and reasons and adduce no self-contained arguments and so are unable to prove the repudiation of spontaneous generation and to show that the adversary's argument is inconclusive on grounds acceptable to both; none the less, in being obliged to show up the internal contradiction in the adversary's argument, they must do this by means of arguments which are themselves free from all faults pertaining to examples, reasons and so on. Buddhapalita, not having adduced arguments free of such errors, stands faulted.

This is not the way things are, we reply. Of course anyone making a positive assertion must establish his argument with his adversary and the latter should be persuaded to accept it. But the Madhyamika brings no reason against his adversary; he makes no use of reasons and examples but pursues his own thesis only until the adversary gives up his. He proceeds on assumptions which are not provable claims; he goes so far as to contradict himself and is not capable of convincing his opponent. This is, surely, a clearer refutation that the opponent's own thesis is not adequately established. In such a situation, what would be the purpose of attempting a refutation by superior counter-argument?

Even so Buddhapalita's comment could be expressed in a formal argument as, by implication, he gives both an example of self-origination and a reason against it. Whether we take the example of the clay and the pot or the threads and the cloth, he has shown clearly and with good reasons, that the Samkhya position, according to which the effect [pot and cloth] preexists in the cause [clay and threads] does not make sense, namely, because, if they really pre-exist, there is no sense in their arising a second time.

The adversary is bound to a conclusion which is perverse by logical necessity (*prasangaviparitena*). We are not so bound because we advance no thesis of our own. It is therefore impossible to invalidate any argument of ours. Our intention is fully satisfied so long as a multitude of logical faults, due to internal contradictions (*prasangaviparita*), descend on our adversary.

How can Buddhapalita, an unerring adherent of Nagarjuna's thought, possibly conclude anything inadvertently which would give his adversary an opening against him? If one who holds that particular things do not have self-existence exposes the logical faults in the view that they have, how can there be logical inconsequence in an argument which merely exposed logical inconsequence? Words are not like policemen on the prowl: we are not subject to their independence. On the contrary, their truth lies in their efficacy (*sakti*); they take their meaning from the intention of the one using them. It follows that we have merely invalidated our adversary's thesis. We need not

accept the antithesis of the logical fault we have exposed.

Nagarjuna, very especially, merely pointed out logical faults when he was demolishing the thesis of an opponent. For example: 'There is no infinite space prior to the nature of infinite space: if it were prior to its nature it would be, illogically, without a nature.' [MMK V.1] 'Objects are not perceived apart from matter as their cause; matter as cause is not perceived apart from objects.' [MMK IV.1] Again, '*Nirvāṇa* is not ontic, for then it would follow that it was characterized by decay and dissolution. For there is no ontic existent not subject to decay and dissolution.' [MMK XXV.4]

Bhavaviveka would say 'Of course these are terse sayings. One must develop the various reasons and consequences of the profound sayings of Nagarjuna. Why does Buddhapalita not develop his formulations in this manner? For it should be the endeavour of commentators to give syllogistic arguments.'

It is not so. Nagarjuna commented on his own *Vigrahavyavartani* without employing syllogistic arguments (*prayogavakya*). Bhavaviveka is merely exhibiting his skill in the art of dialectics. Though he claims to be a follower of the Madhyamika school he none the less advances syllogistic arguments which aim to be conclusive (*svatantra*). Madhyamika is a great impediment for a logician such as he would be. He accumulates fault after fault.

How is that? He has advanced the following syllogistic argument: The contents of the mind (*adhyatmikany ayatanani*) do not, in higher truth (*paramarthatah*) arise out of themselves, because they exist already, even as pure consciousness does.

But what is the purpose of the qualification 'in higher truth', which he introduces? If he says it is because origination as it is understood in the everyday world cannot be denied, because, if it is, then its transcendence will not be required, as we believe it is, this does not make sense. Even in the everyday world spontaneous origination is not accepted. The sutra says 'A sprout arising from a seed as its cause is not generated from itself nor from what is not itself, nor from both, nor at random; and it does not arise from god, from time, from atoms, from matter nor spontaneously.' (fn 19 Cf. Siksasamuccaya, p. 213) And again, 'The sprout of a seed is not the seed itself, being the sprout; nor is it other than the seed; yet it is not the same; it is neither perishable nor eternal, but is of the essence of things.'

And Nagarjuna will say in this treatise, 'Whatever comes into existence dependent on something else cannot be that very thing; nor can it be wholly other either; therefore it neither perishes completely nor is it eternal.' [MMK XVIII.10] If Bhavaviveka says that the qualification 'in higher truth' holds only for the opponent, that does not make sense. We do not accept an opponent's concepts even for the everyday world. As non-Buddhists lack unerring insight into the nature of the two truths, both should be excluded if the discussion is to proceed successfully. Thus it does not make sense to introduce this qualification when referring to the argument of an opponent.

Nor does the ordinary man understand causality as spontaneous generation and therefore the qualification is useless in his case as well. He does not penetrate into the problems of origination from self or from another, that an effect is produced from a cause, and so on; he understands it simply as it appears to be. Nagarjuna himself settled the matter in this way. It is clear that this qualification is in every sense utterly pointless.

However, if Bhavaviveka introduced this distinction so that he would not repudiate origination in the everyday sense, then this would involve two fallacies, that of an argument invalid because its substance is untrue for its proponent, and that of an invalid reason (*hetu*) (fn 20 Cf. p. 38, 'because they exist already') as the basis of the argument: he does not himself accept the existence of visual perception and the other mental faculties in higher truth. If he objects that there is no fallacy because vision and the other mental faculties are facts in the everyday sense, then for whom is the qualification 'in higher truth' binding. Perhaps he will say that the origination of delusive everyday vision and the other mental faculties is repudiated 'in higher truth' as a way of specifying the kind of repudiation. If that is so he should have expressed himself in this way: 'Visual perceptions and the other contents of the mind do not arise in higher truth.' He did not, however. But even had he, he would still have had an invalid argument because its basis is unacceptable to the opponent: for he accepts vision and the other mental faculties as real entities but does not take them to be pragmatic terms serving everyday purposes (*prajnaptisata*). (fn 21 This is the Madhyamika view.) So this does not make sense.

If Bhavaviveka would reply that all philosophical dispute proceeds in spite of the parties not accepting each other's presuppositions, this will not do. He cannot advance an independent argument about the

cause of the faculties of consciousness because just these, he, as a Madhyamika, knows do not exist.

In so far as the explicit intention is to repudiate origination utterly, one must repudiate both entities and their causes whose supposed reality is rooted in mere misbelief (viparyasa) (fn 22 i.e. false belief; cf. Chapter XVII)? This repudiation must be unconditional. Misbelief and the absence of misbelief (*aviparyasa*) are incompatible (*bhinna*). So long as, because of misbelief, one seizes on the unreal as real, even as the victim of an eye defect falsely perceives hairs and other things in front of the eye, how will one in the least way grasp the way things really are? However, so long as, because of the absence of misbelief, the unreal is not reified into the real, even as those with healthy eyes do not see hairs and other things in front of the eye, then how could one in the slightest perceive as real what is non-existent? To do that constitutes the delusive everyday world. Precisely this is the intention of Nagarjuna's verse: 'If through the means of valid knowledge I cognized any object at all I would affirm or deny its existence; but as I do not do this I am not culpable.'

In this sense, therefore, misbelief and its absence are incompatible. Therefore, as for the wise there can be no misbelief where the absence of misbelief has been established, how could the mental faculties be real entities in the false everyday world? Bhavaviveka's argument is, thus, faulty because it uses unacceptable assumptions; further, its reason is faulty as it lacks any ground. It does not therefore confute us.

There is no analogy between the existence of the mental faculties and the impermanence of sound. Whereas there is agreement about the general nature of sound and impermanence there is no agreement about the mental faculties between those who hold them to be devoid of self-existence and those who hold them not to be so devoid, either in the everyday sense or in the higher sense. So the two instances are not the same. What has been said about the fallacy of a thesis without substance for its proponent applies equally to the fallacy of adducing 'existence' as the reason in an argument.

At times Bhavaviveka himself falls back on the unfoundedness of all reasons as when he repudiates causality in the ultimate sense. But if reasons are unfounded proof is impossible. It may then be objected that our own arguments are as invalid as those we attack. This is true only if one, like Bhavaviveka, advances independent arguments (*svatantra anumana*). But we do not construct independent arguments. Our arguments effect the refutation of the claims of our opponents.

For example, someone claims 'The eye sees what is other than itself.' That will be invalidated solely by an argument which such a one accepts himself. 'You think that the eye does not have the capacity to see itself and it is agreed that this capacity is never separated from the capacity to see what is not itself, we will urge.1 'Therefore whenever there is no seeing of self, there is no seeing of what is not self either, as in the case of a jar. But the eye does not see itself, and therefore it cannot see what is not itself either.' So there is a contradiction between not being able to see itself and seeing what is not itself, like the colour blue and such things. This contradiction is exposed by an argument based solely on the opponent's own presuppositions. Only that much is achieved by our arguments. How can the fault referred to above be turned against our thesis? How could it have the same fault?

In short, to apply the technicalities of discursive disputation is purposeless. The Buddhas themselves, out of concern for those they were guiding, who were ignorant of logic, made their points in terms of the conventional ideas of these people themselves.

The commentary resumed

Enough of all this. Let us resume our commentary on the main work. Nor do things arise out of what is other than themselves (*paratah*) because such 'other' does not exist. As Nagarjuna will express it later on, 'The self-existence of things cannot be found in their causes and conditions.' It follows that, because the 'other' does not exist, things cannot arise from what is other than themselves. Further, some passages from the Madhyamakavatara make it clear that origination from the 'other' has to be repudiated. 'If what is other is entirely dependent on what is other, then fire could give rise to great darkness. Indeed, anything could arise from anything, and perfect otherness amounts to no cause at all.' Buddhapalita elucidates: 'Things do not arise from what is other than themselves, because it would follow that anything would be possible from anything.'

Bhavaviveka attacks this as being a statement which merely exposes the inner contradictions of an opponent's argument, without advancing an independent counter-argument. (fn 23 i.e. aprasanga statement;) But we have shown that such a statement is valid and that one does not affirm the opposite of what

one denies. Nor are things born from both (fn 24 i.e. 'self and 'other') taken together. The illogicality will apply to both theses taken together, as origination is incomeprehensible in terms of either. Nagarjuna will say later on [MMK XII,9] 'Afflicted existence (*duhkha*) could arise from two causes if it could arise from one cause.'

But things cannot arise without any cause at all. If there is no cause, there will be no means nor effect either.' The illogicality of this will be discussed later. The illogicality is further pointed out in such verses as if the entire world were devoid of causes nothing at all could be comprehended, it would be precisely like the scent and colour of a lotus in the sky.' (fn 25 Madhyamakavatara, VI, 99) Buddhapalita observes, 'Things cannot arise without cause, because that would entail that anything could arise at any time, anywhere.'

Bhavaviveka attacks this statement as well for being mere dialectics and because it implies the truth of its opposite. But these objections have been dealt with.

Further, any espousal of God and such ideas is equally unintelligible, because they cannot exist apart from the agreed conceptions used in the theses given by ourselves and our opponents. And so it has been established that there is no origination because it is not possible (*asambhavat*). The way things are in truth, however, characterized as neither perishing nor arising and so on, has been established.

Some may object: If, in this way, you characterize dependent origination as neither perishing nor arising and so on, what then of the words of Buddha, 'Personal dispositions are dependent on ignorance; if ignorance comes to an end, dispositions come to an end.' Or, 'Personal dispositions are impermanent and belong to something which itself arises and perishes. Having come into being, they cease again; bliss is their quiescence.' Again, 'Whether perfectly realized ones arise or do not arise, there is one essential truth established for all things. There is one practical rule for the sustenance of beings: the fourfold nourishment. There are two factors which protect the individual: humility and justice.' Again: 'One attains this life (*loka*) coming from another: one attains another life departing from this.' It is clear that Buddha taught dependent origination as characterized by perishability and so on. Does this not contradict your interpretation?

From such passages the characteristics of dependent origination are taken to be 'perishing' and so on. (fn 26 i.e. the opposite of Nagarjuna's characterization.)

Sutras for mankind at large and sutras for the initiates

This is precisely why Nagarjuna composed this treatise on the middle way; he wanted to demonstrate the proper distinction (fn 27 The distinction between *neya* and *nita* is indispensable to Madhyamika's interpretation of the mass of Buddha statements accepted as canonical. The widespread translation 'provisional' (*neya*) and 'final' (*nita*) truth cannot hold for Madhyamika which dispenses with the notion of propositional truth.) between those sutras which are for mankind at large (*neyartha*) and those which are for the initiates (*nitartha*). The former speak of arising, perishing, and so on, as characteristics of dependent origination; they have no reference to things as they are in themselves (*visayasvabhava*), unsullied because the defect of primal ignorance has been dispelled. They relate, on the contrary, to the knowledge of things as bound by convention and accept the limitations of primal ignorance.

But the illustrious one has spoken of seeing the way things truly are (*tattvadarsana*). 'That, o monks, is the higher truth, it does not pretend to be what it is not, it is *nirvāṇa*. The realm of the compounded is not what it pretends to be and so is unreal' and so on. Again: 'In this world there is neither truth nor absence of untruth. Everything pretends to be what it is not; it is essentially a swindle; it is unreal; it is a conjuring display (*maya*); it is the babbling of a child.'

A further quotation: 'Things are but a ball of foam; feelings but a bubble; ideas are like a mirage; personal dispositions are the stem of a banana tree; consciousness is but a conjuring display; thus has spoken the sunlike Buddha.' (fn 28 Samyutta Nikaya', Kindred Sayings, vol. 3, pp. 120-1.)

'A monk, seized with vigour, analysing the elements of things day and night, mindful, perfectly gathered and aware, should make his entry into the realm of peace, the realm of bliss where all personal forces are at rest.' 'Because all elements of existence lack an inherent self.' And so on.

For the one who, due to ignorance of the real meaning of Buddha's teaching, is in doubt whether certain passages are mere teaching devices, or speak of the way things really are, as well as for the one who, due to a feeble mind, mistakes a teaching utterance intended for mankind at large for a teaching aimed at wise initiates, for both of these persons who need guidance, Nagarjuna undertook this treatise. Its purpose is to dispell false opinion and doubt by the use of both reasoning and authority.

The reasoning was given in discussing the verse 'Not of themselves, nor from another . . .' and so on.

Authority is adduced in verses like these: 'Whatever is not what it pretends to be, that is unreal declared the illustrious one. All things are not what they pretend to be and are therefore unreal.'[MMK XIII.1] 'The great sage declared that an absolute beginning is incomprehensible; afflicted existence is without beginning and end: there is no first, no last.' [MMK XI.1] 'In the Katyayanavavada Sutra, the illustrious one, who comprehends existence and non-existence, repudiated the thoughts "what is, is imperishable", "what is is perishable", or "what is, is both imperishable and perishable".' [MMK XV.7]

And in the *Aksayamati Sutra* it is said: 'Which are the sutras for mankind at large and which are for initiates? Those spoken for the sake of entering the path are said to be for mankind at large; those spoken for the sake of attaining the final goal are said to be for initiates. Whichever sutras are concerned primarily with liberation characterized by the absence of being in particular things, by the absence of external objects and bigoted views, of willed action, of birth, origination, existent things, inherent natures, by the absence of individual beings, of personal spirits, of the person and of the self - such sutras are for wise initiates. This, venerable Sariputra, is called cleaving to the sutras which are for initiates, not to those for mankind at large.'

And as the *Samadhiraja Sutra* has it: 'The one who can single out those sutras which are for the initiates knows the truth of the absence of being as taught by the perfect one; where, however, person, individual, and soul are spoken of, he knows all such terms are for mankind at large.' In this sense Nagarjuna undertook to demonstrate the falseness of the understanding of dependent origination as arising, perishing, and so on.

Someone may object: if the attributes "arising", "perishing" and the others do not hold, and if Nagarjuna undertook this work with the purpose of demonstrating the falsity of all possible assertions (sarvadharmanam mrsatva) — whatever is false being non-existent — it follows that there are no bad deeds and, in their absence, no miserable lives. Nor can there be good deeds, and, in their absence, no good lives. But if there is no possibility of differentiating a good life from a bad, there can be no birth-death cycle in the Buddhist sense. And then there would be no purpose at all in undertaking any deed whatsoever.'

The delusive everyday as the basis of freedom

In reply we urge the essential falsity of things in order to counteract the inveterate commitment of the ordinary man to the reality of his everyday world as 'the' reality. It is definitely not so for the realized wise ones who take nothing at all as either false (*mrsa*) or not false (*amrsa*). Furthermore, how could there still be soterically relevant deeds or a birth-death cycle for one who has comprehended the falseness of all the putative elements of existence (*dharma*)? Such a one does not seize on any putative element whatsoever either as existing or as not existing.

As the illustrious one says in the *Ratnakuta Sutra*: 'If one searches for the mind, Kasyapa, one cannot perceive it; what one does not perceive that one cannot take as real; what one does not take as real, that is neither past, future nor present; what is neither past, future nor present, that is not self- existent; what is not self-existent does not arise; what does not arise does not perish', and so on.

Now anyone who is in the grip of misbelief will never comprehend the essential falseness of all putative elements of existence: he persists incorrigibly in the belief that dependent things are self-existent. Being thus incorrigible and being committed to the belief that what is directly given in the form of the putative elements of existence is reality, he carries out actions and he cycles in the birth-death cycle; being rooted in misbelief he will not attain *nirvāṇa*.

How can there be an adequate basis for affliction and freedom therefrom if things are false by their very nature? lust as it is in the case of an apparitional young beauty for those ignorant of her illusory nature, or in the case of a vision evoked by the realized one for those of favourable character.

The *sutra* on the *Discourse with Drdhadhyasaya* says: 'It is, o son of a noble family, as when one is present at a magical show: one's mind fills with desire on seeing a woman created by the magician; but, embarrassed, one leaves, and, having left, one tries to convince oneself that this magical woman was ugly, perishable, void and without reality', and so on.

And in the *Vinaya* (fn 29 *Vinaya pitaka,* a major component of the *tripitaka,* the Buddhist canon. It is concerned With the discipline of the community of monks.) it is told: 'An artisan created a doll in the form of a young woman. Though not in reality a young woman it was just like one in appearance. It became the object of true love and desire for a certain painter. Similarly even things which are wholly false can provide, for the unenlightened, an adequate basis for affliction and freedom therefrom.'

And in the Ratnakuta Sutra there is a story of the five hundred apostate monks who withdrew from the Buddha's presence. They were taught by two apparitional monks created by the Buddha that their chosen realities — meditational trance, ultimate insight, freedom, and the intuitive vision of freedom — merely hint metaphorically at *nirvāṇa* but are devoid of self-existence and any inherent nature. The two apparitional monks taught them to reject even the idea of ultimate *nirvāṇa*; taught them that one should not brood on ideas about ideas, nor seek knowledge through mere ideas; for one who does becomes enslaved to his ideas. They taught the five hundred that they should attain that state where all knowing by means of ideas has come to an end; that there is nothing beyond the cessation of knowing by means of ideas for a monk to achieve.

The apostate monks then returned to the Buddha's presence and the Bodhisattva Subhuti questioned them: 'Wither did you go and whence are you coming?' 'The Buddha's teaching knows no going thither nor coming hither, Subhuti.' 'Who is your teacher?' 'One who was neither born nor will vanish into *nirvāṇa*.'' 'And what teaching have you heard?' it was neither of bondage nor freedom.' 'Who gave you your discipline?' Subhuti then asked. 'One who has neither body nor mind.' 'What was the course of your discipline?' it was neither in the sense of removing ignorance nor of acquiring knowledge.' 'Whose followers are you?' 'His, who did not rest in a personal *nirvāṇa* nor personal enlightenment.' 'Who are your fellow wayfarers?' 'Those who do not course about in all the three worlds.' 'How long must you wait for your final emancipation?' 'Until all creatures of the perfectly realized one are finally emancipated.' 'How do you achieve your goal?' 'By fully comprehending the "I" sense and the "mine" sense.' 'Have, for you, the basic afflictions vanished?' 'Because of the utter dissolution of all the putative elements of existence whatsoever.' 'Have you overpowered Mara, the tempter?' 'By not taking as real the temptation of the factors of personal existence.' 'How do you revere your teacher?' 'Not by overt deed, nor by words, nor by thought.' 'How do you solve the problem of giving?' 'By not taking anything and by not accepting anything.' 'Have you transcended the birth-death cycle?' 'By holding neither to the naturalist, nor the eternalist view.' 'How do you practice giving?' 'By being utterly free from all grasping.' 'What is the purpose of your faring?' 'The 49.15 purpose of all the creatures of the perfectly realized one.'

So it was that the two unreal apparitional monks which Buddha created provided the basis for the liberation of five hundred monks.

And the *Vajramandadharani* has it: 'Just as smoke, Manjusri, dependent on a piece of wood, the friction of rubbing and the action of someone's hand, begins to appear and then fire follows, the actual flame however not being based solely in the wood or the rubbing or in the action of the hand; precisely so, Manjusri, do the flames of desire, aversion and illusion arise for the person who is deluded by illusory false beliefs; for these flames are based neither in himself, nor outside of himself, not between the two.

'Again, Manjusri, for what reason is being deluded known as delusion (*moha*)? It is known as delusion because it is defined as being utterly deluded about all the putative elements of existence whatsoever.'

Then Manjusri explained to the Buddha that he believed the dreams and imaginings of hellish tortures were equally illusory. 'And precisely in this sense, illustrious one, did the illustrious Buddhas proclaim their doctrine for beings deluded by the four misbeliefs. In this world there are no women, men, individuals, eternal souls or persons. All such putative realities are erroneous, unreal and confusing; they resemble a conjuring trick or a dream or an apparition or a reflection of the moon in water. Those who have listened to this teaching of the perfectly realized one look on all things as purged of desire and delusion, that is, as without self-existence and free of false appearance. Such meet their death with their spirits at home in the infinite; after death they will all enter the realm of perfect *nirvāṇa*.'

By all this we have established that everyday things, lacking in self-existence and distorted by self-imposed misbeliefs of the unenlightened, are the cause of the basic afflictions. This is the birth-death cycle. How things whose nature it is to be unreal can bring about a purging of the afflictions is explained in the *Madhyamakavatara*.

Someone may object: But if things arise neither of themselves nor from another nor from both nor without cause, how can the Buddha's words be understood: 'Personal dispositions are dependent on primal ignorance'? The answer is: That holds for the everyday personal world but not for the way things are in truth.

How is the nature of this everyday world defined? We hold that the everyday world is determined by

pure conditionedness, by being utterly conditioned (*pratyayata matrena*). It cannot be established by the four theories of causality because they entail the self-existence of particular things, which is unintelligible .

If one accepts everything as utterly conditioned, that is, the reciprocal dependence of cause and effect, then neither of these exists in its own right and the theory of self-existence fails. That is why it is said, 'People argue that afflicted existence arises of itself or from another, or from both or without a cause; but you (fn 30 Buddha) proclaimed it born of dependence.'

And Nagarjuna will say, [MMK VIII.12] 'An agent subject can be held to exist only on the presupposition of a product, and a product can be held to exist only on the presupposition of an agent subject. We discern no other basis for establishing their existence.' Buddha himself has said precisely the same thing. 'The theory of the elements of existence implies: "if this is, that will arise; because this has arisen, that will arise". Personal dispositions are dependent on primal ignorance, personal consciousness is dependent on personal dispositions and so on.'

The wise are not dependent on the means of cognition

There are those who will protest: You say that things do not arise from causes. Is this cognitive assertion (*niscaya*) based on some means of knowledge or is it not? If you consider that it is based on knowledge (*pramanaja*) you must speak to these points: How many means of knowledge are there? What are their characteristics? What are their distinctive objects? Do they arise spontaneously or from another, from both or without cause? If your cognitive assertion is not based on some means of knowledge this is unintelligible, because knowing something depends on a means of knowledge. Something that is unknown cannot become known except by some means of knowledge. In the absence of any means of knowledge nothing can be known. How then is your own cognitive assertion possible? It can make no sense to claim 'things do not arise from causes'. With the same right with which there is the assertion that things do not truly arise I will maintain that all things do come into existence. Should you, however, not hold the view that all things do not truly arise, then, as there is no conviction on your own part, your opponent cannot possibly be persuaded and the composition of this treatise will have been entirely futile. That all things do exist will not be refuted.

In reply we say that if we Madhyamikas made any cognitive assertion at all it would either be based on a means of knowledge or it would not be. But we make no such assertions. How is that to be understood? In your thinking, where there is a negative assertion (*aniscaya*) there would have to be a counter assertion which, with reference to the first, would be positive. But as we make no negative assertion whatsoever how could there be a positive thesis which would either contradict or not contradict it? Because the opposing terms would be meaningless, as are the length and shortness of a donkey's horns. So 4ong as, thus, no cognitive assertion is made, what would the means of knowledge, which we speculated about so much, serve to establish? How can they have a correct number, definition and object? How can they arise spontaneously, from another, from both self and other, or at random? It is not for us to answer such questions.

If a Madhyamika does not, in any sense at all, advance cognitive claims, how is your assertion 'things do not arise spontaneously or because of another, or because of both or from no cause at all' to be understood? It has the form of a cognitive claim.

Our reply is that this pronouncement is an assertion for the ordinary man because it is argued solely on a basis which he accepts. But it is not a cognitive assertion for those wise in the Buddhist way.

Is there then no reasoned argument (*upapatti*) for the wise?

How could we say whether there is or there is not? The higher truth, for the wise, is a matter of silence (*tusnimbhava*). How then would everyday language, reasoned or unreasoned, be possible in that realm?

But if the wise ones do not give a reasoned account how will they convey the idea of a higher truth to the ordinary man? The wise do not give a reasoned account of the everyday experience of the ordinary man. Rather, adopting for the sake of enlightening others, and as a means only, what passes for reasoning in the everyday world, they work for the enlightenment of the ordinary man. It is precisely as with impassioned men who, in the grip of misbelief erroneously impute an unreal quality of goodness to the body because they do not perceive that it is in fact impure, and who so suffer torments. In order to dispel their passions, a god, or someone created by a Buddha would disclose the imperfections of the body previously concealed by the idea that it was good saying 'There are hairs on this body and other

imperfections.' And they will become free from this erroneously imputed idea of goodness and achieve freedom from the passions.

And so it is in this case. The wise ones do not, in any way, take particular things as having essential natures. But ordinary men, whose thought, because of weak vision, has succumbed to the defect of ignorance, impute an erroneous self-existence to any and all particular things and suffer excessively. The wise ones then discourse with them using only such arguments as ordinary men accept. For example, if someone (fn 31 The Samkhya school) argues: 'A pot that exists does not arise from clay and the other factors' this is accepted as a basis for argument. Then it can be concluded: 'If a pot exists before it originates, it cannot originate because it is already in existence.' Or if someone (fn 32 The Vaisesika school) argues: 'A sprout cannot be produced from what is totally other, for example, from glowing coals' this is accepted as a basis for argument. But then it can be concluded: 'Neither can it arise from seeds, earth and so on which are usually given as its causes.' (fn 33 Because these two are other.)

Should someone (fn 34 Possibly the Buddhist epistemologist Dignaga) now say: 'But such origination is immediately given to us in experience', this would not make sense either. The reason is that what is immediately given in experience (anubhava) is false, just because it is immediately given in experience (anubhavatvat). It is like the givenness of two moons for one with an optical defect. Consequently it does not make sense to set aside our objection, because 'what is immediately given in experience' must first be justified. (fn 35 i.e. presumes what must first be proved; *a petitio principii*.)

Conclusion

And so the endeavour of this first chapter (fn 36 The first chapter of the *Prasannapada* probably ended at this point originally, though in its present form it includes Chapters II and III of this translation. Cf. Preface, pp. xiii-xiv.) is to establish that things do not really arise by opposing the perverse foisting (*adhyaropa*) of an essential nature on things. It will be the endeavour of the remaining chapters to invalidate and reject any and all reifying distinctions (*visesa*) which are foisted on things. All reifying distinctions such as, 'the one in motion', 'space to be traversed' and 'movement' do not obtain and it is the purpose of the doctrine of 'dependent origination', i.e. the true way of things, to establish this.

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Attack on the Possibility of Knowledge: Controversy with a Buddhist Epistemologist [Chapter II]

Should someone (fn 1 Probably a representative of the school of the Buddhist epistemologist Dignaga (480-540 AD), though the counter-arguments cited could also be those of Bhavaviveka.) say 'It is the ordinary man's experience of cognition and its objects which is described in our treatise', we would counter 'But what is the purpose and worth of this description?' If it is rejoined 'Incompetent logicians' (fn 2 Non-Buddhist logicians of the Nyaya school) have ruined the subject by setting up faulty definitions; we have given the correct definitions' this makes no sense either. If incompetent logicians have developed an erroneous description of cognition, clearly this would contradict the experience of the ordinary man and there would be no good purpose in undertaking to correct it. But this is not the case and your undertaking is quite pointless.

Furthermore, Nagarjuna, in the *Vigrahavyavartani* pointed out the following logical difficulty, among others, 'If the attainment of knowledge rests on the valid means of knowledge, by what are these guaranteed?' As you do not refute this objection your 'correct' definitions have no true explanatory power.

In any case, if you assert that there are but two valid means of knowledge (*pramana*) (fn 3 These are in the Dignaga school: (a) *pratyaksa:* intuitive, unmediated knowledge; (b) *anumana:* knowledge mediated through concepts, i.e. inference. The first gives access to ultimate reality, *paramatha sat;* the second to the everyday reality, *samvrtisat:* Madhyamika must fight this view because it makes enlightenment ontological, not the realization of a way.), conforming to a self-characterizing particular (*svalaksana*) and a universal (*samanyalaksana*) respectively, what is the subject which these two characterize? Or does it not exist? If it does, then it is an object of knowledge different from them. What becomes then of the mere duality of the means of knowledge? Again, such a subject might not exist. In that case even the characteristics, lacking a subject to characterize, would not exist. What then of the mere duality of the means of knowledge?

The self-characterizing particular

As Nagarjuna will say: 'A subject of characterization is unintelligible without actual characteristics. If the subject of characterization is not established, characteristics become impossible as well.'[MMK V.4]

It may be rejoined: 'But the characteristic does not characterize something other than itself; rather, if we take the suffix "istic" as the subject of "character"

according to the common grammatical rule, then the characteristic characterizes itself.' (fn 4 This makes readier sense in Sanskrit than in English.)

Even so it is logically impossible for something to be characterized by itself, because of the difference in meaning between what characterizes and what is characterized, as between means and end. And this is precisely the flaw.

It may be rejoined: 'There is no logical flaw here, because knowledge is itself instrumental and the self-characterizing particular is an integral part of this.' We reply. It is commonly accepted that a self-characterizing particular is the exclusive (*atmiyam*), unique nature of a thing (*svarupam*), which it does not have in common with anything else. For example, of earth it is impenetrability, of feeling the immediate experience of an object, of consciousness (*vijnana*) it is the reflected awareness of objects. It is agreed that by such characteristics these things are characterized. But you, having cast aside the usually accepted meaning of the term, suppose that the subject is itself the means of characterization. Further, if you argue that perceptual consciousness (*vijnana*) is instrumental, this is saying that the self-characterizing particular is alone object (fn 5 i.e. subject of characterization) whilst the instrumentality of consciousness is another such self-characterizing particular. In this case, if the unique nature of consciousness is to be instrumental there will have to be an object (*karma*) different from consciousness. And precisely this is the flaw.

The logician may rejoin: 'The impenetrability of earth and the other characteristics — i.e. what consciousness cognizes — are precisely the objects of consciousness and they are not different from the self-characterizing particular.'

This implies that as the self-characterizing particular, consciousness, is not an object, there is no object to be cognized. But a self-characterizing particular can be known only as object. The following distinction should therefore be made concerning the double nature of the object of knowledge — the self-characterizing particular and the universal: there is a self-characterizing particular which is an object of knowledge and that is what we call the thing characterized; there is something which is not an object of knowledge (consciousness) and it is said to be characterized by something else. If then this latter is, in turn, to be an object, it will have to be by some means other than itself (fn 6 i.e. by a subsequent act of consciousness.). So, vainly theorizing that a further act of knowledge will be this means, you incur the fault of an argument lacking a ground (fn 7 An argument of infinite regress.).

Unmediated self-awareness

Furthermore, you hold the theory of unmediated self-awareness (*svasarhvitti*), that is, that objectivity is assured of being integral to the object cognized because cognition is by means of unmediated self-awareness.

The refutation of unmediated self-awareness is given in detail in the *Madhyamakavatara*. It does not make sense that one self-characterizing particular should be characterized by another (fn 8 Consciousness as means) and that in turn be known through unmediated self- awareness. What is more, this last act of consciousness can in no way exist; it cannot be real except as a self-characterizing particular, there being no subject to be characterized; and because characteristics without a subject are unreal. What now of unmediated self-awareness?

To quote from the *Questions of Ratnacuda*: 'The Bodhisattva contemplates the mind and enquires into the stream of consciousness asking "whence does consciousness arise". And he thinks: "consciousness arises given an object". Does that mean that the object is one thing and consciousness another? Or are they identical? If the object is one thing and consciousness another there will be a duplication of consciousness. If they are identical how can one perceive consciousness by means of consciousness? But consciousness does not perceive consciousness. The edge of a sword cannot cut its own edge nor can the tip of a finger touch that very tip. In the same way one act of consciousness cannot directly perceive the same act of consciousness. So it is that for such a one, concerned with what arises in the mind, the mind is impossible to ground, is without beginning or end, is not unchanging, is not uncaused nor unconditioned, is neither identical with itself nor different. He knows and sees the stream of consciousness like a twining creeper, he knows and sees the essential nature of consciousness, the groundlessness of consciousness, the hiddenness of consciousness, the imperceptibleness of consciousness, the absolute uniqueness of consciousness. As he knows and sees it thus, so he knows and sees it as it really is and he does not suppress it. This is the analysis of consciousness as he truly knows it and sees it. This, noble son, is the Bodhisattva's contemplation of consciousness, this is his penetration into thought.'

There is thus no unmediated self-awareness (fn 9 If there were, Madhyamika would have to give up its view that

nowhere is an absolute fact vouchsafed us.). As there is not, what will be characterized by what?

Character and characteristic

Further, something which is a characteristic (*laksanam*) must be either different from what it characterizes (*laksyam*), or not different. In the first case, as the characteristic is distinct from what is characterized it does not characterize it and is not a characteristic. And as the subject, what is to be characterized, is distinct from the characteristic it will not be characterized and will not be its subject. That is, because the characteristic is distinct from the subject, the subject would be without relation to its characteristics and so, lacking any relation to the characteristics, like a lotus in the sky - would not be their subject.

In the second case the subject and its characteristics are not distinct. Not being separate from its characteristics, as these have become one with it, the subject loses its character of being a subject. The characteristics, not being separate from the subject, as this has become one with them, are not truly characteristics.

It has been put this way: if the characteristic is other than the subject, then the subject is without characteristic; but if there is no difference between the two you have obviously declared that neither is real.' (fn 10 One of Nagarjuna's religious verses, Lokatita Stava 11.) And there is no other way of establishing the reality of subject and characteristic except through their essential difference.

Nagarjuna will put it this way: 'How can a pair of things exist at all if they cannot be proved to exist either as identical or as different?' [MMK II.21]

If, further, one suggests that their reality is inexpressible (*avacyata*) it cannot be so. What is called the inexpressible exists only where there is no clear knowledge of the difference between reciprocally dependent concepts. Where there is no clear knowledge of the difference it is not possible to define the difference as 'such is a subject', and 'such is a characteristic', and so it is impossible for either of them to exist separately (fn 11 One of the deepest of all Madhyamika presuppositions.). Therefore the reality of subject and characteristic cannot be established as inexpressible either.

The agent of perception

There is another question. If an act of perception (*jnanam*) is a means, and the object (*visaya*) is separate from it, who is the agent? A means and an object are not possible apart from an agent as in the case of an axe used for cutting. If it is supposed that agency resides in consciousness itself (*citta*), that too fails to make sense. Because the intuition of the bare object is due to consciousness whereas the perception of an object with qualities is due to the contents of consciousness (*caitasa*). It is generally accepted that 'the intuition of the object is consciousness; the object's qualities, however, are mental content.'

Where there is one principal function at work then means, agent, and action, each in its own right, are taken as component members according to the actual nature of the function. But in this case there is not one principal function for both pure intuition and perception. Rather, the principal function of pure intuition is singling out the bare object whereas in perception the object is determined by its qualities. Perception cannot be the means nor can consciousness be the agent. This is precisely the logical flaw.

You might argue that, according to scripture, all putative elements of existence are without inherent natures because in no sense is there an agent in them; and yet, though lacking an agent, the transactions of the everyday are quite real. But neither is this so; it does not penetrate the true meaning of the scriptures. This has been explained in the *Madhyamakavatara*.

Everyday predication

Again, you might argue that a self-characterizing particular is analogous to 'the body of the statue' or 'the head of Rahu' (fn 12 A legendary Indian demon who consists only of a head), where, though there is no attribute that is not of 'body' or of 'head' there is none the less subject and attribute. Even as one says 'the self-characterizing nature of earth' though earth is impossible apart from that nature. (fn 13 i.e. the difficulty with the expression 'self-characterizing' is merely an awkward verbal habit.)

It is not so because the cases are not analogous. A thoughtful man, because of the factual relationship of the words 'body' or 'head' to other existing things, like the words 'mind' or 'hands' will, having in mind their connection, enquire into the object of the words 'body' and 'head' and will ask 'whose body?' 'whose head?' Another man, not concerned with their relationship to other things, using merely verbal qualifications of the

statue and Rahu following common practice, will ignore the concern of the first. This much is understandable. But, as earth and the other elements cannot exist apart from 'impenetrability' and so on, the relationship of a subject and its characteristics does not make sense. If you think that it is not reprehensible to employ qualifying terms as the non-Buddhists do on the assumption of a separate subject, this would not be right. One should not accept for oneself concepts which the non-Buddhists have imagined and which are devoid of sense, because then one is committed as well to accepting their view of the valid means of knowledge and other such ideas.

Perhaps it is like pragmatically useful and tenable ideas (*prajnaptivat*) such as the individual person (*pudgala*)? This analogy is not apposite. It is true that, as part of ordinary discourse, one makes the uncritical attribution, namely that the statue is the possessor of its own possessed body or that Rahu is the possessor of a possessed head. If you say this comparison does hold because no other thing exists apart from the head and the body, none being directly perceived, it is not so. In ordinary discourse, everyday terms, which on being critically examined cease to be effective, function uncritically. A personal self (atman), for example, cannot, critically speaking, possibly exist separate from a body and the other factors of personal existence, even though in the world of the ordinary man it exists unrelated to such factors. But this case is not apposite to Rahu and the statue.

Definition of the everyday

Thus, if, after critical analysis, there is no subject separate from impenetrability and the other characteristics of earth and from the characteristics of the other elements as well, and equally no characteristic without a basis and separate from a subject, this is then precisely what we call the 'false everyday world' (*samvrti*). By virtue of the reciprocal dependence (*parasparapeksa*) of these two concepts (fn 14 Subject and attribute. This is the topic of Chapter VII.) Nagarjuna has rigorously established the nature of the false everyday world. And it is essential to understand it in this way; because otherwise the false everyday world could not be distinguished from what makes sense (*upapatti*); and it itself would be the way things really are (*tattvam*) and not the false everyday world. It is not only the bodies of statues and such things which, on being critically examined are not in reason possible; rather, it will be argued later on, body, feelings and the other factors of personal existence are not, in reason, possible either. Then is it to be accepted that they, like the body of a statue and so on, are non-existent in the false everyday world? Not at all; that would be wholly false.

You may interject: Are we not just splitting hairs? We are certainly not declaring the entirety of transactional experience based on knowing and objects of knowledge to be true; it is rather that our argument establishes what the ordinary man accepts as true.

We reply that we too would say: Why this hairsplitting? The investigation concerns the experience of the ordinary man. Let it be; it is the false everyday world; it exists only in virtue of an unfounded belief in the reality of a personal self, which is a pure misbelief. It is the condition for the maturation of favourable qualities leading to liberation in those pursuing it, so long as there is no realization of the true nature of things (*tattvam*). But you destroy this false everyday world by your wrong-headed understanding of the distinction between it and the higher truth (*paramarthasatyam*); you introduce inappropriate arguments.

I, being able to determine the true nature of the false everyday world, base myself on the viewpoint of the ordinary man. I refute one argument designed to invalidate the everyday world by matching it with another argument; like an old authority I refute you specifically when you go astray, using what is accepted by ordinary people. But I do not reject the everyday world. And so, if we take the experience of ordinary people, there will have to be something possessing characteristics as their subject, as well as the characteristics themselves. This is precisely the flaw in your argument. However, as in the higher truth there is no subject to be characterized, your dual definition falls away. How then can there be a duality of the means of knowledge? (fn 15 The controversy is too involved for footnote commentary; but it is clear that Candrakīrti must contest any theory of the everyday which claims to be true, because that would preclude his own understanding of the world as a rationally impenetrable magical play.)

Furthermore you do not accept the traditional explanation of sentences as containing a connection between an action and its circumstances. That is indeed unfortunate. You yourself use sentences which express a real connection between action and circumstances, but you do not think that the meaning of a sentence consists of action, means, and so on. It is too bad that all this is based on nothing but your idiosyncratic views.

So long as, in this way, the dual nature of what is known the universal and the particular — is not objectively established, there will be other means of knowledge such as knowledge from authority.

The unintelligibility of perception

And now a different matter. Your theory (fn 16 Of the self-characterizing particular, the ultimate simple, as the object of perception.) does not make sense because your definition is too narrow. It does not comprehend such expressions of ordinary speech as 'there is a perception of a jar', and the speech of the unenlightened must be accepted as a base.

You may reply that blue and such qualities are perceptions which are the basis of the jar, because they are what perception, the means of knowledge, singles out. So, just as it is commonly said 'the birth of a Buddha is a happy event' where the cause is spoken of as the effect, similarly, though the jar is caused by the perception blue and such qualities, it is commonly said there is a perception of a jar where the effect is spoken of as the cause.

To speak thus of objects like jars does not make sense. Everyone experiences birth to be different from happiness. It is precisely unhappiness, the nature of temporal things being what it is, and the sources of trouble being many and various. To maintain 'birth is happy' is indeed illogical, but, in this case, it makes sense as a figure of speech. But when one says 'there is a perception of a jar' there is no unperceived jar, experienced in some private way, of which one could say, in a figure of speech, that it was perceived.

If you say that, because there is no jar apart from colour and the other qualities, its being perceived is a figure of speech, such a figure of speech makes even less sense. There is no basis for it: one cannot speak 'metaphorically' of the sharpness of a donkey's horns.

Further, if it is agreed that the jar which is imbedded in everyday verbal transactions does not exist apart from colour and so on, its perception must be taken to be 'metaphorical' (*upacarika*). And if this is so, then colour and the other qualities do not exist apart from earth and the other elements and their perception must be taken to be metaphorical as well. To quote, 'Even as ajar does not exist apart from form and so on, so form does not exist apart from wind and the other elements.' (Catuhsataka, XIV, 14.)

And so your definition is inadequate because you fail to grasp the nature of these everyday verbal transactions. From the point of view of the true nature of things (*tattvavid*) one cannot concede the perception of blue and such qualities or of jars and such things. In terms of the false everyday world, however, we have to accept the perception of jars and such things.

To quote from the Catuhsataka, 'Who, knowing the true nature of things, could say "the jar is perceived" or "an unperceived jar is created from all perceived qualities"? By the same reasoning all such qualities as the fragrant, the sweet and the soft must be repudiated by the sovereign mind.' (XIII, 1, 2)

Or, further, the term perception means what is not mediated (*aparoksa*); what is immediately present is a perception. Jars and colours and so on are accepted as unmediated perceptions because it is agreed that they are immediately present to the

senses in particular instances. The act of knowledge distinct from the object is considered to be perception as well, being the cause of what is perceived even as we say 'a straw fire' or 'a chaff fire' (fn 17 i.e. the straw or chaff is the cause of the fire but is the term which designates the effect.).

There is one (fn 18 Prasastapada of the Vaisesika School) who explains the term perception as meaning 'what is real for its corresponding sense'. This derivation is not intelligible because the senses are not the objects of perception, but sense objects are. 'Sense perception' would have to become 'object perception' or 'thing perception'.

Again it might be said (fn 19 A Buddhist view. Cf. Abhidharmakosa, I, 45) that the functioning of the act of perception depends on both factors. Perceptions are named, however, solely with reference to the sense organ because the degree of their acuteness conforms to changes in the sense organ. For example, we say 'visual perception'. Thus, although perception functions with reference to a specific object, none the less it is based on a specific sense organ. Because it is named with reference to this base it becomes 'sense perception'. Names customarily designate the specific base of anything: we say 'the sound of a drum' or 'a sprout of barley'.

These examples do not hold for the argument given. Because, according to it, if the type of perception were designated according to its object, we would say 'colour perception', and so on. The differences between the six kinds of perception (or types of consciousness), however, could not be made clear in this way because the sixth sense, inner perception, functions with

precisely the same objects as does vision and the other five kinds of perception. That is, if there are six kinds of perception - that of colour and the others - and perceptions arise in strict dependence on the sense faculties, how can a perception, arising from one of the external senses be a mental or inner perception? If, however, the designation is according to the sense faculty, then the objects of vision and the other sense faculties can be the objects of mental or inner perception as well and the mutual differences would be clear.

In your (the Buddhist logician) argument, however, which is concerned with a definition of the valid means of knowledge, you presume that perception is merely that from which the elaboration of thought is removed (*kalpanapodha*) because you conceive of it in distinction from thought construction. You see no purpose in designating it by its special causes. As the actual number of the means of knowledge depends on the number of the kinds of objects of knowledge, and as the essential nature of the two means of knowledge has been determined exclusively by their conformity to the nature and reality of the objects of knowledge, nothing is served by designating them according to the faculty involved; the designation solely in terms of the object is, in every respect, the cogent one.

You may say that the designation rests solely on the faculty because in the everyday world the term sense-perception is accepted and object-perception is not, even if we mean object- perception. It is true that the term sense-perception is commonly accepted but we alone use it as the ordinary man understands it. By distorting everyday things as they actually are, the explanation you offer accepts a distortion of what is 'commonly accepted'; that is, there is no commonly accepted sense-perception in your sense. A single visual perception based momentarily on a single sense faculty would not be perception: it would lack an adequately wide sense; and what is not perception in a single instance cannot be in many instances.

Your supposition is that perception is only that act of knowledge which is free of the elaboration of thought but this does not appear in the experience of the ordinary man at all although your concern is to give an account of knowledge and its objects in the experience of the ordinary man. This theory of perception as a means of knowledge turns out to be wholly futile.

You may quote the traditional text: 'A man had a visual perception, blue, though he does not know "it is blue".' But this scriptural pronouncement is not relevant to a definition of sense perception; it is explaining that the five kinds of sense- perception are inert. Nor do the traditional texts say that sense-perception is limited to perception which is free of the elaboration of thought; that would not make sense.

The Madhyamika conclusion

It follows that in the everyday world (*loka*), everything, whether the subject of characterization (*laksya*), the self-characterizing particular or a general characteristic is unmediated because directly perceived. Sense perception is therefore defined as an object together with the act of knowledge. For cognition which is free of defect there is no perception of two moons; but for defective cognition the two moons are precisely 'sense-perception'.

An act of knowledge whose object is not directly given is an inference. It derives from a distinguishing characteristic which is unfailingly concomitant with what is to be inferred. The pronouncements of those especially gifted in the direct perception of matters beyond the senses constitute authority. Knowledge of something never experienced, like a gayal, because it resembles what we have experienced, a buffalo, is called knowledge by analogy. 'And so the attainment of knowledge by the ordinary man is defined in terms of the four means of knowledge.'(fn 20 Candrakīrti thus accepts four means of knowing, as Indian realists of the Nyaya school do.)

Both means and object of knowledge however are established in reciprocal dependence: in so far as there are means of knowledge there are objects of knowledge; in so far as there are objects of knowledge there are means of knowledge. But most emphatically neither the means of knowledge nor their objects can be established as existing in themselves. The everyday world should be accepted exactly as it appears to be. (fn 21 Again Madhyamika repudiates any theory which would offer another reality in place of the everyday.)

Enough of these logical arguments. We will now give an account of the main subject-matter. The teaching of the truth by the illustrious Buddhas was based on the way the ordinary man regards things.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Introduction to the Commentary

Nāgārjuna, who lived in South India in approximately the second century C.E., is undoubtedly the most important, influential, and widely studied Mahayana Buddhist philosopher. He is the founder of the Madhyamika, or Middle Path schools of Mahayana Buddhism. His considerable corpus includes texts addressed to lay audiences, letters of advice to kings, and the set of penetrating metaphysical and epistemological treatises that represent the foundation of the highly skeptical and dialectical analytic philosophical school known as Madhyamika. Most important of these is his largest and best known text, *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā* (literally *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way).* This text in turn inspires a huge commentarial literature in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Korean and Japanese. Divergences on interpretation of *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā* often determine the splits between major philosophical schools. So, for instance, the distinction between two of the three major Mahayana philosophical schools, Svatantrika-Mādhyamika and Prasangika-Madhyamika reflect, inter alia, distinct readings of this text, itself taken as fundamental by scholars within each of these schools. (fn 1. See, for instance, Nagao(1989 and 1991), Lopez (1987), and Cabezon (1992) for more detailed discussion of *Yogācāra* and *Svātantrika* readings.)

The treatise itself is composed in very terse, often cryptic verses, with much of the explicit argument suppressed, generating significant interpretive challenges. But the uniformity of the philosophical methodology and the clarity of the central philosophical vision expressed in the text together provide a considerable fulcrum for exegesis. Moreover, the rich commentarial literature generates a number of distinct and illuminating readings. The central topic of the text is emptiness-the Buddhist technical term for the lack of independent existence, inherent existence, or essence in things. Nāgārjuna relentlessly analyzes phenomena or processes that appear to exist independently and argues that they cannot so exist, and yet, though lacking the inherent existence imputed to them either by naive common sense or by sophisticated realistic philosophical theory, (fn 2. It cannot be overemphasized that as far as Nāgārjuna-or any Mahayana Buddhist philosopher, for that matter-is concerned, the view that the things we perceive and of which we conceive, to the extent that they exist at all, do so inherently originates as an innate misapprehension and is not the product of sophisticated philosophical theory. That is, we naively and pretheoretically take things as substantial. This, as Nāgārjuna will argue, and as the Buddha himself argued, is the root delusion that lies at the basis of all human suffering. We can, to be sure, make sophisticated philosophy out of this. And much of Western and Asian metaphysics is devoted to that enterprise. But it is important to see that an intellectual rejection of that sophisticated essentialist metaphysics would not, from the standpoint of Buddhism, suffice for liberation from suffering. For the innate misapprehension the root delusion enshrined in common sense and in much of our language-would remain.· Nāgārjuna's text is aimed primarily against philosophy. But its soteriological goal is the extirpation of the very root of suffering.) these phenomena are not nonexistent-they are, he argues, conventionally real.

This dual thesis of the conventional reality of phenomena together with their lack of inherent existence depends upon the complex doctrine of the two truths or two realities-a conventional or nominal truth and an ultimate truth-and upon a subtle and surprising doctrine regarding their relation. It is, in fact, this sophisticated development of the doctrine of the two truths as a vehicle for understanding Buddhist metaphysics and epistemology that is Nāgārjuna's greatest philosophical contribution. If the analysis in terms of emptiness is the substantive heart of *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā,* the method of reductio ad absurdum is the methodological core. Nāgārjuna, like Western skeptics, systematically eschews the defense of positive metaphysical doctrines regarding the nature of things, arguing rather that any such positive thesis is incoherent and that, in the end, our conventions and our conceptual framework can never be justified by demonstrating their correspondence to an independent reality. Rather, he suggests, what counts as real depends precisely on our conventions. (fn 3. Though in the end, as we shall see, ultimate reality depends on our conventions in a way, it depends on our conventions in a very different way from that in which conventional reality does. Despite this difference in the structure of the. relation between convention and reality in the two cases, however, it remains a distinctive feature of Nāgārjuna's system that it is impossible to speak coherently of reality independent of conventions.)

For Nāgārjuna and his followers this point is connected deeply and directly with the emptiness of phenomena. That is, for instance, when a Mādhyamika philosopher says of a table that it is empty, that assertion by itself is incomplete. It invites the question, Empty of what? And the answer is, Empty of inherent existence, or self-nature, or, in more Western terms, *essence.* (fn 4. I have generally translated the Tibetan *"rang bzhin"* (Skt: *svabhāva)* with the English philosophical term "essence," as opposed to the more traditional "self-nature" or "own-being" used by many Buddhologists. (Here I agree with Cabezon [1992].) I think that this best captures Nāgārjuna's usage, and this choice makes good etymological sense as well But there are dangers here. *"Rang bzhin"* and *"svabhāva"* have their semantic homes in Buddhist philosophical literature, and their ordinary meanings derive from their usage in that environment. "Essence" has it semantic home in the Western philosophical tradition. So there will no doubt be resonances of the original terms that are not captured by the translation and new resonances introduced that would be foreign to the original text. But this is unavoidable in a translation. Retaining the original term is worse, as it conveys nothing to the reader not already conversant with Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Buddhist philosophy. And using one of the ugly neologisms frequently introduced conveys the misleading impression that the original introduces such an ugly neologism. In the interest of not cluttering this text with philological footnotes, I will not generally defend my choices as I do here. But I do remind the reader of this and of any translation: *Caveat lector!* A great deal of interpretation goes into any translation.) Now, to say that the table is empty is hence simply to say that it lacks essence and importantly *not* to say that it is completely nonexistent. (fn 5. See also Ng (1993), esp. pp. 12-15, for a good exposition. For an exposition of the contrary view, see Wood (1994). As

will be clear, I disagree with his interpretation globally and on many points of detail.) To say that it lacks essence, the Mādhyamika philosopher will explain, is to say, as the Tibetans like to put it, that it does not exist "from its own side"-that its existence *as the object that it is-as a table* depends not on *it,* nor on any purely nonrelational characteristics, but depends on us as well. That is, if our culture had not evolved this manner of furniture, what appears to us to be an obviously unitary object might instead be correctly described as five objects: four quite useful sticks absurdly surmounted by a pointless slab of stick-wood waiting to be carved. Or we would have no reason to indicate this particular temporary arrangement of this matter as an object at all, as opposed to a brief intersection of the histories of some trees. It is also to say that the table depends for its existence on its parts, on its causes, on its material, and so forth. Apart from these, there is no table. The table, we might say, is a purely arbitrary slice of space-time chosen by us as the referent of a single name and not an entity demanding, on its own, recognition and a philosophical analysis to reveal its essence. That independent character is precisely what it lacks on this view. (fn 6. Note that nothing in this example hinges on the fact that the table is an artifact. The same points could be made about the tree from which its wood was hewn. The boundaries of the tree, both spatial and temporal (consider the junctures between root and soil, or leaf and air; between live and dead wood; between seed, shoot, and tree); its identity over time (each year it sheds its leaves and grows new ones; some limbs break; new limbs grow); its existence as a unitary object, as opposed to a collection of cells; etc., are all conventional. Removing its properties leaves no core bearer behind. Searching for the tree that is independent of and which is the bearer of its parts, we come up empty. I thank Graham Parkes for pointing out the need to stress this point.)

So from the standpoint of Mādhyamika philosophy, when we ask of a phenomenon, Does it exist?, we must always pay careful attention to the sense of the word "exist" that is at work. We might mean *exist inherently,* that is, in virtue of being a substance independent of its attributes, in virtue of having an essence, and so forth, or we might mean *exist conventionally,* that is to exist dependently, to be the conventional referent of a term, but not to have any independent existence. No phenomenon, Nāgārjuna will argue, exists in the first sense. But that does *no/entail* that all phenomena are nonexistent tout court. Rather, to the degree that anything exists, it exists in the latter sense, that is, nominally, or conventionally. It will be important to keep this ambiguity in "exists" in mind throughout the text, particularly in order to see the subtle interplay between the two truths and the way in which the doctrine of the emptiness of emptiness resolves apparent paradoxes in the account.

And this analysis in terms of emptiness-an analysis refusing to characterize the nature of anything precisely because it denies that we can make sense of the idea of a thing's nature-proceeding by the relentless refutation of any attempt to provide such a positive analysis, is applied by Nāgārjuna to all phenomena, including, most radically, emptiness itself. For if Nāgārjuna merely argued that all phenomena are empty, one might justly .indict him for merely replacing one analysis of things with another, that is, with arguing that emptiness is the essence of all things. But Nāgārjuna, as we shall see, argues that emptiness itself is empty. It is not a self-existent void standing behind a veil of illusion comprising conventional reality, but merely a characteristic of conventional reality. And this, as we shall see, is what provides the key to understanding the deep unity between the two truths. (fn 7. Siderits (1989) puts this point nicely: "The ultimate truth is that there is no ultimate truth" (p. 6).)

While Nāgārjuna is a powerfully original thinker, he is clearly and self-consciously operating squarely within the framework of Buddhist philosophy. As such, Nāgārjuna accepts and takes it as incumbent upon him to provide an account of the Four Noble Truths, nirvāṇa, buddhahood, and other fundamental Buddhist soteriological conceptions. Moreover, he takes it as a fundamental philosophical task to provide an understanding of what Buddhist philosophy refers to as *pratītya-samutpāda - dependent* coorigination. This term denotes the nexus between phenomena in virtue of which events depend on other events, composites depend on their parts, and so forth. Exactly how this dependency is spelled out, and exactly what its status is, is a matter of considerable debate within Buddhist philosophy, just as the nature of causation and explanation is a matter of great dispute within Western philosophy. Nāgārjuna is very much concerned to stake out a radical and revealing position in this debate. We will, in fact, see that this position and its connection to his understanding of emptiness and the nirvāṇa-saṃsāra relation provides the key to understanding his entire text.

Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā is divided into twenty-seven chapters, which fall roughly, though by no means officially, into four sections. In the first section of the text, comprising Chapters I through VII, Nāgārjuna discusses the fundamental theoretical constructs in Buddhist ontology, such as dependent origination, change and impermanence, perception, the aggregates that compose the self, the elements' that constitute the universe, and the relation between substance and attribute. In the second major section, Chapters VIII through XIII, Nāgārjuna focuses on the nature of the self and of subjective experience. Chapters XIV through XXI are primarily concerned with the external world and the relation of the self to objects. The final section, Chapters XXII through XXVII, addresses phenomena associated with the ultimate truth, such as buddhahood, emptiness, and nirvāṇa, and the relation of the conventional to the ultimate and of saṃsāra to nirvāṇa. The chapters that form the climax of the text are found in this section. But it is important to note that in fact the dialectical structure of the text requires a reading of these chapters in order to fully grasp the import of the earlier ones. This is because the doctrine of the emptiness of emptiness does not fully emerge until this point, and it is crucial to Nāgārjuna's argument that

all phenomena are empty and that their emptiness is also empty. (fn 8. I should note that this division of the text is not in any sense canonical. Tsong Khapa sees the structure slightly differently; Kalupahana (1986) proposes yet another structure. I see my own division, like these others, simply as a useful heuristic device for parsing the argument. (It should be noted that the division of the text even into chapters is due to Candrakīrti.))

The order, of the chapters is often, though not always, important. Often a chapter will consider a phenomenon held by a proponent of another philosophical school to be inherently existent. Or an opponent may charge Nāgārjuna with denying the actuality of a phenomenon in virtue of asserting its emptiness. In his analysis, Nāgārjuna will typically argue that the phenomenon proposed as inherently existent cannot be so and indeed is empty, or that the phenomenon whose existence he is charged with denying is, in fact, on his analysis, while nonexistent from the ultimate point of view, conventionally existent. In each case, he will argue that the functions the opponent thought could only be served by an inherently existent phenomenon can, in fact, be served only by empty phenomena. But quite often these analyses will inspire natural rejoinders of the form, "Yes, *x* might well be empty and only conventionally existent, but we can't make sense of its conventional existence without presupposing the inherent existence of *y."* In such cases, the next chapter will typically address that natural rejoinder. So, for instance, the first chapter argues that conditions and the relation between phenomena and that on which they depend are empty. But a natural rejoinder is that even conventional but actual conditions can only be understood in the context of change or impermanence. So Chapter Ā addresses change. The text hence forms a single sustained argument with only a few digressions or changes of subject, generally marked by the section divisions I have suggested above.

The first chapter addresses dependent origination. While many Western commentators assert that this chapter opens the text simply because it addresses a "fundamental doctrine of Buddhism," (fn 9. Kalupahana (1986), p. 32.) my analysis of the text suggests that Nāgārjuna begins with causation for deeper, more systematic reasons. In Chapters Ā through XXI, Nāgārjuna addresses a wide range of phenomena, including external perceptibles, psychological processes, relations, putative substances, and attributes, arguing that all are empty. In the final six chapters, Nāgārjuna generalizes the particular analyses into a broad theory concerning the nature of emptiness itself and the nature of the ultimate, of liberation, and of the relation between emptiness and dependent arising. At the close, he replies to objections. It is generally, and in my view correctly, acknowledged that Chapter XXIV, the examination of the Four Noble Truths, is the central chapter of the text and the climax of the argument, with Chapter XXV on nirvāṇa and saṃsāra sharing that spotlight. One verse of Chapter XXIV, verse 18, has received so much attention that interpretations of it alone represent the foundations of major Buddhist schools in East Asia:

> *18. Whatever is dependently co-arisen*
> *That is explained to be emptiness.*
> *That, being a dependent designation*
> *Is itself the middle way.*

Here Nāgārjuna asserts the fundamental identity of (1) emptiness, or the ultimate truth; (2) the dependently originated, that is, all phenomena; and (3) verbal convention. Moreover, he asserts that understanding this relation is itself the middle-way philosophical view he articulates in *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā.* This verse and the discussion in the chapters that follow provide the fulcrum for Candrakīrti's more explicit characterization of the emptiness of emptiness as an interpretation of Nāgārjuna's philosophical system the interpretation that is definitive of the Prasangika-Madhyamika school. (fn 10. For a translation of much of Candrakīrti's commentary *(Prasannapadā),* see Sprung (1979). Huntington and Wangchen (1993) provide an excellent translation of Candrakīrti's principal treatise on Madhyamika *(Mādhyamakāvatāra).)* In what follows I will provide an interpretation of the text inspired by the centrality of this verse and of the chapters forming its context that harmonizes with Candrakīrti's. In fact, on my reading of the text this doctrine is already found in the opening chapter-the examination of conditions. Reading the text in this way locates the doctrine of the emptiness of emptiness not only as a dramatic philosophical conclusion to be drawn at the end of twenty-four chapters of argument, but as the perspective implicit in the argument from the very beginning and only rendered explicit in XXIV. Reading the text in this way will show us exactly how XXIV:18 is to be understood and just why a proper understanding of causality is so central to Buddhist philosophy.

When a Westerner first encounters *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā* or other Madhyamika texts, the philosophical approach can appear highly metaphysical and downright weird. The unfamiliar philosophical vocabulary, the highly negative dialectic, and the cryptic verse form are indeed forbidding. Most bizarre of all, however, at first glance is the doctrine that all phenomena, including self and its objects, are empty. For indeed Nāgārjuna and his followers do argue that the entire everyday world is, from the ultimate standpoint, nonexistent. And that does appear to stand just a bit deeper into philosophical left field than even Berkeley dares to play. But if the interpretation I will urge is adopted, the real central thrust of Madhyamika is the demystification of this apparently mystical conclusion. While it might appear that the Madhyamikas argue that nothing really exists except a formless void, in fact the actuality of the entire phenomenal world, persons and all, is recovered within that emptiness. (fn 11. For useful discussions of the recovery of the conventional within emptiness and the relation between the two truths in Mādhyamika philosophy, see Sprung (1973, 1979), esp. 1973, pp. 15-20; Newland (1992); Napper (1992); Streng (1967), esp. chap. 3.)

Now a word about the methodology and intent of this commentary: Since the intended audience is Western philosophers and students of philosophy whose primary study has been in the Western tradition, I have tried throughout, insofar as that is possible without distortion of the meaning of the text, to explain Nāgārjuna's arguments and positions in language familiar to Western philosophers. I have occasionally used analogies to positions and arguments found in Western texts, but have avoided doing so where I thought that the comparisons might force a Procrustean analysis of Nāgārjuna's own views. And it is, of course, impossible and pointless to completely recast Nāgārjuna's positions as those with which we in the West are familiar and to replace his technical terminology with ours. For Nāgārjuna is not a Western philosopher. He is an Indian Buddhist philosopher whose work we approach through a vast Asian Buddhist commentarial literature. And while many of his concerns, problems, theses, and arguments are recognizable cousins of ours, many are not, and there are genuine differences in outlook.

This is what makes Nāgārjuna's work so exciting to read and to think about-it provides a genuinely distinctive perspective on a set of problems and projects that we share. In commenting on Nāgārjuna's text, I am constantly aware of walking a philosophical and hermeneutical tightrope. On the one hand, one could provide a perfectly traditional commentary on the text-or better, a translation of one of the major Sanskrit or Tibetan commentaries-or a transcript of oral commentary by a recognized scholar of the tradition. Such a commentary would explain in great detail the way the text is seen from the perspective of its home tradition and the background of Buddhist controversies to which the text responds. A commentary like this would undoubtedly be of great use to Buddhologists and philosophers already steeped in Buddhist philosophy and its history. And indeed Sprung's translation of most of Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā (Lucid Exposition),* including the root verses from *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā,* partially fulfills this need. But many of these scholars and students already have access to the relevant texts in their original languages or to teachers situated within the Buddhist tradition.

On the other hand, one could try to comment on the text by presenting a theory of what Nāgārjuna would have said had he been a twentieth-century Western philosopher. One could then feel free to step back from the internecine debates in the classical Buddhist academy, which were so absorbing to the historical Nāgārjuna and so distant from our own context, and simply ask how his arguments would be formulated in the context of the contemporary philosophical scene. Leaving aside the question of how one would identify the possible philosopher denoted by this bizarre counterfactual, this would again be a profoundly unsatisfying enterprise. For what makes this a great text is not simply that we can extrapolate its significance to our own context, but that in reading it, to borrow Gadamer's metaphor, we are able to fuse its textual horizon with our own. It is the bringing to the present of Nāgārjuna's own concerns, insights, and arguments that is revelatory, not speculation about a related counterfactual nonentity. And for this fusion of interpretive horizons to be possible, we must, as much as possible, respect the original horizon of the text. Having said this, one must confess the double difficulty of giving sense to the phrase "Nāgārjuna's own concerns, insights, and arguments." The recovery of authorial intent as a hermeneutic task is problematic (especially when the author is so culturotemporally remote and when his corpus is as controversial in composition and interpretation as is Nāgārjuna's). But it is equally problematic as a hermeneutic desideratum. For who is to say that Nāgārjuna was/is the best possible interpreter of *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā?* After all, he did not have the benefit of the long commentarial tradition he spawned. (fn 12. The late Wilfrid Sellars was fond of saying that we understand Plato better than Plato could ever have understood himself: Plato, for instance, could never have dreamed of the consequences that would be drawn from his arguments.) A great text-or, as Gadamer has referred to such texts, an "eminent text"....,-grows over time and merits reinterpretation and rereading as the tradition in which it participates develops and provides an ever-expanding context for its reading. Moreover, I am reading Nāgārjuna largely through the lens of the Tibetan commentarial tradition and through the Tibetan translation of his text-,-the text read and discussed by the scholars of this long, deep, and intellectually diverse and rich tradition, few of whom had access to Sanskrit. So the Nāgārjuna whose views I am exploring is an evolving figure, rooted in the life and writing of a first or second century Indian monk, of whom we know but little, but whose literary life and identity extends through a complex, sophisticated, and contested textual and philosophical tradition in India and Tibet and in the West.

As a consequence, in interpreting this text on the Middle Path for a Western audience, I have sought insofar as possible to find a middle path between these extremes. I have tried to explain Nāgārjuna's own arguments and their context as straightforwardly as possible without burdening the Western philosophical reader with extended discussion of the specifically ancient Indian Buddhist philosophical debates. I have indicated ways in which very specific arguments can be generalized and have commented on general structural features of arguments, chapters, and the text. I have throughout explained arguments in Western philosophical terms, while situating those arguments in their Buddhist context. There may be times when my desire to make arguments accessible has led to some distortion in Nāgārjuna's sense. There may also be times at which, by leaving arguments set firmly within the soteriological context of Buddhism, I have left those arguments looking like curios to my Western audience. Some of this may be

unavoidable, but in any case I have sought specifically to minimize these difficulties.

The interpretation I offer is situated squarely within a Prasangika Madhyamika interpretation of Nāgārjuna (the philosophical school that reads *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā* through the commentaries of Buddhapalita and Candrakīrti). But more specifically, my reading is heavily influenced by the Tibetan Gelukpa tradition that takes as central the commentaries of dGe-'dun-grub, mKhas-grub-rje, and especially, Je Tsong Khapa. My interpretation of the text reflects not only Candrakīrti's and Je Tsong Khapa's commentaries, but also the extended oral commentary I have received on this text from the eminent Tibetan Madhyamika scholars, especially the Yen. Professor Geshe Yeshes Thap-Khas of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies and the Yen. Professor Gen Lobzang Gyatso of the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics (I should point out that both of these scholars-as well as others to whom I am indebted for valuable conversations, including the Most Yen. Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche and the Yen. Geshe Namgyal Wangchen-received their education at Drepung Loseling Monastic College, and so my interpretation also reflects more particularly the academic tradition of that institution).

Having characterized this as a tradition of interpretation, I must emphasize that it is not, as it is often represented, and as it often represents itself, a homogeneous tradition. Though there is a hermeneutic convention in Indo-Tibetan Buddhist literature of presenting oneself as merely expounding faithfully the views of all of the earlier commentators, this is almost never the truth. There are considerable divergences in interpretation and in philosophical position within Buddhist schools and within lineages. Indeed the Tibetan scholars I have regularly consulted, despite the fact that they shared many of the same teachers and an identical curriculum, differ widely among themselves on many issues. It would hence be impossible in any case to represent accurately *the* Prasangika-Madhyamika interpretation, or even *the* Geluk-pa interpretation or *the* Drepung Loseling interpretation of *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā.*

I emphasize that *even if one could identify such a homogeneous interpretation,* I am *not* here presenting the interpretation or interpretations of any of these commentators or scholars, individually or collectively. There are substantial debates within these traditions regarding interpretative issues, and I do not consistently side with any particular faction (though I do think that it is true that my reading never conflicts directly with that of Candrakīrti); sometimes (as in my reading of the final chapter) I depart from the most common Geluk-pa interpretation entirely in favor of a line more closely associated with the Nyingma-pa reading of the text. Nor is the purpose of this text to compare, criticize, and resolve differences between interpretations. Instead, I here present the text as I read it, having been influenced by all of these commentators and teachers, and as I present it to my Western colleagues. And my intention in doing so is to let the text stand alone as a work of philosophy valuable in its own right to anyone interested in fundamental metaphysical, epistemological, and soteriological questions, not as a text to be studied only as part of "the history of philosophy" or "comparative philosophy."

Moreover, my exposition will be deliberately sympathetic. My goal is not to assess Nāgārjuna's philosophy, but to present and elucidate it and to do so in a way that, while making the text accessible to Western philosophers, does not disguise the fact that the text made accessible is an early Indian Madhyamika philosophical treatise, read by a Western philosopher through an extended Indo-Tibetan commentarial and academic tradition. It is neither a contemporary treatise nor a second century text transported miraculously to us without the distortion of time and cultural distance. Buddhologists may lament the lack of critical discussion of . Buddhist antecedents and commentarial sequellae, and my Tibetan colleagues may be uncomfortable with some of the tendentious extensions of arguments beyond the dialectical contexts in which they originally arose. Despite this, I hope that for Western philosophers interested in approaching Madhyamika in particular or Buddhist philosophy in general, and for students of Nāgārjuna's philosophy in the West, this exposition will make his text more accessible.

Dedication

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Dedication

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

I bow to buddhas
Who teach contingency
(No death, no birth,
No nothing, no eternity,
No arrival, no departure,
No identity. no difference)
And ease fixations.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

The Dedication

Nagarjuna makes both an ontological claim and a methodological claim here. First, he describes the empty state of things. Some of the negations - the "unceasing, unborn, unannihilated" - may suggest a permanent transcendental reality such as Brahman, but the claim is only about the *phenomenal world* seen correctly. He makes clear in the text that only what is *real* - i.e., *self-existent* - is something that can be born or cease (but then he argues that the real cannot change), and what is void of self-existence cannot be born, cease, or be annihilated. Thus, phenomenal reality as it really is *(tattva)* is free of anything real (self-existent) and thus of anything that could arise and cease. Notice that it is not an affirmation of emptiness, as if that were itself a reality or the source of a reality.

Second, he brings up the "peaceful stilling of all conceptual creations *(prapancha)."* This indicates the centrality of *prapancha.*

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

Opening Homage

I prostrate to the one
Who teaches that whatever is dependency arisen
Does not arise, does not cease,
Is not permanent, is not extinct,
Does not come, does not go,
And is neither one thing nor different things.
I prostrate to the perfect Buddha, the supreme of all who speak,
Who completely dissolves all fabrications and teaches peace.

THIS VERSE OF HOMAGE with which Nagarjuna begins the text explains why it is that we should have such great respect for the Buddha. Why is the Buddha worthy of our prostration? It is because the Buddha teaches that all of the phenomena of samsara and nirvana are dependently arisen mere appearances, and that therefore t heir true nature transcends the concepts of arising and ceasing, of permanence and extinction, of coming and going, and of being one thing or different things.

In fact, essential reality (dharmata) transcends all conceptual fabrications, and the Buddha taught this to his disciples very clearly. In this way the Buddha taught the path that dissolves all conceptual fabrications and thereby leads to the peace that is free from samsara's suffering. Suffering comes from taking things to be real—from taking friends and enemies to be real, from taking birth and death to be real, from taking clean and dirty to be real, and from taking happiness and pain in general to be real. The Buddha taught that the true nature of reality actually transcends all these concepts—it is the equality of all these seeming opposites—and he also taught us how to realize this. Since putting the Buddha's teachings into practice leads to the complete transcendence of suffering and the perfect awakening of the omniscient enlightened mind, then these teachings are the greatest words ever spoken, and the Buddha himself is the supreme of all who speak. For these reasons, the Buddha is worthy of our respect and our prostration.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Dedicatory Verse

अनिरोधमनुत्पादमनुच्छेदमशाश्वतम्।
अनेकार्थमनानार्थमनागममनिर्गमम्॥१॥
यः प्रतीत्यसमुत्पादं प्रपञ्चोपशमं शिवम्।
देशयामास संबुद्धस्तं वन्दे वदतां वरम्॥२॥

LVP 11,13-16
anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāśvatam |
anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam |
yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṃ prapañcopaśamaṃ śivam |
deśayām āsa saṃbuddhas taṃ vande vadatāṃ varam |

不生亦不滅 不常亦不斷
不一亦不異 不來亦不出
能說是因緣 善滅諸戲論
我稽首禮佛 諸說中第一

T1564: vol 30, pg 1b14
bù shēng yì bù miè bù cháng yì bù duàn
bù yī yì bù yì bù lái yì bù chū
néng shuì shì yīn yuán shàn miè zhū xì lùn
wǒ qǐ shǒu lǐ fú;fó zhū shuì zhōng dì yī

(Nagarjuna’s homage):
གང་གིས་རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་པར་འབྱུང་། འགག་པ་མེད་པ་སྐྱེ་མེད་པ།
ཆད་པ་མེད་པ་རྟག་མེད་པ། འོང་པ་མེད་པ་འགྲོ་མེད་པ།
ཐ་དད་དོན་མིན་དོན་གཅིག་མིན། སྤྲོས་པ་ཉེར་ཞི་ཞི་བསྟན་པ།
རྫོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་སྨྲ་རྣམས་ཀྱི། དམ་པ་དེ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།།

Tg tsa 1a1-3
| ’jam dpal gźon nur gyur pa (2)la phyag ’tshal lo |
gaṅ gis rten ciṅ ’brel par ’byuṅ		’gag pa med pa skye med pa
chad pa med pa rtag med pa		’oṅ ba med pa ’gro med pa
tha dad don min don gcig min		(3)spros pa ñer źi źi bstan pa
rdzogs pa’i saṅs rgyas smra rnams kyi		dam pa de la phyag ’tshal lo

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
I pay homage to the Fully Awakened One, the supreme teacher who has taught the doctrine of relational origination, the blissful cessation of all phenomenal thought constructions. (Therein, every event is "marked" by): non-origination, non-extinction, non-destruction, non-permanence, non-identity, non-differentiation non-coming (into being), non-going (out of being).

JONES (Skt):
I bow to the fully-enlightened Buddha, the best of teachers, who taught that whatever arises dependently is unceasing, unborn, unannihilated, impermanent, not coming, and not going; and who also taught the peaceful stilling of all conceptual creations.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
I salute him, the fully enlightened, the best of speakers, who preached the non-ceasing and the non-arising, the non-annihilation and the non-permanence, the non-identity and the non-difference, the non-appearance and the non-disappearance, the dependent arising, the appeasement of obsessions and the auspicious.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Dedication:
I greet the best of teachers, that Awakened One,
who taught liberation, the quieting of phenomena,
interdependent origination which is;
nonceasing and nonarising, nonmomentary and nonpermanent,
nonidentical and nondifferent, noncoming and nongoing.

SPRUNG (Skt):
Neither perishing nor arising in time, neither terminable nor eternal,
Neither self-identical nor variant in form, neither coming nor going;
Such is the true way of things, the serene coming to rest of the manifold of named things,
As taught by the perfectly enlightened one whom I honour as the best of all teachers.

STRENG (Skt):
Introductory Verses
I salute him, the fully-enlightened, the best of speakers,
who preached the non-ceasing and the non-arising,
the non-annihilation and the non-permanence,
the non-identity and the non-difference,
the non-appearance and the non-disappearance,
the dependent arising,
the appeasement of obsessions and the auspicious.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
DEDICATION
The Perfect Buddha,
The foremost of all Teachers I salute.
He has proclaimed
The Principle of (Universal) Relativity,
’Tis like blissful (Nirvana),
Quiescence of Plurality,
There nothing disappears.
Nor anything appears,
Nothing has an end.
Nor is there anything eternal,

Nothing is identical (with itself),
Nor is there anything differentiated,
Nothing moves.
Neither hither nor thither.

ROBINSON (Skt):I offer salutation to the best of preachers, the Buddha, who has taught that dependent co-arising has no ceasing, no arising, no nullification, no eternity, no unity, no plurality, no arriving, and no departing, that it is quiescent of all fictions, that it is blissful.

BOCKING (Ch):
1v1 No arising and no ceasing
No permanence and no severance
No identity and no difference
No arriving and no departing
1v2 To the one who can expound this matter of causality
And completely destroy all sophistries
I bow my head in reverence:
The Buddha, greatest of all teachers.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
I prostrate to the youthful Manjushri.
I bow down to the most sublime of speakers, the completely awakened one who taught contingency (no cessation, no birth, no annihilation, no permanence, no coming, no going, no difference, no identity) to ease fixations.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Homage
That which originates dependently
Does not cease and does not arise,
Does not come and does not go,
Is not annihilated and is not permanent,
Is not different and not the same.
To the true teacher who reveals this peace,
The complete pacification of constructs,
To the perfect Buddha I bow down.

GARFIELD (Tb):
Dedicatory Verses:
I prostrate to the Perfect Buddha,
The best of teachers, who taught that
Whatever is dependently arisen is
Unceasing, unborn,
Unannihilated, not permanent,
Not coming, not going,
Without distinction, without identity,
And free from conceptual construction.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
I prostrate to the perfect Buddha,
The best of all teachers, who taught that
That which is dependent origination is
Without cessation, without arising;
Without annihilation, without permanence;
Without coming; without going;
Without distinction, without identity
And peaceful—free from fabrication.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
OPENING HOMAGE
I prostrate to the one
Who teaches that whatever is dependently arisen
Does not arise, does not cease,
Is not permanent, is not extinct,
Does not come, does not go,
And is neither one thing nor different things.
I prostrate to the perfect Buddha, the supreme of all who speak,
Who completely dissolves all fabrications and teaches peace.

ROBINSON (Ch):
Not arise, also not cease, not permanent, also not cut-off, not one, also not different, not come, also not go-out, able speak this cause condition, well quench all-the play discourse, I bow head revere Buddha, all-the speak among number one.

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):
The Chinese does not make clear that the eight "nots" are all attributes of dependent co-arising. The Sanskrit order has been kept, but the syntactic relationship has not been preserved. The Chinese translates the Sanskrit privative bahuvrihis by straight negative plus verb. It renders *ekartham* (having one object, unity) by *i* 一 (one), and *nanartham* (having diverse objects) by *i* 異 (different). In verse 2, *yin-yuan* 因緣 (cause and condition) is more properly a translation of *hetu-pratyaya* or of *nidana* than of *pratitya-samutpada*, for which there is another and unambiguous term yuan-ch'i 緣起 (condition arising). Neng shuo 能說 (able speak, the speaker) translates *yak desayam asa* (who has taught). "All-the speak among number one" renders *vadatam varam* (best of speakers/preachers). *Chu shuo* 諸說 (all-the speak) does not indicate that *vadatam* is "of those who speak." The word order "Buddha, all-the speak among number one" is Sanskrit, as an attributive phrase regularly precedes its head-word in Chinese. *Chu hsi-lun* 諸戲論 (all-the play discourse) corresponds to *prapanca*-, but the *chu* is interpretive. *Prapanca*- is the first member of the compound *prapanca-upasamam* and is not marked for number. *Shan* 善 (well) in the second line perhaps renders *sivam* (blessed), but certainly does not convey the meaning of this highly important word.

1/1 – 1/2 With these two verses he reveres the Buddha, and expounds in brief the supreme meaning.

Question: Dharmas are innumerable. Why do the negations refer only to these eight things?

Answer: Although dharmas are innumerable, by-the brief exposition of eight things he effects a comprehensive negation of all dharmas.

(1c14) As to 'no arising', the commentators expound the characteristic of 'arising' in various ways. Some say that cause and effect are identical, some say that cause and effect are different, some say that the effect pre-exists in the cause, some say that the effect does not pre-exist in the cause, some say that things arise from themselves, and some say they arise from other things, while some say that they arise from both together. Some say that arising exists, while others say that arising is nonexistent. Such ways of expounding the characteristic of arising are entirely wrong, and these matters will be enlarged upon later. Since no fixed characteristic of arising is tenable, there is no arising. As for 'no ceasing'; if there is no arising, how can there be ceasing? Since there is no arising and no ceasing, the remaining six are also negated.

(1c21) Question: If 'no arising and no ceasing' imply a comprehensive negation of all dharmas, why does he repeat the exposition with regard to the other six things?

Reply: It is in order to bring out the meaning of 'no arising and no ceasing'. There are some people who do not accept no arising and no ceasing, but do believe in no permanence and no severance. A deep enquiry into no permanence and no severance shows them to be the same as no arising and no ceasing, and why? If a dharma really exists then clearly it cannot be nonexistent. If it formerly existed and now does not exist, this constitutes severance. If its nature existed before, then this would be permanence. This is why he teaches 'no permanence and no severance', to lead into the meaning of 'no arising and no ceasing'.

(2a3) There are some people who, although they hear these four ways of negating dharmas, nevertheless establish dharmas through the other four ways, but these are also mistaken. If all dharmas were one there could be no causal relations, while if they were different there could be no continuity of characteristic These things will be refuted in various ways later on. Therefore we declare again 'no identity and no difference'. There are some people who, although recognizing these six ways of negating dharmas nevertheless establish dharmas in terms of arriving and departing. As for ' arriving' , they say that dharmas come from the god 'Self-Being' (Isvara), from the world-nature or from the atoms, and so forth. As for 'departing', they say that dharmas return to their place of origin.

(2a8) Moreover, the myriad things do not arise, and why? It is because of direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes, corn does not arise at the beginning of a kalpa, and why? Without the corn at the beginning of the kalpa there could be no corn now. If there were corn existing now apart from that at the beginning of the kalpa, there would have been an arising, but in fact this is not so, and therefore there is no arising.

Question: If there is no arising, then surely there must be ceasing?

Reply: There is no ceasing, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes, the corn which was there at the beginning of the kalpa did not cease. If it had ceased there would be no corn now, but in fact there is corn, and therefore there is no ceasing.

Question: If there is no ceasing then surely there must be permanence?

Reply: There is no permanence, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes things are not permanent; for example, when the corn sprouts the seed decays, and therefore there is no permanence.

Question: If there is no permanence then surely there must be severance.

Reply: There is no severance, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes things are not cut off. For instance, the sprout grows out of the corn, and therefore there is no severance. If there were severance there would be no continuity of characteristics.

(2a20) Question: If this is so, then all things are one.

Reply: They are not one, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes, things are not one; for example, the corn does not constitute the sprout and the sprout does not constitute the corn. If the corn constituted the sprout and the sprout constituted the corn, they would be one, but in fact this is not so and therefore they are not one.

Question: If they are not one, then surely they must be different?

Reply: They are not different, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes, things are not different. If things are different from

each other why do we classify things as shoots of corn, stalks of corn and leaves of corn rather than as shoots of a trees, stalks of a trees or leaves of trees? Therefore they are not different.

(2a26) Question: If there is no difference then surely there must be arriving?

Reply: There is no arriving, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes, things do not arrive; for example, the sprout inside the grain of corn does not arrive from anywhere. If there were arriving the sprout would have to come from some other place, like a bird coming to roost in a tree; but in fact this is not so, and therefore Lire is no arriving.

Question: If there is no arriving then surely there must be departing?

Reply: There is no departing, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes, things do not depart. If there were departing we should see the sprout departing from the corn, like a snake coming out of its hole'; but in fact this does not happen. Therefore there is no departing.

(2b4) Question: Although you have commented on the significance of ? no arising and no ceasing', we should like to hear the exposition of the one who composed the treatise.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Commentary on the Dedication is included in the Introductory section above.]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

These introductory verses appear to be equivocal and therefore could account for most of the conflicting views in the two major Madhyamika traditions: (1) those of the Prasangikas, represented by Candrakīrti and attributed by him to the earlier Madhyamika philosophers like Aryadeva and Buddhapalita, who recognized no views and merely utilized the reductio ad absurdum method to refute the views of their opponents; and (2) those of the Svatantrikas, reprinted by Bhavaviveka, who admitted a positive thesis on the basis of which they criticized the opponents' views. In these verses, the contents of the Buddha's discourse are all referred to in the accusative case as anirodham, anutpadam, anucchedam, asasvatam anekartham, ananartham, anagamam, anirgamam, pratityasamutpadam prapancopasamam, sivam without giving any indication as to whether they refer to one doctrine or several.

Modern interpreters of Nagarjuna, probably following Candrakīrti, whose commentary, the Prasannapada, is the only one available in its original Sanskrit, have assumed that all these terms refer to one doctrine, namely, dependent arising (partityasamutpada). However, as will be shown below, it is also possible to explain these verses as referring to several different concepts in the Buddha's philosophy, thus providing justification for the standpoint of the 'positivists' (svatantrika) of the Madhyamika tradition.

-1. Prasangika interpretation. Candrakīrti's comments on these verses show very definitely how he moves from a svatantrika interpretation to a prasangika one. He begins his treatise, the Prasannapada, by emphasizing the significance of dependent arising (pratityasamutpada). Accepting both the general or distributive meaning and the particular usage of the term, he explains dependent arising as "the arising of things contingent upon causes and conditions" (hetupratyayapekso bhavanam utpadah pratityasamutpadh,), contrasting it with the definition offered by those who accepted a theory of momentariness (ksanika-vada). According to the latter dependent arising means "the arising of those that are repeatedly destroyed," (prati prati ityanam vinasinam samutpada iti, loc. cit.). In fact, Candrakīrti seems to defend some sort of "radical empiricism" when he raises the question: "How can one maintain that there is arising of that which has reached [another] without obtaining a relation?" (Katham anenaiva prapteh sambhava ita yuktyanupadanena, p. 9). He continues to emphasize Nagarjuna's view that "whatever that has arisen reaching such and such, that is not arisen in terms of self-nature" (tat tat prapya samutpannam notpannam tat svabhavatah, pp. 9, 10). This certainly means that the negations in the dedicatory verse are intended to deny that things are arisen through self-nature (svabhavatah) and there seems to be no implication that they are applicable to dependent arising itself. However, a change of perspective appears when Candrakīrti proceeds to explain the principle of dependent arising (pratityasamutpada). Instead of taking dependent arising as the positive middle position of the Buddha, Candrakīrti applies the negations to dependent arising itself, as if the

negations are presented as adjectives qualifying dependent arising. Hence his statement: "The entire treatise [i.e. the Karika] purports to establish the absence of cessation, etc. of dependent arising," (nirodhadayo na santi pratityasamutpadasya, p. 11). This leads Candrakīrti to a position of "no-views" which is then identified with the "appeasement of obsessions" (prapancopasama) or freedom (nirvana), thereby emphasizing its transcendence. Quotations from Nagarjuna as well as Aryadeva are presented as justification for this identification of "dependent arising" and "appeasement of obsessions" (p. 16), even though Nagarjuna seems to distinguish between utilizing right views (such as dependent arising) without grasping on to them as the absolute truth. With this interpretation of the negations, the dependent arising and freedom, Candrakīrti then moves on to the contents of Nagarjuna's first chapter on the examination of "conditions" (pratyaya) and involves himself in a lengthy discussion of the Prasangika and Svatantrika standpoints.

-2. Svatantrika interpretation. It is possible to interpret these eleven characterizations as expressing three major aspects of the Buddha's discourse:

a) The eight negations may be taken as a refutation of the false views (mithya-drsti), primarily the theories of substantial existence (astitva) and nihilistic non-existence (nastitva), that is, the non-ceasing (anirodham) of a substantial entity and the non-arising (anutpadam) of a nonexistent entity. Indeed, the non-ceased (aniruddham) and non-arisen (anutpannam) are equivalent to the nonempty (asunya), a term used to refer to substance (svabbhava) (XX.17). Hence these negations appear in couplets and could be considered as another way of presenting the non-substantiality (anatman) not only of phenomena but also of those views. They are non-substantial in the sense that they are not absolute, as they were assumed to be by their proponents.

b) "Dependent arising" (pratityasamutpada) would then stand for the middle position, which is the right view (samyag-drsti) on the basis of which the wrong views are criticized. "Dependent arising" is considered to be the right view, not because it is an absolute truth, but because it allows for possible explanations of phenomena not permitted by theories of absolute existence and nihilistic non-existence.

c) "The appeasement of obsessions" (prapancopasama) and "the auspicious" (siva) would be the result of adopting the middle position. This is freedom or nirvana.

Interpreted as such, these verses refer to a positive core of the Buddha's teachings, alongside of the negative aspect which was intended as a rejection of the heretical views. Such an interpretation would leave dependent arising as the position from which the Buddha rejected the metaphysical or absolute views and this would support the Svatantrika understanding of Nagarjuna. If the analysis of Nagarjuna's philosophy is undertaken in the light of the "Discourse to Katyayana," as is done in the Introduction to the present work, the above interpretation of the dedicatory verses may appear to be more in conformity with the Buddha's own teachings. Such an interpretation would present the Karikas as a compact and well-organized composition and eliminate the need to prone portions of the text as being irrelevant or inessential to the main theme.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Dedicatory verses are often treated as mere performatives. But these are special and announce in a subtle but powerful way the program of the *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā.* There is a common point being made in the four pairwise denials, but also a specific insight being expressed in each. The relation between the conventional and the ultimate that will be developed in the text is also expressed poetically in the dedication. In fact, Candrakīrti, in *Prasannapadā,* argues that the dedication determines the Prasangika reading of Nāgārjuna's text.

Candrakīrti's point is this: In the four pairwise denials, Nāgārjuna is announcing that the Madhyamika philosopher will make no positive assertions about the fundamental nature of things. But this claim must be qualified in several ways. For one thing, we must take the phrase "the nature of things" very seriously. That is, Nāgārjuna will be refusing to say anything about the essence of anything exactly because he will deny the coherence and utility of the concept of an essence. For another, it is important to see that the predications that are rejected are intended to be understood as made from the ultimate standpoint. That is, the assertions that are being denied are assertions about the final nature of phenomena that emerge from philosophical analysis. They are not meant to be ordinary assertions dependent upon conventions. Nāgārjuna will deny that it is possible to assert anything from the ultimate standpoint. He will urge that all truth is relative and conventional. In fact, as we shall see, these qualifications turn out to be mutually entailing.

But each pair is significant in its own right. To say that "whatever is dependently arisen is unceasing and unborn" is to emphasize that dependent arising amounts to emptiness, and emptiness amounts to nonexistence in the ultimate sense. While, as we shall see, Nāgārjuna defends the conventional existence of phenomena, he will urge that none of them

ultimately exist - that none of them exist independently of convention with identities and natures that they possess in themselves. Therefore, he will argue, nothing ultimately is born, and from the ultimate standpoint there is nothing to cease. This is a deep point, which only emerges completely through a reading of the whole text. But we can say at this point that this insight contains within it the seeds of the eventual equation of the phenomenal world with emptiness, of saṃsāra with nirvāṇa, and of the conventional and the ultimate that are the hallmarks of the Prasangika-Madhyamika view.

When Nāgārjuna claims that "whatever is dependently arisen is ... unanihilated and not permanent" he indicates that the dependently arisen world and all of its contents are, in virtue of being dependently arisen and dependent upon conditions, impermanent. Phenomena come into existence when the conditions upon which they depend obtain, and they cease to exist when the conditions for their continued existence no longer obtain. This impermanence, he will argue, entails their nonexistence from the ultimate standpoint. For there will be no principled way to assert criteria for identity for phenomena that distinguish them in any principled way from their conditions. Nor can we find any essence they themselves have that determines their identity. The criteria for identity we posit will end up being purely conventional. Hence the same is true for any claims of substantial difference between things. But this impermanence and lack of intrinsic identity, while it amounts to the impossibility of ultimate existence, is not equivalent to annihilation. The empirical reality of things, on Nāgārjuna's analysis, is not denied by asserting their emptiness.

Finally, to assert that things are "not coming, not going" is to assert that the phenomenal world does not contain intrinsically identifiable entities that persist independently with those identities over time. As a consequence, there can be no sense in saying that any entity, independent of conventional imputation, comes into existence, remains in existence, or goes out of existence. (fn 13. As Georges Dreyfus points out (personal communication). many Tibetan scholars read this line also as a comment on the selflessness of sentient beings - as indicating that there is no self that comes from previous lives and goes on to future lives.) The final remark - that the phenomenal world is free from conceptual imputation - raises a tension that is central to Madhyamika philosophy and that animates the whole of the text: The tension between the desire to characterize the ultimate nature of things and the recognition that all characterization is conventional. For Nāgārjuna will urge that all conventional phenomena are conceptually designated, depending for whatever identity and existence they have on such designation, and that this merely imputed status is their ultimate nature. Despite this, however, he will urge that seeing this fact is at the same time to see that the nature naively imputed to things and the nature they appear to us to have - inherent existence - is wholly false. In themselves, from their side, things are free of that imputation, even though there is really nothing at all that can be said from their side. This dynamic philosophical tension - a tension between the Madhyamika account of the limits of what can be coherently said and its analytical ostension of what can't be said without paradox but must be understood - must constantly be borne in mind in reading the text. It is not an incoherent mysticism, but it is a logical tightrope act at the very limits of language and metaphysics.

⁂

Chapter I

प्रत्ययपरीक्षा नाम प्रथमं प्रकरणम्

中論觀因緣品第一(十六偈)

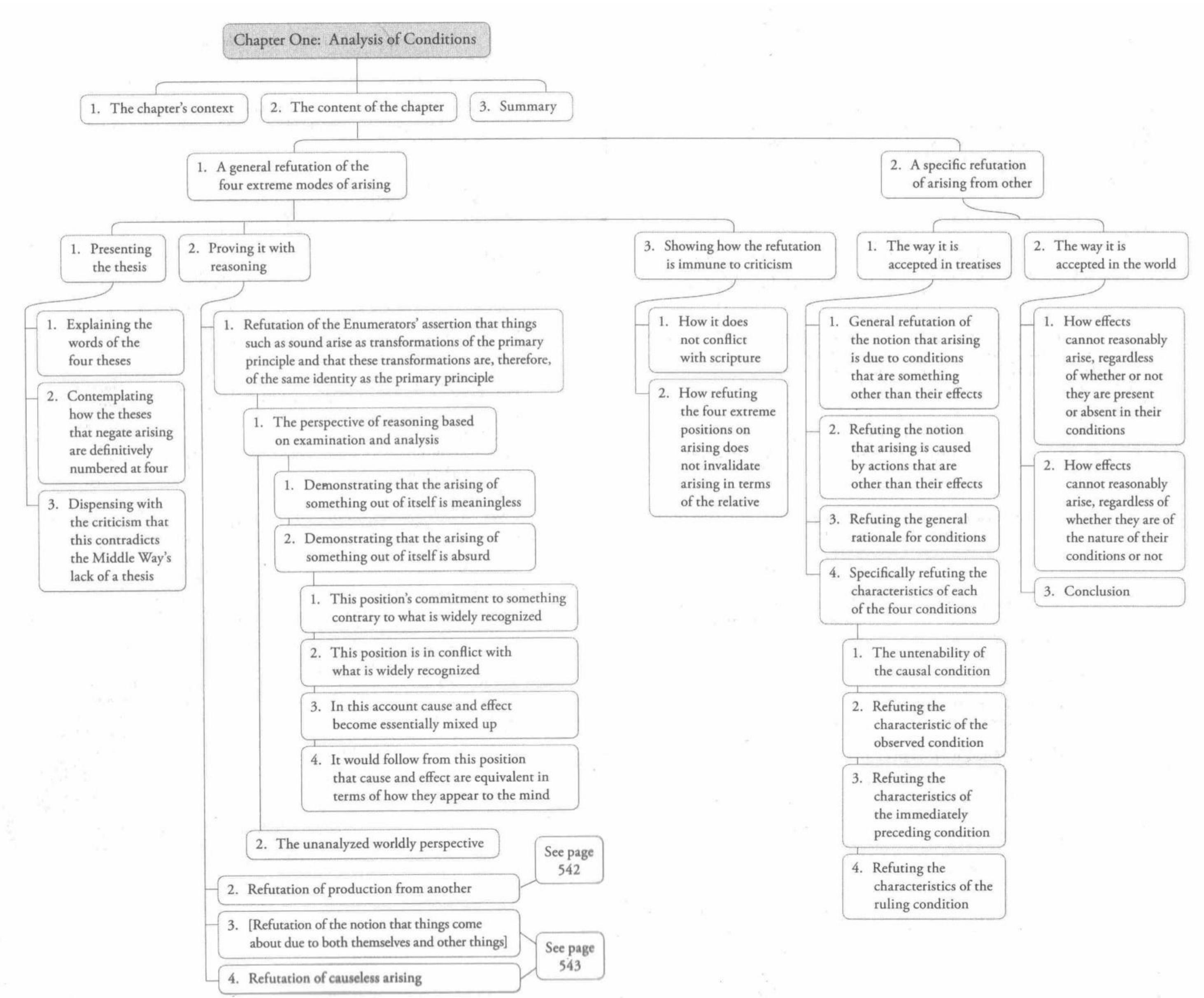
pratyayaparīkṣā nāma prathamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

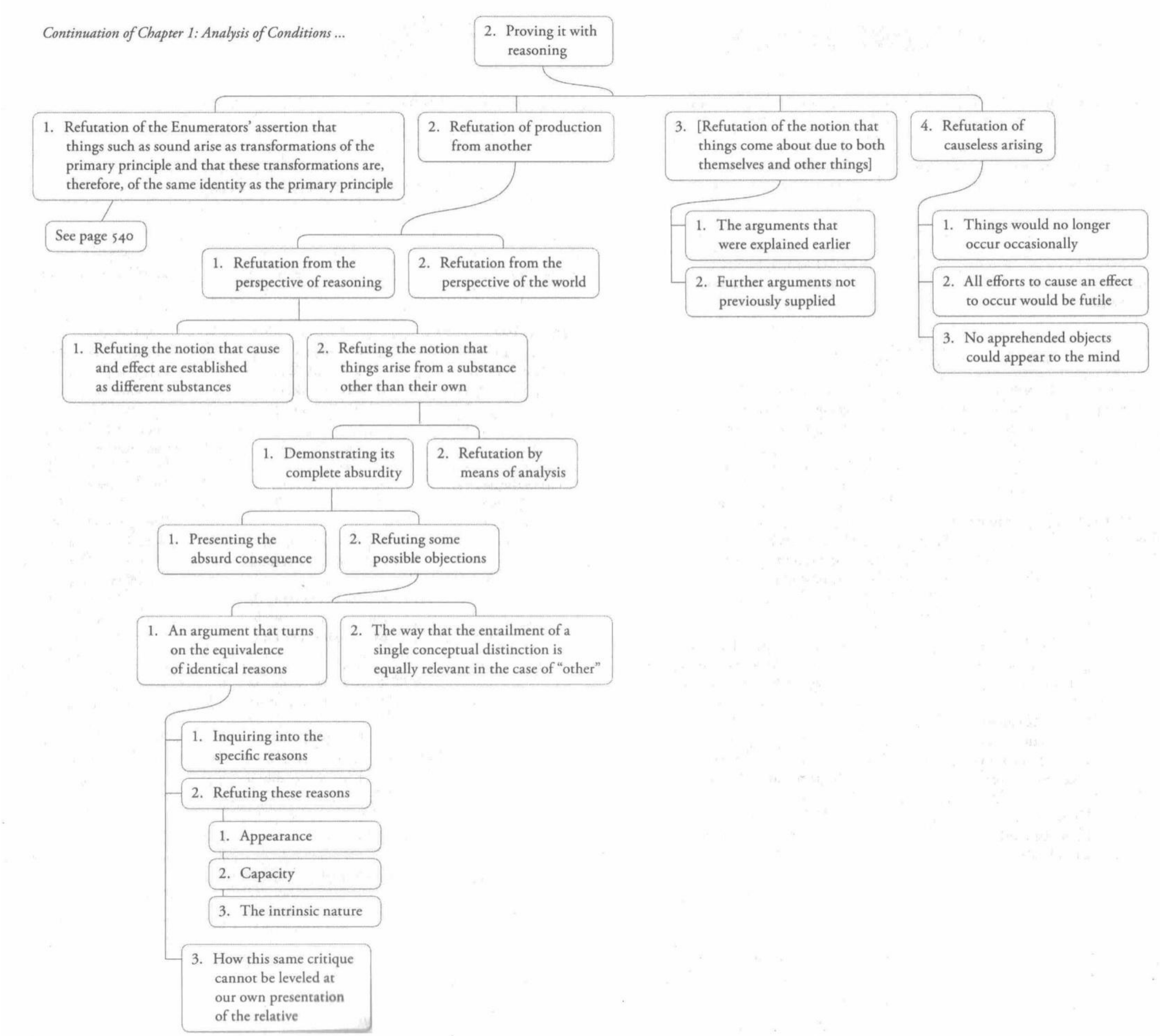
Chapter I: Examination of Conditions

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter I

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)





TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We now begin the second part of this section of the treatise, which involves explaining the meaning of each chapter. This section has three parts: the demonstration that dependent origination is essentially empty, the presentation of the fact that whether one remains engaged in cyclic existence or withdraws from it depends on whether one understands that, **[37]** and how, once one understands dependent origination, the erroneous views are abandoned.

We now begin the first of those three parts: the demonstration that dependent origination is essentially empty by nature. This section has two parts: the main point and the rebuttal of refutations. The first of these sections has two parts: the brief presentation of the two selflessnesses and its extensive explanation. The brief presentation in turn has two parts: the refutation of the essence of phenomena through the examination of the agency and action of cause and effect and the refutation of the essence of the person through the examination of the action and agent of going and coming. This chapter constitutes the first of those two parts.

EXPLANATION:

In the beginning, arising is negated with the thought that in order to explain such things as the non-ceasing presented above, it would be easier to deny the existence of such

things as cessation having already denied that of arising. This section has two parts: the refutation of the essence of the arising of effects and the refutation of the essence of conditions in that which gives rise to things.

SUMMARY:

Here are summaries of the following three matters: the way in which the object of negation refuted in this chapter is grasped, what is established after it is refuted through arguments, and in light of that, how to posit causes, conditions, and effects. When such things as seeds and fuel are seen or heard to be performing the action of giving rise to such things as sprouts and fire, respectively, to take both cause and effect not as merely nominally imputed, but as the objects that are the bases of nominal imputation, grasped as inherently existent produced and producer, is to grasp the object of negation.

When the object so grasped is maintained to exist in that way, through an analysis asking whether this arisen effect has the same essence as or a different essence from its causes and conditions, with respect to the effect, the essence of the produced is refuted, and when one analyzes the conditions that produce the effect, asking whether they exist or not when the cause occurs, then with respect to the cause the essence of the producers is refuted. **[89]** This is because Nagarjuna presents a position, the primary focus of which is refutation, according to which an inherently existent entity cannot be posited as having causes, conditions, or effects.

Here is why he does this: Since from beginningless time, we are accustomed to grasping causes and effects as existing inherently, this is difficult to dispel. When that essence is refuted, the tenability of action and agent in the context of essencelessness can easily be established. Nagarjuna does not focus here primarily on how we set out action and agent conventionally in our own system.

Arguments such as "Neither from itself nor from another" that express refutations always involve analysis of how the objects taken to be the bases of conventional imputation exist. Therefore, they refute any arising that is not merely imputed, but they do not refute *mere* arising. Having this clearly in mind, in most of the chapters Nagarjuna does not apply the modifying term to the object of negation. The modifying term is indeed applied in many places. He does not always explicitly apply it, thinking that it is easy to see that when it is applied in any one context, when the grounds are the same, it should be supplied in other cases even where it is not explicitly applied.

I have explained in *Lam rim chen mo* [580, translation by Cutler et al., III, pp. 128–129] that, according to *Prasannapada*, when such statements as "Dependent origination is without cessation, without arising" [4a] are shown to be noncontradictory to sutras where the existence of such things as cessation is asserted, they are taken to express the absence of such things as cessation and arising with respect to the nature of the object of uncontaminated wisdom. They refute ultimate arising, but they do not refute conventional arising. It is also explained that this is the intention behind statements in sutra that things arise from the four conditions. Even the refutation of the objective condition is said to be with respect to the ultimate and not the conventional [*Prasannapada,* 28b]. Therefore, it is crystal clear that the modifying term should be applied to the object of negation, and this kind of case occurs frequently. But one should not be misled by lexical glosses where this is not applied frequently.

The commentary to *Catuhsataka* makes this point very clearly: **[90]**

If one maintained that in virtue of the complete refutation of arising via this analysis, compound phenomena are presented as nonarisen, then it would not be like an illusion, but would be like something that is perceived by the son of a barren woman and the like. Lest the absurd consequence follow that there would be no dependent arising, one should not compromise with those who say this. Instead, one should consistently follow the analysis according to which they are illusionlike. [*dBu ma* ya 225a]

Prasannapada [88b] quotes the following statement in the *Lankavatarasutra*:

I have said that all things are nonarisen meaning that they are *essentially* nonarisen. [*mDo sde* Ca 79b]

If cause and effect are refuted in the context of existence through their own characteristic, cause and effect can be taken to be merely nominally imputed, and merely posited through the force of nominal conventions. As the *Buddhapalita* says, in the beginning of the first chapter, "To say that something arises is merely convention" [161b], and as it says, at the very end of the chapter, "To say that something arises is to say that it merely exists conventionally" [168b].

Thus, when one sees that in the context of inherent existence it does not make any sense to accept cause and effect, since beneficial and harmful causes and effects are undeniable, they exist; and since it makes no sense to posit them in the context of inherent existence, one must accept that they are tenable only when posited as existing merely through the force of nominal convention. Since ordinary people are thoroughly habituated to positing producer and produced as existing through their own characteristics, when this is refuted, they find it awkward to posit them as existing merely through the force of nominal convention. However, since there are only these two modes of positing them, and since the first one is untenable, one should push one's mind in the direction of the second one, since it is inevitable.

It makes no sense to think that it is untenable to say that since producer and produced exist, cause and effect exist; and therefore that they are nominally imputed. **[91]** The reason that this makes no sense is that, as has been explained, the word "merely" means neither that no objects exist besides names nor that their being cognized by authoritative cognition is precluded. On the other hand, although the phrase "things exist merely in virtue of nominal imputation" means that it is impossible that they exist without being posited by nominal convention, it does not mean that everything posited by nominal convention exists.

So, taking whichever of the internal and external causes and conditions is clearest as an example—such as seeds and sprouts, or consciousness arising depending on sense faculties and objects—and seeing how it is grasped in the way previously explained, and then focusing either on the

cause or on the effect, through the argument refuting their inherent existence, one should refute all of the remaining essence. If even the slightest bit is not refuted, then being bound by that grasping, liberation cannot be attained. Then causes and effects will appear to be merely nominally imputed. Then, since the benefits and harms of causes and effects are undeniable, one should develop ascertainment, thinking as follows: "Although in the context of mere imputation, causes give rise to effects, it is erroneous for me to grasp them in the context of existence through their own characteristics." One should not allow this to undermine one's ascertainment of the dependent arising of causes and effects. According to our own system, if these things are posited as existing conventionally in the sense of existing merely from the standpoint of illusion, and are not posited in a framework according to which there are causes and effects, this would be a great error and a great deprecation of reality.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER I - Examination of Relational Condition

The term, pratyaya, has been variously rendered as yin-yuan by Kumarajiva, as causality by Stcherbatsky, as Bedingungen by Walleser. All three renditions, it must be stated, do not do complete justice to the Sanskrit original but there is a feeling that all three translators have sensed the significance of the term and concluded with the best possible term under their command in conveying the idea. This is just an example of how difficult it is to translate an original idea into another language, a difficulty which is doubly so when the term is a philosophical concept.

We may perhaps venture to say at the outset that the term ought to be shorn of any notion of "cause" or "causality" as commonly interpreted. These notions would immediately set up a causal connection such that an effect or something is originated or produced out of something else. In other words, they would connote a one-to-one, cause-effect, occurrence of events which is definitely not the true intention of the Madhyamika. For this reason, it is proposed, not without shortcomings either, to coin the phrase, "relational condition," in which the adjective, "relational" refers to the onto-logical representation of an event or subject as related to the whole situation, whether significantly or not, in a certain moment; while the noun, "condition," refers to the state of such an event or subject at that particular moment. Thus, relational condition does reflect somewhat the modern idea of a four-dimensional view of events in nature but the comparison can never be completely carried out because the former has a pre-scientific origin while the latter a strictly Western scientific base.

The chapter then discusses the important concept of pratyaya or relational condition. Nagarjuna immediately ties it in with the problem of origination or how experiential events come forth. He asserts emphatically that events or entities (a term synonymously used in reference to a unity of human experience) are never known or found to originate out of themselves, from others, from both themselves and others, and from the absence of causes (verse 1). Following fundamental Buddhist principles, he points out that four and only four types of relational condition are permissible, i.e. primary causal (hetu), appropriating or objectively extending (alambana), sequential or contiguous (anantara), and dominantly extending (adhipateya) (verse 3). But then, keeping in mind the concepts of being (sat) and non-being (asat), he methodically analyzes the play of relational conditions in order to exhibit the inner contradiction or utter absurdity of premising anything in the entified form.

In such a way this chapter serves as an introduction to the rest of the chapters because the method or line of argument used recurs over and over again, almost ad nauseam. However, the reader must constantly keep in mind that the basic aim of Nagarjuna is to reveal the fact that experiential events are always in the nature of relational origination (pratityasamutpada). And, very early in a dedicatory verse, Nagarjuna sings praise to the Buddha's supreme teaching of relational origination. The verse contains the famous Eight-Nons or Negations which indirectly point at the blissful realm of existence. It expresses the whole philosophy of Madhyamika in a nutshell and thus could well be labeled the Madhyamika Creed.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

Analysis of the Karika

Part-I (Causality and Change)

1. *Conditions* (*pratyaya*). The Buddha's main philosophical insight, as has been shown, was expressed by the term "dependent arising" (*paticcasamup-pada*). It was presented against the four theories of self-causation, external causation, both self- and external causation and non-causation. Nagarjuna, being a true disciple of the Buddha, is therefore seen as initiating his primary philosophical treatise by categorically denying these four causal theories (1.1). According to the Buddha, the four theories imply the existence or nonexistence or both or neither, of a permanent existence, an eternal and substantial self (*atman*). That same implication is assumed by Nagarjuna when he used the term *bhava* (instead of *bhava*) to refer to the entities that are explained in these four ways. Thus, in the very first stanza Nagarjuna's denial pertains to a metaphysical existence (*bhava*) and not to the empirical notion of becoming (*bhava*) characterized by arising (*utpada*) and ceasing (*vyaya*).

In verse 2, Nagarjuna refers to four types of conditions (*pratyaya*), emphatically declaring that there is no fifth.

However, there is no categorical denial of the four conditions, compared to the denial of the four causal theories in the previous verse. The reason for this is very evident. Nagarjuna, a very sophisticated philosopher, realized that the Buddha rejected the four causal theories mentioned in verse 1. He also knew that the later Buddhist disciples (*sravaka*) attempted to elaborate upon the Buddha's conception of "dependent arising" (*pratityasamutpada*) by formulating a theory of four conditions (*pratyaya*); these were the early Abhidharmikas. He saw no reason for an outright rejection of the theory of four conditions. However, in verse 3, he immediately takes up a particular interpretation of a condition (*pratyaya*) and negates it: "The self-nature of existents is not found in the condition, etc." It is not difficult to see what is being denied here. To Nagarjuna, it seems that some philosophers were interpreting the Buddhist (Abhidharmika) theory of four conditions (*pratyaya*) in terms of one or the other of the theories mentioned in verse 1, which the Buddha himself had rejected. Nagarjuna could not have been unaware of the fact that the philosophers who spoke of conditions (*pratyaya*) at this early period in Indian thought were the Buddhists and not the non-Buddhists. Therefore, his attention is now directed to these Buddhist interpreters and not to the non-Buddhists.

As mentioned earlier, among the Buddhists the only school that gave a susbstantialist interpretation of phenomena (*dharma*) during this early period was the Sarvastivada school. Their theory of self-nature (*svabhava*) came dangerously close to the Indian conception of self (*atman*). Nagarjuna was, therefore, merely criticizing the view of the Sarvastivada school of Buddhists, who were suggesting a substantialist interpretation of the four conditions. Thus, the categorical denial in stanze 3 pertains to the view of the Sarvastivadins, who assumed a self-nature or substance (*svabhava*) of the existent (*bhava*) *in* the conditions (*pratyaya*).

What sort of argument does Nagarjuna present in order to deny the existence of self-nature? Mufti and others who saw in Nagarjuna's method a dialectic comparable to that of Immanual Kant have considered self-nature (*svabhava*) and other-nature (*parabhava*) as antinomies. This may be true. However, such a dialectic is not used by Nagarjuna in his first refutation of the notion of self-nature. Nagarjuna rejects self-nature, not because it is relative to other-nature, but because it is not evident (*na vidyate*). The argument from relativity is utilized to reject other-nature only and not self-nature. ("In the absence of self-nature, other-nature is also not evident.") What is found here is a simple and straightforward denial of self-nature on epistemological grounds, even though he does not elaborate upon that epistemology at this point. Throughout the text, one finds Nagarjuna using the negated verb, *na vidyata,* and sometimes the present participle, *aviayamana.* The former is often rendered as "not found," and in our translation preference is given to the more epistemologically oriented rendering: "is not evident." This emphasis is clearly evident from the manner in which he rejects "selfnature," as explained above.

In other words, Nagarjuna appears more as an empiricist than as a dialectician who merely utilizes reason. Thus, the text begins with a simple denial of self-nature as something that is *not evident.* What Nagarjuna means by evidence will be explained later on in this essay. If this point is kept in mind, it becomes rather easy to understand the rest of Nagarjuna's analysis of conditions.

Thus, in the verse that follows (1.4), Nagarjuna speaks of action (*kriya*) and condition *(pratyaya)*. In this case, neither the action nor the condition is denied. What is denied is the sort of relationship that is assumed between them, that is, inherence which emphasizes identity. The denial of identity is prompted by the fact that it is equated with "self-nature" (*svabhava*) which, in its turn, was looked upon as a permanent entity. Difference was likewise denied because it was perceived as other-nature, which implied annihilation or lack of any continuity.

Verse 5 takes up the definition of a condition. A condition is such because depending upon it others arise. However, the reason why Nagarjuna rejects this definition is not that it is not empirically valid, but that there is a rider attached to the definition. That rider implies that this dependence is eternal and permanent. In other words, that which is dependent and that upon which it depends are substantially connected through a relation of inherence. Hence, Nagarjuna's queston: "So long as it [the effect] does not arise, why is it [the cause] not considered to be a non-condition?"

Verse 6 completes Nagarjuna's general criticism of conditions. Most modern translators have failed to bring out the significance of this verse, primarily because the term *artha* (= effect, fruit, result, rendered into Chinese as *kuo*)

failed to attract their attention. What is denied is, therefore, not the arising of an effect as ordinarily understood, but the arising of an effect that is already existent (*sato arthasya*) or one that is non-existent (*asato arthasya*). These again represent the identity (*satkarya*) or the non-identity (*asatkarya*) theories of causation presented by the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas.

Verses 7-10 represent the criticism of the four types of conditions referred to at I.2 as interpreted by the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas. If the *sat* (existent) and *asat* (non-existent) qualifying *dharma* (phenomena) are understood as implying "the substantially (*svabhavato*) existent and non-existent," a qualification that Nagarjuna often makes, then it will be easy to understand the nature of Nagarjuna's criticism. This is especially so in verse 10 where, on the surface, it appears that Nagarjuna was criticizing the Buddha's own statement: "When that exists, this comes to be," (*asmim satidam bhavati*). However, Nagarjuna was very careful in dealing with this statement, for in the first line he was explicit with regard to the sort of existence he was criticizing, that existence being none other that "substantial existence" (*sat-ta).* Verses 11-14 deal with several other aspects of the theory of causation such as the arising of an effect from a combination of conditions. It is indeed the concluding line of the last verse (1.14) that possibly can give rise to all the misunderstanding regarding Nagarjuna's analysis of causal conditions. "In the absence of the effect, whence can there be a condition or a non-condition." It is easy to interpret this statement to mean that Nagarjuna did not accept either a cause or an effect that is dependent upon a cause. To take it as a simple denial of cause and effect would be to ignore everything that Nagarjuna has been trying to say earlier in the chapter, regarding self-nature (*svabhava*) or substantial or permanent existence (*sat*). There seems to be no rationale for interpreting this statement independent of the basic premises with which he set out on his examination of conditions. To conclude: What is denied here is not the simple effect that depends upon the condition or conditions for its arising, but an effect that is either pre-existent, and therefore permanent, or nonexistent because it is not pre-existent. It is also reasonable to assume that a similar denial pertains not to a simple cause or condition but to a cause or condition that produces an already existent or non-existent effect. "Dependent arising" or casuality (*pratityasamutpada*) was, to reiterate, the principle in terms of which the Buddha was able to explain the functioning of phenomena (*dharma*) without resorting to a conception of permanent and eternal entity (*nitya atman*). In other words, dependent arising explains the impermanence (*anityata*) of phenomena that are dependently arisen (*pratityasamutpanna*) without which no identification of "dependent arising" is possible. Because such phenomena are dependently arise, they are impermanent (*anitya*). Impermanence involves change and movement.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Conditions

Nothing comes from itself
Or something else
Or both together
Or without a cause.

The essence of a thing
Is never to be found
In causes or precursors,
Consciousness or objects-For
if a thing is not itself,
How can it he something else?

I too did not appear
Either with conditions
Or without them:
They became my conditions
Only when I sprang from them,
Not before.

Whether I am there or not,
Conditions are impossible –
For in my absence,
Whose conditions would they be?
And in my presence,
What purpose would they serve?

You cannot say:
"When this is present, that happens" –
For the presence of an inessential thing
Is never to be found.

How can conditions cause
Something unconnected to them?
Why could I not have been born
From causes that were not my conditions?

How could my nature be conditioned
When conditions have no nature of their own?
How could it ever he my nature
To be without conditions?

JONES (COMMENTARY)

1. Conditions

This chapter is not about *causation* in the scientific sense, although translations and discussions of Nagarjuna suggest that it is. Rather, it is about the *origin* of things – how things are produced. It begins with a declaration – "no entities whatsoever are found anywhere that have arisen from themselves, from another, from both themselves and another, or from no cause at all" - with no reasons given. But the reasons can be constructed from other verses in the *Karikas:*

(1) Nothing can be self-caused because it would already have to exist to be the cause. In short, nothing can produce itself. (This would include a god, no matter what the advocates of the Cosmological Argument think. See Jones 2009: 137-39.) Nothing can produce itself through its own power nothing is "self-existent." "Self-existence" or "self-causation" would simply render the concept of *"causation"* meaningless.

(2) Nothing real can be caused by another reality since it would then be dependent on that reality and thus by definition it would not be real. In addition, something could arise from another thing only if that other thing was itself real (i.e., self-existent), but since there is no self-existence that other thing also is not real.

(3) Nothing can be caused by the combination of itself and something else: the two possibilities were ruled out in (1) and (2), and so the combination of them will not work either. That is, the combination of a thing and another thing would not be real since neither part is real (self-existent).

(4) Nothing arises without a cause. In emptiness metaphysics, everything arises dependent upon causes and conditions - nothing is causeless. [n self-existence metaphysics, to be causeless is to be in effect self-caused, which has already been ruled out.

The first option can be seen as a rejection of the Samkhya position that the effect is *in* the cause; the second of Jaina's position on a creator; the third of Vaisheshika's position on multiple causes (material and instrumental); and the fourth of the position of Indian materialists (Lokayata/Charvaka) that there is only chance and causelessness (Wayman *197T 11-12).*

The point of verse 1 is that since there are no options other than these four, all things lack self-existence *(svabhava)* and thus are empty *(shunya),* Furthermore, all empty things are causeless since there are no real (self-existent) entities to be a real cause or a real effect.

The causes and conditions of verse 2 are these: an efficient cause with the power to bring about an effect *(hetu)* and the three conditions in the Abhidharma analysis. *(Reason* and *cause* are not differentiated in the concept of *"hetu.")* The "objective support" is the object in the world that permits our perception of it. The "continuity" is the connection to a continuing series of events in the world or moments m consciousness. The "influence" is something like the Aristotelian "final" cause: the purpose for which an action is undertaken.

Verse 3 says that activity, like physical entities, is also not separate from its conditions. Verse 4 sounds like a contradiction in terms: "Activity does not have conditions, nor does it not have conditions. Moreover, conditions do not exist with the power to act, nor without the power to act." But this can be seen as consistent if we utilize the doctrine of "two truths" (24,8-10): from a conventional point of view, activity has no conditions and has the power to act; but from an ultimate point of view, it is not self-existent but has conditions, and so it has no independent power 10 act but is conditioned by other activity and entities. This pattern of mixing both points of view occurs throughout the *Karikas,* but Nagarjuna has one consistent position throughout: there are no self-existent entities, properties, or activities, and there are worldly phenomena that arise and fall dependent upon conditions.

In verse 5, Nagarjuna is arguing that if the conditions exist *before* the thing dependent upon them arise, then how can they then *be* called "conditions"? They only become conditions *as* things arise dependently on them.

What does not exist at all *(asat)* obviously cannot have conditions (since it does not exist), and what is real *(sat)* does not need conditions (to be real is to be self-existent and thus to exist independently and without reliance on anything else) (vv. 6, 8). So how can there be conditions? So too, the fundamental factors of the experienced world *(dharmas)* are without *svabhava* and thus they too are not realities that could really arise or cease or be a real cause.

Since nothing real truly arises, there is nothing real that could cease, and thus no true conditionality is involved (v. 9). And if something real possibly had arisen and then ceased, conditions are no longer possible. And with no self-existent entities, there is nothing real to be the cause or condition for something else (v. 10).

An effect is not already in the conditions or we would see it there; but if it is not in the conditions and yet still arises, it is not related to the conditions at all (vv. 11-12). If the conditions are not real, how can any effect arising from them be real (v. I3)? If there is no real effect, then there is nothing to label a "condition;" and if there is nothing to label a "condition," then there is nothing to contrast as a "non-condition" (v. 14).

1

An Examination of Causal Conditions

In the Sutra Requested by Madropa, the Buddha said:

Whatever arises from conditions does not arise.
It does not have the nature of arising.
Whatever depends on conditions is explained to be empty,
And to know emptiness is the way to be conscientious.

IN THIS CHAPTER, Nagarjuna explains the meaning of this passage and proves its validity with logical reasoning. The reason Nagarjuna composed this chapter was that people believe that causal conditions are real. As a result of that, they believe that things really happen. They believe that arising is real. When they believe that, it is difficult for them to believe in emptiness and to gain confidence that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence. However, in order to understand the true nature of reality, we must realize that nothing ever really happens. We must realize that arising and birth are not real. Therefore, Nagarjuna analyzes causes, conditions, and arising, and he proves that they are in fact empty of any inherent nature.

Let us begin by looking at this verse spoken by the Buddha. Whatever thing it might be in samsara or nirvana, it can come into existence only in dependence upon its specific causes and conditions. There is nothing that can arise; there is no event of arising at all that can occur without the presence of these causes and conditions to make it happen. This holds for the arising of all the impure phenomena of samsara and all the pure phenomena of nirvana. Whatever arising it is, it can occur only in dependence upon a specific gathering of causes and conditions. Otherwise it will not take place.

Furthermore, whatever arises in dependence upon causes and conditions does not truly arise. One way to understand this is to see that it is not the case that just one single cause or one single condition can bring something into existence, but rather, that many causes and conditions must come together for any one particular result to arise.

Thus, if we look at any particular result and first see that it requires a number of causes and conditions to come together to produce it, we can then look at those causes and conditions and see that each one of them as well requires an incredible number of causes and conditions to cause it to arise. We can go back and back and get to even the most subtle causes and conditions, and we find that these too do not exist independently, but rather can only exist in dependence upon a multitude of their own causes and conditions. Then we realize that nothing exists independently with a nature of its own, that there is nothing truly there. Everything is like a dream and an illusion.

The same can be said for all of the thoughts that arise in our minds, whether they are good thoughts, bad thoughts, or neutral ones. There is not a single thought that can arise on its own, that can decide to come to existence and then be born. Thoughts can arise only when many causes and conditions come together to produce them. Since these causes and conditions also exist only in dependence upon their own causes and conditions, and those causes and conditions themselves need their own causes and conditions in order to arise, and on and on, all of them are empty of inherent existence. The arising of thoughts is therefore empty of any inherent nature.

In this way, we can see that whatever arises in dependence upon causes and conditions is empty of true existence because it does not really arise at all. To know this emptiness is the best way to be conscientious. The reason for this is that everything we experience in this life is appearance-emptiness; however, if we think it is real, we can try very hard to be conscientious, but in fact our confusion about the basic nature of our experiences will make us careless. On the other hand, those who gain stable certainty that their experiences are appearance-emptiness, and are therefore no more real than illusions, correctly understand the true nature of things, and even if they appear to us to be careless, they are in fact more conscientious than anyone!

The first verse of this chapter reads:

Not from self, not from other,
Not from both, nor without cause:
Things do not arise
At any place, at any time.

This verse proves that things do not arise because they do not arise from any of the four extremes: They do not arise from themselves, from something other than themselves, from both themselves and something other than themselves, and they do not arise without any cause at all. These are the only four possible ways in which things could arise, and since none of them are valid, things do not truly arise. Therefore, things do not truly exist.

Why do things not arise from themselves? If they did, the term arising would be meaningless. When something is said to arise, this means that it comes into existence anew. However, if things arose from themselves, they would have to first exist in order to then arise from themselves! What would be the point of saying that something “arose” after it was already existent? Why would it have to arise at that point? That is one flaw in this argument.

Another flaw in this position is that if things did indeed arise from themselves, their arising would never end. This is the case because if things arose after they already existed, what would stop their arising? What we observe in the world is that the process of arising stops when the thing that has

arisen fully exists. As described above, however, if things arose from themselves, they would have to exist first in order to be there to produce themselves. They would have to arise again even after they existed. They would exist, then arise, then exist, then arise, and what would ever stop them from needing to arise again and yet again? Arising would thus go on forever.

Things do not arise from something different from themselves, either, because if they did, they would arise from things that were not their causes as well as from things that were their causes. Here, when we say that two things are different from each other, it means that they have no connection between them—they are separate and completely independent entities. They are like a horse and a cow.

Therefore, if things arose from other things that were completely separate and independent from themselves, they would be able to arise from anything at all. No connection or relationship would be necessary for one thing to be able to produce another. Darkness would arise from fire, barley would grow from wheat seeds, and so forth. There would be no reason this could not happen, because different things would be arising from different things.

Another reason things do not arise from something different from themselves is that if they did, cause and result would have to exist at the same time. For two things to be different from each other, there have to be two things to begin with. If there is only one thing, what is it different from? Take the example of a seed and a sprout. If the sprout truly arises from the seed that is different from itself, then the sprout and seed would have to exist simultaneously in order to be different from each other. If only one existed at any one time, it would not have the other one there to be different from itself.

However, cause and result do not coexist—they are sequential. When the seed exists, the sprout does not, and when the sprout exists, the seed does not. Therefore, the seed and the sprout cannot be said to be different from each other because only one exists at a time. They never exist simultaneously, so no comparison between them can ever be made. We cannot say that they are two different things because there are never “two” there together—there is only one of them present at any one time. The sprout therefore cannot be said to arise from a seed that is different from itself, and in this way, arising from other is refuted.

The third possibility is that things arise from both themselves and something other than themselves. The problem with this is that all the faults inherent in the first two positions accrue to this third one. Combining wrong view number one and wrong view number two does not erase the faults of the first two views—it just combines them together into doubly wrong view number three.

The fourth possibility is that things arise without any cause at all. If they did, however, then they would either always arise or never arise. This would be the case because the arising of things would not be related to causes and conditions. Thus, a result would always arise because, since its arising would not depend on causes and conditions, it would arise whether its causes and conditions came together or not; or it would never arise because, since it would not have any relation to its causes and conditions, even if they came together they could not produce it.

Furthermore, if things arose without cause, then all the effort people in the world put into bringing things into being would be in vain. Why would farmers plant seeds if harvests would arise without any cause? We can thus see that this fourth possibility is refuted by our own direct experience of the world.

Arising, therefore, does not occur in any one of these four possible ways, and therefore it is not real. What then is the nature of the arising that we see happening in the world all the time? It is mere appearance, just like the arising that appears to happen in dreams. As long as we dream and do not know that we are dreaming, we believe that the arising we see happening in the dream is real. As soon as we recognize that we are dreaming, however, we know that the arising is just a mere appearance that has no reality to it at all. In terms of the ultimate nature of the dream, it transcends both notions of “real” and “false”—it is the equality of real and false that transcends conceptual fabrication.

The same is true for daytime appearances of arising. When we do not analyze them, they appear to be real and we think they are real. At the level of slight analysis, we can apply the reasonings described above and find that the arising is not real after all—it is just mere appearance. Finally, at the level of thorough analysis, we discover that the true nature of arising transcends existence and nonexistence—it is the equality of both. This is how the three stages of no analysis, slight analysis, and thorough analysis apply to the arising that appears in daytime and in dreams.

In the tradition of Mahamudra, the profound set of instructions that describe the true nature of mind and how to meditate upon it, it is explained that mind does not arise, abide, or cease. It is from analyzing in the way that is described in this chapter that you can come to understand that. The same is true for suffering—suffering does not arise from any one of the four extremes, and therefore it does not really happen. It does not truly arise, remain, or cease. However, because of our confused belief that suffering does truly occur, we think that we suffer, while in fact we really do not.

Along these lines, in his song No Birth, No Base, and Union, the lord of yogis Milarepa sang:

The true nature of appearances is that they've never been born.
If birth seems to happen, it's just clinging, nothing more.
The spinning wheel of existence has neither a base nor a root.
If there is a base or root, that's only a thought.

It is important to know what Milarepa taught about these things. The very identity of what things are is that they never happen; they never come into existence. Then what is happening when we seem to perceive things arising? It is just our clinging, our mistaken perception of something that is not really there. Similarly, the nature of samsara's cycle of existence is that it has no ground, no identifiable basis, support, or origin. When we believe there is some basis or root of our existence, it is only our own confused thoughts that believe it, and nothing more than that.

It is very important to separate the way things appear from the way they truly are. As long as we do not do that, we will continue to think that our confused mode of perception is valid, and we will never gain liberation from the suffering that this confusion causes us. We have to begin to see that the true nature of reality is not as it superficially appears to us to be.

Supplemental Commentary

WESTERHOFF (Chapter 5)

5

Causation

Having dealt with some important formal aspects of Nāgārjuna's arguments chiefly connected with the notion of negation, we are now equipped to explore further ramifications of the Mādhyamika's rejection of *svabhāva* outlined in chapter 2. Apart from Nāgārjuna's general arguments against the existence of *svabhāva* presented there, we also find in his writings specific investigations of phenomena arguing that these in particular lack *svabhāva.* In fact a large part of Nāgārjuna's writings can be best understood as an examination of various classes of things with the aim of establishing their emptiness. The phenomena examined are those that constitute a particularly important part of our view of the world and that are therefore the most likely places where the mistaken ascription of *svabhāva* could arise. In the next five chapters we will investigate Nāgārjuna's arguments concerning five such phenomena: causation, motion, the self, epistemology, and language.

The fundamentality of *causation* for making sense of our experiences need hardly be stressed. The notions of cause and effect provide us with one of the most fundamental set of tools we use to gain cognitive access to the world. *Motion* might strike us as a somewhat less central topic, but it is important to keep in mind its importance in the Indian mind-set in which this discussion originates. Motion, not so much in the literal sense but in the sense of moving from one life to the next (the succession of one mental state by the following one provides a small-scale example), the traversing of saṃsāra in an infinite succession of existences, is an essential feature of the Indian (and more specifically Buddhist) view of the world. The *self* appears to be the entity that does this traversing, and it provides us with what seems to be the most important notion of them all. Viewing ourselves as a self, a subject, a responsible agent, appears to be indispensable for our conception of what we are. It provides the focal point of our cognitive life, the place where the disconcertingly diverse array of different experiences comes together and is unified in a view of the world from a unique perspective. This self interacts with the world around it in a variety of ways. The description of its direct cognitive interaction with its surroundings is the province of *epistemology;* this analyzes how parts of the world can become parts of our mind, in short, how knowledge is acquired. However, our interaction with the world is not completely solitary. We do not just read off information from the world but also conceptualize it in a variety of ways in order to share it with others. Our primary tool for framing and sharing bits of information is *language.*

Arguing for the nonexistence of *svabhāva* by examining different kinds of things one-by-one is of course beset with a fundamental problem. Because there might be infinitely many or at least an indefinite number of things, we are unlikely ever to conclude our investigation and to establish the thesis of universal emptiness. The Madhyamaka tradition does of course offer arguments which are proposed to work as general arguments for emptiness (such as the five types of arguments discussed in chapter 2). However, we could equally argue that the absence of any master argument for emptiness might constitute not a difficulty, but an inescapable consequence of Madhyamaka epistemology. Since the Mādhyamika regards nothing as being intrinsically a means of knowledge, what establishes emptiness in one context might fail to do so in another.[1] In any case there is hardly any doubt about the centrality of the five phenomena just introduced. Regardless of our view of its consequences for establishing the general thesis of emptiness, a demonstration of the absence of *svabhāva* in each of them would have fundamental consequences for our view of the world, of ourselves, and of the relation between the two.

5.1. Causation: Preliminary Remarks

Nāgārjuna's treatment of causation is an examination of different attempts to analyze the relation between cause and effect which employ a variety of familiar

1. Siderits (2003: 147); see also the discussion in chapter 8 of this volume.

and (and least *prima facie* unproblematic) conceptual frameworks. Causation being a two-place relation, we will want to investigate the identity relation between its relata: are cause and effect the same or different, or are some identical and some different? Are cause and effect related as part and whole? Or are there perhaps no items instantiating the causal relation at all? Since causation takes place in time, we will want to investigate the temporal relation between cause and effect: are they successive events, or simultaneous, or overlapping, or are cause and effect just two aspects of a single unified event?

The interesting fact about Nāgārjuna's discussion of these analyses is that he sets out to show that they are all equally unsatisfactory:[2] cause and effect are argued to be neither identical nor different nor related as part and whole, they are neither successive, nor simultaneous, nor overlapping, and so forth. In itself such a discussion would show little more than that the philosopher in question had failed to come up with a satisfactory theory of causation. It would at best be interesting for the criticism leveled against other positions but would hardly constitute a unified philosophical outlook on its own.

In order to see the point of Nāgārjuna's arguments, however, it is essential to understand that he takes the possible analyses of causation examined to be exhaustive: any view one could possibly hold concerning the identity relation or the temporal relation between cause and effect can be subsumed under one of the alternatives considered. If Nāgārjuna is successful in showing that all the alternatives are deficient, there is only one conclusion to be drawn. The conceptual frameworks that these different analyses employ must be based on a mistaken presupposition.

Suppose there was some peculiar theory that tried to find out what shape the color red was. This process could proceed by one's listing all the possible shapes the color red could be, and then examining them one by one, until the right one was found. Unsurprisingly, we would find that the color red is neither circular, nor triangular, nor rectangular, nor any other shape, since while there are doubtlessly examples of such shapes that are colored red, the color itself, being a property, does not have any of these shapes. The explanation for our inability to come up with a satisfactory answer to the question "What is the shape of the color red?" is that it is built on the mistaken presupposition that the color red has a shape at all. In the same way, Nāgārjuna wants to argue that our inability to come up with a satisfactory answer to the question of whether cause and effect are identical or different is due to another faulty presupposition.[3] This is the presupposition that cause and effect exist with their own *svabhāva,* that is, that they are independent and self-sufficient entities.[4]

Cause and effect existing with their own *svabhāva* first of all means that cause and effect are qualitatively and therefore also quantitatively distinct objects. *They do not require one another:* first the seed exists without any need for the tree it will later produce; later, after the seed has produced the tree, the seed has stopped to exist and the tree will exist without any need for the seed to still be around. Second, the existence of cause and effect as "independent objects" or as "existing from their own side" refers not just to their mutually independent existence, but also to their *independence of a cognizing subject.* According to such an objectivist understanding of causation, the interlocking chain of causes and effects is something that exists in the world independent of any observers.[5] It might be a transfer of energy from cause to effect, the cause's raising the objective chance of the effect happening, or perhaps an unanalyzable, primitive causal relation, but in each case it is something that remains independent of human expectations and conceptualizations.

Nāgārjuna argues that this commonsensical view of cause and effect constitutes the basis of the conceptual framework we employ in order to analyze causation. Should it now turn out, as Nāgārjuna sets out to demonstrate, that there is something problematic with *all* the analyses usually encountered, this finding would provide an argument for questioning the commonsensical view of cause and effect underlying all of them.

Before investigating different accounts of causation, however, we have to consider further what Nāgārjuna means by the lack of independence and therefore the interdependence of cause and effect.

5.2. Interdependence of Cause and Effect

In order to get a clear conception of Nāgārjuna's view of the interdependence of cause and effect, it is necessary to understand that his analysis of causation

2. The reader familiar with Greek philosophy will realize that many of Nāgārjuna's arguments concerning causation bear strong similarities to classical sceptical arguments as, e.g., presented in the third book of Sextus Empiricus's *Outlines of Scepticism.* Since the present discussion is not an attempt at comparative philosophy, I will not discuss these resemblances here. The interested reader is referred to McEvilley (1982), who even addresses the question of whether Nāgārjuna's arguments might be derived from Greek works (28). For a broader discussion of possible Greco-Indian philosophical interactions, see McEvilley (2002).

3. See Ronkin (2005: 198).

4. See Garfield (1994: 220) (2001: 509).

5. Such an objectivist understanding of causation is entailed by the Ābhidharmika's claim that primary existents (*dravya*) can be dependent on causes and conditions. For if the existence of these primary existents is mind-independent, then the existence of one such object, a conditioned object (*saṃskṛta dharma*), that is an effect, cannot depend on another one by a relation that is itself mind-dependent. This point is elaborated in Siderits (2004: 410 –413).

does not distinguish just two notions, cause and effect, but three. This is so because a cause does not bring about an effect on its own but does so only against a background of supporting condition. A spark does not cause an explosion on its own, but only in the presence of oxygen, fuel, a suitable temperature, and so on. The Madhyamaka analysis of causation therefore includes reference to a collection of background conditions. Nāgārjuna refers to the cause together with the background conditions as a "complete collection" (*sāmagrī*); we shall employ the term *causal field.*[6] Nāgārjuna asserts in a variety of places that cause and effect are interdependent and can be conceived of only in such an interdependent fashion.[7] It is apparent, however, that the dependence of an effect on a cause must be very different from the dependence of a cause on an effect. An effect depends for its existence on its cause: had the cause not existed, the effect would not have existed either.[8] A cause, on the other hand, can exist without causing any effect, it would just not be described as a cause in this case. The fact that some particular acorn does not produce an oak tree does not mean the acorn does not exist, only that we do not refer to it as "the cause of an oak tree." This label is attached to it not because of some internal property, but simply because it stands in a particular relation to another object, namely the oak tree. In the absence of the oak tree there would be no relation to that oak tree, so the label would be inapplicable.[9]

If we take into account the distinction between existential and notional dependence described in chapter 2, it is clear that some of the dependence relations Nāgārjuna asserts to hold between cause and effect are quite straightforward. Cause and effect are *notionally* dependent on one another. If anything falls under the concept "cause," something will fall under the concept "effect," and vice versa. The effect also depends *existentially* on its cause, since in the absence of the cause, the effect would not exist.

The main problem for understanding the supposed *symmetric* dependence between cause and effect lies in the assumption of the existential dependence of the cause on the effect. After all, as we have just seen in the case of the acorn (the cause) and oak tree (the effect), the latter failing to exist does not obliterate the former, so that we can at best speak of notional dependence in this context.

There are three distinct ways in which we can make sense of the existential dependence of the cause on the effect. First we can argue that if Nāgārjuna is arguing against an opponent who holds that a cause has its property of being a cause essentially its notional dependence on the effect will entail its existential dependence. For something being a cause essentially means that this is a property it could not lose without ceasing to be that very object. But since the presence of this property depends on existence of the effect, the existence of the cause as that very object also depends on the existence of the effect.

A second interpretation which does not have to assume that causes are essentially causes argues that Nāgārjuna intends to refer not to the existential dependence of *some particular cause* on its effect but rather to the existential dependence of the *property* of being a cause on the property of being an effect.

As should be clear from our earlier remarks, if an object *a* falling under property *F notionally* depends on something falling under *G*, this means that the property *F* existentially depends on the property *G*, since *F* can exist only if some object falls under the property "identical with the property *G,"* that is, if the property *G* exists.

The *property* "Northern England" depends existentially on the property "Southern England," even though the objects falling under each do not existentially depend on one another. This is so because one property could not exist without the other one, but the objects falling under them could. Nāgārjuna refers to this existential dependence of properties on one another in RĀ 1:49:[10]

When there is no "short" there is no "long," they are without substance. When there is no lamp, there is no light.

6. Kalupahana (1991: 61). It is interesting to note that the distinction between cause (*hetu*) and supporting conditions (*pratyaya*) is not found in early Buddhist texts (Ronkin [2005: 222]), where the two terms are often used interchangeably. Kalupahana (1975: 59) notes that "While recognizing several factors that are necessary to produce an effect, it [i.e. early Buddhism] does not select one from a set of jointly sufficient conditions and presents it as *the* cause of the effect. [. . .] Thus, although there are several factors, all of them constitute one system or event and therefore are referred to in the singular." See also Ronkin (2005: 206). The distinction between cause and condition as two different elements involved in the causal relation is due to the Sarvāstivādins (Frauwallner [1995: 199–201], Ronkin [2005: 221–232]) and coheres well with their distinction between primary existents or substances (*dravya*) and secondary existents (*prajñapti*) (Williams [1981: 237]). The cause of a particular secondary existent would be regarded as the primary existents on which it is based, while its conditions could be seen as whatever causes its properties as a secondary existent. See Kalupahana (1975: 60–66).

7. MMK 8:12, 10:8, 20:22, 24; see also ŚS 13ab, BCA 9:13–15.

8. Nāgārjuna makes the additional claim that *everything* is existentially dependent on its cause, since "no object whatsoever exists without being caused" (*na cāsty arthah. kaścid āhetukah. kvacit.* MMK 4:2).

9. In MMK 1:5 Nāgārjuna states that "something is called 'condition' because in dependence on it something else arises. But as long as the second something does not arise, why do we not refer to the first something as a 'non-condition'?" *utpadyate pratītyemān itīme pratyayāh. kila / yāvan notpadyata ime tāvan nāpratyayāh. katham.* . In 10:9 he argues that if the dependence of cause and effect held in only one way, i.e. if fire (the effect) depended on fuel (the cause) but not vice versa, this would imply the absurd consequence that the cause could exist as a cause without the effect existing. *yad īndhanam apekṣyāgnir* [. . .] *evaṃsatīndhanam. cāpi bhaviṣyati niragnikam.* .

10. *hrasve 'sati punar dīrgham. na bhavaty asvabhāvatah. / pradīpasyāpi anutpādāt prabhāyā apy asam. bhavah.* . Kalupahana (1975: 97) interprets this statement of Nāgārjuna as "a rare interpretation of the causal principle." This seems to be getting the order of concepts in the development of Nāgārjuna's thought the wrong way round. For him the notion of a dependence relation between objects is the more general concept, which can take a number of specific forms (such as mereological, causal, and cognitive dependence). Dependence is not a specific interpretation of causality, but causality is a specific interpretation of dependence.

The existential dependence of the effect (the light) on the cause (the lamp) is here equated with the way the properties "long" and "short" depend on one another—in each case the latter could not exist if the former did not exist.

According to this interpretation, we would therefore conclude that Nāgārjuna means to say that the *properties* "being a cause" and "being an effect" depend existentially on one another, even though the existential dependence of *objects* falling under them is not symmetric: the effect depends existentially on the cause, but the cause does not need the effect for its existence.

The third, stronger reading claims that while Nāgārjuna undoubtedly also wanted to assert the existential dependence of the properties' "being a cause" and "being an effect," he moreover made the claim that not only does the particular object which is the effect need the cause for its existence, but the cause also needs the effect.

Such a reading can be supported if one considers an entire causal field rather than just particular causes. A causal field is a cognitive artifact, a collection of objects assembled with the sole purpose of explaining why a particular effect came about. If it is divorced from this explanatory role, there is no reason for introducing the concept at all.[11] We might therefore want to argue that the causal field also depends for its existence on the effect it produces. This is of course not to say that *every member* of the causal field existentially depended on the effect they jointly bring about: the spark, petrol, and so forth would still exist, even if they for some reason did not manage to bring about an explosion. But the collection exists only if there is some effect it causes. Whether we want to argue that a causal field depends for its existence on the effect it brings about is intimately connected with our view of the existence of collections. We might think that whenever there are some objects there is the collection of those objects. Or we might deny that every arbitrary assembly of objects constitutes a collection. We would then argue that for some objects to form a collection there must be something that makes them hold together as a collection, for example that they all exemplify a property, or that they were put together for a specific purpose. If we adopt the first view of collections, then clearly a causal field will depend only nominally on its effect, since "being a causal field bringing about that effect" is only one way in which we can refer to the preexistent collection that contains all the elements of the causal field, but not to anything that brings it about. If we adopt the second conception, however, it may be the case that the only thing that binds all the members of the causal field together is that they are considered to be the things that jointly bring about a particular effect. In the absence of this effect, the collection disintegrates and ceases to exist. Nāgārjuna seems to favor the second interpretation when he asserts that a cause could not *exist* without an effect.[12] It is significant that what is denied here is not just the ascription of the label "cause" to some object because it is related to some other object, the effect,[13] but the *existence* of the cause in the absence of the effect. Nāgārjuna endorses not just the uncontroversial notional dependence of the cause on its effect, but its existential dependence as well. Applied to the discussion of causal fields, this view implies that a causal field can exist only if the effect it brings about does, and for this reason it cannot be taken to exist whenever all of its members do.

If we adopt this third, stronger reading, then we have to conclude that for Nāgārjuna causes and effects are both notionally and existentially dependent on one another. They therefore cannot exist from their own side, irrespective of the existence of one another. Moreover, they also depend for their existence on us, because it is our cognitive act of cutting up the world of phenomena in the first place which creates the particular assembly of objects that constitutes a causal field, which then in turn gives rise to the notions of cause and effect. This entails that the causal field, cause and effect are empty of *svabhāva.*

It is evident that unlike the Ābhidharmikas, Nāgārjuna regards an object's not being empty—that is, its having *svabhāva*—as incompatible with the causal production of that object.[14] A causally produced object depends on its cause for its existence and could therefore not stand outside of any dependence relation with other objects. Furthermore, if an object either existed or failed to exist by *svabhāva,* it would always do so, since such substantial properties cannot change. But then an existent object cannot be caused, since it will always have existed, a nonexistent object cannot be caused either, because it will never become existent. Therefore, in the presence of *svabhāva* (and thus the absence of emptiness) there can be neither causation nor change.[15] It is equally clear that an object cannot depend notionally on some other object for having some property and yet have this property by *svabhāva,* for this property is then obviously had by the object not from its own side but only via its relation to some other

11. "Because the effect is absent, where would conditions or non-conditions come from?" *phalābhāvāt pratyayāpratyayāh. kutah.* . MMK 1:14b.

12. *nāsty akāryam. ca kāraṇam.* . MMK 4:3. "How indeed can there be a causal field in the absence of an effect?" *asti pratyayasāmagrī kuta eva phalam. vinā.* 20:24b.

13. This is discussed in MMK 1:5.

14. MMK 15:2ab, YS. 19. See also Siderits (2004: 399).

15. ŚS 5: "What was born will not be born, what was not born will also not be born. The being born will not be born either, because it was both born and not born." *skyes ba bskyed par bya ba min / ma skyes pa yang bskyed bya min / skye ba'i tshe yang bskyed bya min / skyes dang ma skyes pa yi phyir.* See also MMK 20:17, 21a.

object. Neither the existential nor the notional interdependence of cause and effect is thus compatible with ascribing *svabhāva* to them.

It also has to be noted that Nāgārjuna asserts, somewhat puzzlingly, that the absence of *svabhāva,* that is, emptiness, is not compatible with causation either.[16] Causation in this context has to be understood as an objectively obtaining relation which links objects and events independent of human conceptualizations. Since the objects our theory relates do not exist "from their own side," the same has to hold for any relation of causation linking them. If the objects in our everyday world owe their existence to a partly habitual, partly deliberate process of cutting up the complex flow of phenomena into cognitively manageable bits, the causal relations linking them cannot exist independently of us, since their relata do not do so either.[17]

5.3. The Four Ways of Causal Production

Having investigated what Nāgārjuna means by his claim that cause and effect are interdependent, we can now discuss his analysis of the different manners in which causal production could come about. Applying the four alternatives of the *catuṣkoṭi* or tetralemma to the relation of causation, Nāgārjuna distinguishes four ways in which a thing could be causally produced:[18]

- it could be caused by itself.
- it could be caused by something else.
- it could be caused by both.
- it could be caused by nothing at all.

5.3.1. *Self-causation*

The Buddhist discussion of self-causation subsumes two very different views of causal production which have to be separated clearly. The first is the view that cause and effect are *the very same object*, so that at least in some cases the causal relation can relate an object to itself. The second does not assert that cause and effect are identical but claims that the effect is *contained* in, and forms part of, the cause. In the context of this discussion, this should be taken to mean that the effect is already contained in the causal field.

IDENTITY OF CAUSE AND EFFECT. It is evident that most instances of causation we encounter in everyday life are not cases of self-causation in the first sense. The spark that causes the explosion is not identical with the explosion. The causal field (the seed together with water, light, warmth, etc.) is what is supposed to bring about the effect (the tree), but it is not yet the effect itself—the collection of the seed, water, light, and so on is not the same thing as a tree but something on which the existence of the tree depends.[19] If we talk about one billiard ball colliding with another billiard ball which it thereby causes to move, we talk about two balls, not just one.[20] Nāgārjuna's rejection of causation as a reflexive relation[21] does therefore not appear to be particularly controversial. We might think, however, that self-causation is what explains the persistence of objects through time. "What causes the existence of the present billiard ball? *Its* existence at the preceding moment. Therefore the billiard ball is the cause of its own persistence." But this reasoning would be mistaken. If we assume that the billiard ball has temporal parts (that is, if we are *endurantists*), the present temporal part of the billiard ball being caused by a past temporal part is not an instance of self-causation but rather an instance of one part of an object causing another, distinct part.

Being *perdurantists* and assuming that an object is wholly present during each moment of its existence seems to be a more satisfactory option. Here the object is not split up into temporal stages, and being a cause turns out to be part of the *svabhāva* of every perduring object. As long as the object exists, it must be its own cause; moreover, its causal role is independent of any cognizing subject. We do not have to conceive of an object as its own cause for it to continue to exist as its own cause.

The problem with this view is that is conflicts with our deeply ingrained assumption that the cause temporally precedes the effect. No object, however, can temporally precede itself.

A more successful example to which the notion of self-causation could be applied would be that of a creator god. Since most theists would not want

16. MMK 20:18, 21b.

17. Candrakīrti's commentary on 20:18 in the PP which makes this point is peculiar. In explaining Nāgārjuna's assertion that empty objects cannot arise or cease ("How can the empty arise, how can the empty be removed? It follows that the empty is not ceased and not arisen." *katham utpatsyate śūnyaṃkatham. śūnyam. nirotsyate/ śūnyam apy aniruddham. tad anutpannam. prasajyate*), he refers to the example of space (*ākāśa*), according to Abhidharma metaphysics an unconditioned phenomenon which neither arises nor ceases (Dhammajoti 2004: 383–384). But this assertion ignores the fact that Nāgārjuna here (as in the preceding verse) attempts to make a universal statement. Since it is obviously not assumed that *all* empty phenomena are like space in lacking arising and ceasing, this reading of the verse appears to be rather misleading.

18. MMK 1:1; 12:1.

19. MMK 12:2.

20. MMK 20:20a.

21. MMK 4:6a; 20:19.

to hold that the existence of such a god is contingent on something else, they might want to argue that the creator god exists as *causa sui,* thereby only causally depending on himself.[22] Such a theist would obviously not be very impressed by Buddhapālita's argument against self-causation, which Candrakīrti mentions in his commentary on MMK 1:1, namely that a self-caused entity would continue causing itself and would therefore be eternal.[23] Eternal existence is one of the welcome consequences of regarding the creator god as his own cause. A more substantial difficulty with the notion of self-causation appears to lie in the justification of using the term "causation" at all. An object that causes itself cannot exist in time, at least if we assume that a cause must temporally precede its effect. Given that temporal priority is an irreflexive relation, a potential self-causer could not be a temporal object.[24] This notion is not problematic if the god is taken to exist outside time. But then it is not clear why such a non-temporal object would have to produce itself all over again, given that it already fully exists when it exists as a cause. Since such a renewed production cannot be required for its continued existence in the next moment in time, its production would be both without meaning (*artha*) and without purpose (*prayoja*).[25] If the causal relation has any essential properties, its role as a transmitter of change is surely one of them. Causation relates a state of affairs which is a cause, that is, a state of affairs in which the effect is not yet present to one in which it is present, and which has thereby changed.[26] But a self-caused object could not change. Since its entire cause lies within the very object that is both cause and effect, there is no room for variation: such an object remains eternally the same. It thus appears that when the theist speaks of self-causation, he chooses a rather misleading way of talking about an object he considers to be atemporal, acausal, and changeless. Of course Nāgārjuna and his commentators do not think that such an object exists, but this is not the point at issue here. Nāgārjuna does not attempt to argue that there just happen to be no self-causing objects, but claims that the very notion of something causing itself is problematic.[27] Even if the theist's creator god existed, we would not want to refer to him as self-caused.

CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATED AS PART AND WHOLE. The second view of selfcausation generally discussed asserts that the effect is in some way already *part of* the cause or, more specifically, part of the causal field.

A predecessor of this view can be found in the *Puruṣa Sūkta* of the *Rg Veda*, which describes the creation of the world as the dismembering of the cosmic giant. The different parts of the world to be created (the four castes: earth, sky, sun, and moon) are already present in the body of the cosmic giant as parts and only have to be separated from one another in order to be brought into existence.[28]

Nāgārjuna gives two reasons for rejecting this mereological view of selfcausation. First of all this would mean that the effect would not have to be produced, since it is already present within the causal field. The causal field, however, is supposed to be that which brings the effect about in the first place.[29] Second, the effect would have to be something that we should be able to conceive of (*gr. hyeta*) within the causal field.[30] Acquaintance with all the elements of the causal field (the spark, the fuel, the oxygen present, etc.) does not acquaint us with the effect (the explosion). Of course this does not mean that, given a complete scientific description of all the elements of the causal field, we might not be able (at least in some cases) to *infer* the effect. But this is not what Nāgārjuna has in mind here; he is concerned with the literal presence of the effect within the causal field, not with its relation to the field via an inferential relation, which could perfectly well obtain without the effect's being part of the causal field.

It is evident that according to this view of self-causation, cause and effect do not exist independently of one another. Since an object depends on its parts for its existence, if the effect is one of these the object will existentially depend on its effect. However, cause and effect can be considered to exist independently of a cognizing subject, at least as long as we assume that which parts an object has does not in any way depend on us but is an independent fact about

22. This idea goes back at least to Plotinus (Hadot 1971; Narbonne 1993). Everything that exists as *causa sui* obviously has its causal power as part of its *svabhāva.* Another way of dealing with this issue consists in asserting the creator god's aseity, i.e., his causal independence of everything, including himself.

23. "If the existent were to be born, it would never not be born." *atha sannapi jāyeta na kadā cinna jāyeta* PP 14:2–3. See MMK 10:1–4.

24. See Hart (1987: 183).

25. "Things are not produced from themselves because of the pointlessness of that production. . . . There is no purpose in the repeated production of existent things from themselves." *na svata utpadyante bhāvāh. tadutpādavaiyārthyāt . . . na hi svātmanā vidyamānānām. padārthānām. punarutpāde prayojanam asti,* PP 14:1–2. See also MA 6:8cd.

26. Nāgārjuna relies on this fact in his argument against suffering being self-caused (MMK 12:4, 8). If some person created his own suffering, then the effect (the person with suffering) was preceded by a cause which is different from the effect (the person without suffering), so that the transition from cause to effect could bring about the necessary change. But given the Buddhist identification of the notion of a person (*pudgala*), its constituents (*skandha*), and suffering (*duh. kha*) (see Schayer [1931: 12–19]), such a person could not exist; the selfcausation of suffering is thereby ruled out. See also Garfield (1995: 203–204).

27. Ganeri (2001: 52).

28. 10.90. For a translation see O'Flaherty (1981: 28–32).

29. MMK 20:1, 16b; ŚS 4a; VP 24.

30. MMK 20:3.

the constitution of that object. If the mereological constituents of objects exist from their own side and causes and effects are special kinds of mereological constituents, causes and effects will also exist from their own side.

The historical precedent of the view of causation in terms of part and whole is the *satkāryavāda* theory of causation defended by the Sāṃkhyas.[31] This account is somewhat more sophisticated than the postulation of the mereological containment of the effect in the cause. The Sāṃkhya theory assumes that the effect (*kārya*) is already existent (*sat*) within the cause, although only in a yet unmanifested form. Everything we need for the production of a pot is already there in the causal field containing the lump of clay, the potter, and so on. Bringing about a cause is a transformation of the causal field, an unveiling of the previously hidden.[32] For the Sāṃkhya theorists the world is nothing but a sequence of transformations of primordial matter (*prakṛti*). In a similar manner we might want to conceive of the universe as an arrangement of atomic particles, and of each future stage of the universe as a rearrangement of these particles in some new way. On this conception causation would indeed never bring anything new into the universe, since all the combinatorial resources for the causal production of future stages are already there. All changes concern the way the individual particles are related to one another, but not what kinds of particles there are.

The Sāṃkhya doctrine has the advantage of being able to account for the fact that specific causes are related to specific effects.[33] Curd can be made from milk but not from oil, because only the milk-particles, not the oil-particles, allow for a curd-re-arrangement, in the same way as "sator" anagrams into "rotas" but not into "horas." However, even if the underlying idea of a fixed stock of primordial matter should prove to be correct, we should be as reluctant to accept the Sāṃkhya conception of the presence of the effect in the cause as we would be to purchase a single volume at the price of an entire library on the grounds that all the other books are "already present" in this one and just have to be brought from the unmanifested state to their manifested one by a transformation of the arrangement of letters.[34] The presence of the matter of the effect in the causal field is not sufficient to convince us that the effect is also present there, in the same way in which the presence of the letters making up a particular text is not the same as having the text in front of us.

31. Frauwallner (1973: 1:303–306); Sharma (1960: 151–152). Parallels have been drawn between the *satkāryavāda* theory and the Sarvāstivādin assumption that not only present, but also past and future phenomena exist. The idea of a future effect being already real though not yet present is very close to the notion of an effect existing in a latent but unmanifested form in the cause. See Stcherbatsky (1962: 1:111); Kalupahana (1975: 150– 152); von Rospatt (1995: 39, n. 72). Samghabhadra in the **Abhidharmanyāyānusārā,* Taisho 1562, 635a, argues against this identification. See Dhammajoti (2004: 100). Murti (1955: 172) and Siderits (2004: 404) subsume the Sarvāstivādin position under *asatkāryavāda* theories of causation.

32. Shaw (2002: 215).

33. Siderits (2004: 404).

34. Compare Brunnhölzl (2004: 768).

5.3.2. Causation by Another Object

The idea that cause and effect are distinct phenomena and that therefore an effect is caused by something distinct from it certainly constitutes the most natural way of understanding causation. The spark is an event distinct from the explosion it causes, the movement of the first billiard ball distinct from the motion of the second one it brings about. The naturalness of this view of causation is underlined by the fact that in the Madhyamaka discussion and rejection of the four alternative accounts of causation, the greatest part of the argument is usually devoted to the examination of the second alternative, that is, to the claim that objects are caused by something different from them. The initial plausibility of causation by other objects means that its refutation has to be worked out particularly well.

There existed a number of contemporary theories which Buddhist thinkers were likely to subsume under the label "causation by another." An obvious example is the theory of divine causation present in the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas which the Buddhists argued against.[35] The view of the Cārvākas, who regarded change as a rearrangement of material particles according to fixed laws of nature, was also classified in the Nikāyas as *paraṃkatam,* presumably because it leaves no room for a human agent.[36] Determinist theories, like those of the Ājīvikas,[37] that denied free will were included among accounts of "causation by another" as well.[38]

35. See Kalupahana (1975: 5) for some other examples of what he calls "external causation." We also find interpretations that regard causation by Brahman as a mere transformation of the cause into the effect, which would subsume them under the theories of self-causation already discussed. Dasgupta (1942: 1:52–53). dPa' bo rin po che's commentary on the BCA specifically considers causation by the creator god Īśvara (*dbang phyug*) as an example of causation from another. Brunnhölzl (2004: 758–762).

36. Ronkin (2005: 196–197). In the Tibetan tradition we find this position ascribed to the Mīmāṃsakas (*dpyod pa pa*). Brunnhölzl (2004: 762). For more details on the Cārvākas' philosophical position, see also Frauwallner (2003: II: 196–200); Steinkellner (1986: 8–12).

37. Frauwallner (1973: 1:213).

38. The justification for this classification becomes more transparent when one considers that in the Nikāyas the Buddha specifically deals with causality by discussing the causal production of suffering (Ronkin 2005: 195). A view that denies the existence of human free will is one that has to explain the existence of suffering by reference to some cause other than the agent experiencing the suffering. The Buddha's ethical discussion of causation concerning the origin of suffering was later generalized to incorporate a metaphysical discussion as well; see Ronkin (2005: 198).

We can identify two main arguments put forward by Nāgārjuna to refute causation from other objects. The first claims that causation from other objects entails an *infinite regress.*[39] There are different ways in which we could spell out the argument Nāgārjuna has in mind here. Assume that some object x was caused by some distinct object $x - 1$. Now the cause of $x - 1$, which we will call $x - 2$ cannot be the same as $x - 1$, for then $x - 1$ would be self-caused, an alternative which has already been refuted. But it can also not be identical to x, since the result would be a causal loop, where first x causes $x - 1$, which then in turn causes x. Apart from the fact that this theory leads to problems with the temporal ordering of causation (if the cause must precede the effect, x will precede itself) causal loops also entail self-causation, even though an object will here cause itself not directly but only via an intermediate chain of other objects.[40] It therefore follows that x, $x - 1$, and $x - 2$ are three distinct objects. Given that the choice of these three was arbitrary, causation by another object thus entails the existence of infinitely many objects. Ganeri[41] argues that this result is sufficient to rule out causation from another thing because "it cannot [. . .] be a matter of logical necessity that the world of objects is infinite."[42] Furthermore such a view of causation creates problems for the notion of causal explanation because "one never reaches the *explanans.*"[43]

The problem with this interpretation is that while we would agree that, say, a logicist like Russell found it difficult to establish the existence of infinitely many objects as a truth of logic,[44] it does not seem at all problematic that our concept of causation might logically entail that the world was infinite (whether the world *is* in fact infinite is of course a distinct question). In particular I do not see why this should be a problem for Nāgārjuna, since I am not aware of any claim of his to the effect that the infinity of the world cannot be established by conceptual analysis alone, or indeed that the world is finite. Nor does it seem much more plausible to assume that a chain of causes stretching infinitely far backward vitiates the concept of causal explanation. After all, this means only that for every causal explanation, we can come up with another one to explain the fact referred to in the explanation in turn. But this is a property of explanations more generally: we can always demand (and in most cases also provide) an explanation of an explanation given. In fact it is hard to come up with an example of an explanation where the *explanans* itself is unexplainable. Even if there are some, *explanantia* in general are not like this.

In fact the only piece of textual evidence we have in connection with this refutation of causation from another does not claim that there is any problem with a world of infinitely many objects, but speaks specifically of the infinite regress produced by the assumption that objects are caused by objects distinct from them.[45] It is therefore more satisfactory to understand Nāgārjuna here as addressing a criticism of the following form: "Of course it is not possible to assume both that an object has *svabhāva,* that is, exists independently, and that it is causally produced, because of its dependence on the cause that brings it about. However, we can circumvent this difficulty by incorporating the causes of an object into our conception of the object. Instead of speaking of the object that is a sprout, we refer to the whole causal complex of which the sprout is the final result: the seed together with water, moisture, and so on. It is such causal complexes (rather than individual objects) to which we want to ascribe independent existence."

As Nāgārjuna points out, this procedure is viable only if you can justify drawing the line at the inclusion of the sprout, water, moisture, and so on, but without including anything else in the complex. Doing so would be possible if the things included were indeed self-caused, an argument that is unfortunately not available to us.[46] Thus enlarging the conception of an object by including its distinct causes will always allow us to include more things, obliterating the distinction between objects altogether and thereby defeating the point of the exercise, for in order to arrive at a plausible candidate for the ascription of *svabhāva* we have to identify some things that could act as starting points of the chain of causes. But these things would have to be either their own causes or have

39. MMK 7.19. A third, distinct argument is given in verses 5–8 of chapter 12, dealing with the existence of suffering. Nāgārjuna examines the possibility that the suffering of a human being is caused by another, namely by an earlier stage of that person, for example by that person in an earlier life. Since on the Buddhist conception, suffering (*duh. kha*) and the person experiencing the suffering (*pudgala*) are taken to be necessarily coextensive, this move does not help a lot. After all, the earlier stage of a person must have been experiencing suffering too, so that we now have to explain where *this* suffering came from, and so forth. But it is evident that this argument does not generalize to show the non-existence of causation from other objects *tout court,* since the cause does not always share the property it is supposed to bring about, as in the case of the various stages of the person: the firewood, which is the cause of the fire, is not already blazing.

40. For an argument that causal loops are logically possible see Lewis (1986a: 75).

41. Ganeri (2001: 52–55).

42. Ganeri (2001: 52).

43. Ganeri (2001: 55).

44. Potter (2000: 151–152).

45. *anya utpādayaty enam. yady utpādo 'navasthitih. .* MMK 7:19.

46. This point is stressed in MMK 12:7–8: 'If we cannot show that it has been caused by itself, how could suffering have been created by another? If another one made the suffering, this one would have to have caused his own suffering. Suffering is not self-caused insofar as nothing is self-caused. If the other is not self-caused, how can suffering be caused by another? '*svayamkṛtasyāprasiddher duh. kham. parakṛtaṃkutah. / paro hi duh. kham. yat kuryāt tat tasya syāt svayaṃkṛtam. // na tāvat svakṛtam. duh. kham. na hi tenaiva tat kṛtam. / paro nātmakṛtaś cet syād duh. kham. parakṛtaṃkatham. .* The point made here is that we can speak of causal complexes as independent existents only if we stop going back in the chain of causes at some point. The only systematic reason for stopping at a particular cause would be the fact that tracing down its cause would bring us back to the object itself, i.e. the object was self-caused. But the possibility of self-causation has already been ruled out earlier.

arisen without a cause. Each of these possibilities is rejected by Nāgārjuna, as our discussion in sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.4 shows.[47]

The second Madhyamaka argument against the distinctness of cause and effect is not based on any difficulties with an infinite series but tries to show that if cause and effect were different objects, the complete *absence of causation* would be entailed, so that we could not draw any distinction between those objects that are causally related and those that are not.[48]

This argument might strike us as a particularly strange one. What is wrong with assuming that the spark causes the explosion, though the spark is not the explosion, nor the explosion the spark? The important point to realize is that two distinct objects that are causally related could not exist independently, each having its own *svabhāva.* This is due to the fact that one will existentially depend on the other, which is its cause, while the other will depend at least notionally on the one, because that dependence is what makes it possible to describe it as a cause. When the Mādhyamika speaks of causation by distinct objects, it is this kind of distinctness he has in mind: cause and effect are supposed to exist independently, it is not sufficient to assume that they merely differ by having some different properties. But if we have a collection of objects such that each exists independently of the other, it is very hard to see how we could make a principled distinction between those objects in the collection that are causes and those that are effects. Any division of the collection into causes and effects seems to be as justifiable as any other, so there is no distinction between the relation of causation and any other arbitrarily chosen relation defined on the set. Moreover, if we observe a collection of objects that all exist independently of one another over a period of time, we realize that nothing happens in this collection at all. The different objects will just sit there, without influencing or changing each other. If we conceive of causation as bringing something about which was not there at an earlier moment, no causation will be found in such a world.[49]

It is important to realize that this argument is not based on any assumption claiming that "the effect must resemble or preexist in its cause," so that two distinct objects (which *ex hypothesi* did not resemble one another in such a way) could not be causally related.[50] As we have already seen, the idea of the preexistence of the effect in the cause is explicitly denied by Nāgārjuna.[51] The point is rather that independently existent objects (whether resembling one another or not) could not be the relata of a causal relation. Given that one exists whether or not the other exists, how could one be the cause bringing the other one about as an effect? If, however, we still want to talk about such objects in causal terms, we have to ask ourselves what the point of this is supposed to be. After all, there is no more justification for claiming that one object is the cause and the other the effect, rather than the other way around, or that the members of some specific pair of objects, rather than those of another one, stand in the relation of cause and effect. Such a statement, however, would mean only that whatever relation we are talking about here is not the causal relation, since the causal relation is not subject to this kind of arbitrariness.

Assuming causation from another is a straightforward way of arguing for cause and effect existing by *svabhāva.* Because they exist independently, they do not require one another. But trying to establish causal relations (which are dependence relations) between such independent objects then leads to all sorts of problems. First of all, to escape the obvious contradiction of an independent (causally) dependent object, we can try to revise our conception of "object," including everything an object causally depends on in this new conception of object and regarding *this* collection as the bearer of *svabhāva.* As we have seen, this new conception implies the difficulty that the things included bring with them what *they* causally depend on, which in turn bring other objects along and so forth. There is no mind-independent criterion for deciding where to draw the line between which objects to include and which to leave out. Second, a set of independently existent objects does not give us any indication of how the causal relations between them should be established. Since the

47. It should be noted that some of the modern commentarial literature also ascribes a different argument from an infinite regress to Nāgārjuna's attempts of refuting causation by other objects. Garfield (1995: 113–114); Siderits (2004: 405–406). The defender of causation by other objects must explain why only particular pairs of objects, but not others, are related to one another as causes and effects. The obvious answer in this case it to say that only some but not all objects are linked by the causal relation. Now the obtaining of the causal relation itself either does or does not rely on conditions in turn. If it does not, it is unclear how much explanatory gain results from the postulation of a causal relation. If all we can say to explain that yoghurt comes from milk but not from oil is that milk and yoghurt stand in a particular primitive relation, it seems as if we have not explained much. After all, what we want to know is *why* certain pairs of things but not others stand in this relation. If, on the other hand, the obtaining of the causal relation in turn depends on conditions, we now have to explain what links the relation and its relata. And for whatever provides that linkage we can ask what links it in turn to the things it links and so on, following the familiar Bradleyan regress. Of course we can just reply to this question that a relation no more needs another relation to link it to its relata than glue needs superglue to make the glue stick to the things it is supposed to glue—the glue sticks all by itself, and relations are self-linking in the same way. (This is in fact the Naiyāyika reply to Bradley's problem. See Siderits (2004: 417, n. 27)). There thus do not appear to be great problems for the defender of causation by other objects to seize the second horn of the dilemma, so the "infinite regress" argument fails on this particular interpretation.

48. *pṛthaktve phalahetvoḥ. syāt tulyo hetur ahetunā.* MMK 20:20. See also 10:1a.

49. "[Fuel] which is different [from fire] is not reached; unreached it does not burn; moreover, not burning it will not be blown out. Not blown out it will continue to blaze, like something having a property essentially." *anyo na prāpsyate 'prāpto na dhakṣyaty adahan punah. / na nirvāsyaty anirvāṇah. sthāsyate vā svalin˙ gavān.* MMK 10:5.

50. This interpretation is given by Ganeri (2001: 54).

51. See also MMK 20:1–3.

existence of any object does not influence the existence of any other object, it appears to be completely arbitrary which way around we consider the causal relations between the objects to hold. For these reasons the assumption of distinct, independently existent objects does not support the view that cause and effect exist with their own *svabhāva.*

5.3.3. Causation by Itself and Another Object

The third alternative to consider is that an object is caused *both* by itself and by other objects. This possibility is usually dismissed very briefly in the Madhyamaka literature with the claim that since self-causation and causation by other objects have already been refuted individually, there is no need to refute both of them together.[52] To illustrate this point, Candrakīrti gives the rather unfortunate example of two conditions, neither of which is fatal, arguing that this demonstrates that both together could not be fatal either.[53] That this implication does not hold can be seen from the example of binary poisons which consist of two chemicals that are non-toxic individually but poisonous when combined. I do not think that Nāgārjuna here argues by relying on the (faulty)[54] principle that if neither of two entities has a property, both of them put together will not have the property either. What he wants to show in this context is that if we have disproved each of a set of two propositions, we do not need a *further* argument to disprove their conjunction, since this is entailed by the individual refutations.[55] It should be noted, however, that it is possible to interpret the third possibility in such a way that the simple refutation of self-causation and of causation by another object will not be sufficient. This is the case if we take the third possibility to be the position that the cause already contains the effect as a potentiality which is brought out only in the presence of particular supporting circumstances.[56] In this way the effect, such as an explosion, is neither wholly caused by objects different from it (since it was already present as a potentiality in the spark that caused it) nor *just* produced from itself as the potentiality present in the cause (because without the auxiliary conditions, such as the temperature required or the presence of oxygen, the explosion would not have happened). Therefore[57]

> the happy compromise doctrine that emerges is the doctrine of causation-by-both: Effects are the result of the joint operation of the effect itself *in potentia* and the external conditions necessary to raise the effect's mode of existence from potentiality to actuality.

It is apparent that on this understanding of the third possibility, it is not enough just to point at the refutations of the first and second possibilities, for in this scenario there is neither a perpetually self-reproducing object due to the necessity of auxiliary conditions, nor do we have to suppose that there is a causal relation holding between existentially independent objects, given that cause and effect are connected by the latter's being present as a potentiality in the former. It seems as if the "happy compromise" manages to avoid the difficulties Nāgārjuna attributes to both self-causation and causation from other objects. A slightly different compromise solution which gets by without the potential existence of the effect in the cause can be found in the theories of the Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas.[58] According to them, causation is understood to proceed by means of two internal causes and one external cause. The two internal causes are the inherent cause (*samavāyikāraṇa*) and the non-inherent cause (*asamavāyikāraṇa*), and the external one is the instrumental cause (*nimittakāraṇa*). If we consider the way a marble statue is produced we can identify at least three different components: the marble out of which the statue is made, the various properties of the marble (such as color, hardness, density, etc.), and the actions of the sculptor. The marble constitutes the inherent cause, the material basis out of which the effect is made; it can be compared to the Aristotelian *causa materialis.* The non-inherent causes (the marble's properties) do not cause the statue, but rather cause properties of the statue. Unlike the inherent cause, changes in the non-inherent cause do not change the *kind* of effect produced. Whether the marble is white or red, we still end up with a marble statue. Had the marble been clay, however, we would not have done so. These two internal causes are then combined with the instrumental cause (comparable to the *causa efficiens*) to bring forth the effect. The sculptor chipping off pieces from the block frees the statue locked within. On this account the marble statue is obviously not completely self-produced: the block of marble and its properties will just continue to sit there until the sculptor comes along. On the other hand it is not

52. MMK 12:9a states the contrapositive: "If suffering was caused by both [itself and others] it could be caused by each individually." *syād ubhābhyāṃkṛtam. duh. khaṃsyād ekaikakṛtam. yadi.*

53. "It is not the case that who is not killed by each individually is killed by both [together]." *na caikaikena prān. ātipāte 'kṛte dvābhyāṃkṛta.* PP 233:6.

54. As even limited exposure to mixing paint or cooking demonstrates.

55. See Ganeri (2001: 52).

56. This view of causation has been ascribed to the Jains (Perrett [1998: 2:267–257]; Ronkin [2005: 197– 198]). It coheres well with their multiperspectivalist outlook (*anekāntavāda*) to argue that the effect is already present in the cause *qua* its potentiality (*śakti*) but not *qua* its fully developed form.

57. Garfield (1995: 107).

58. Dasgupta (1942: 1:320); King (1999: 208).

produced from objects that are completely different either, since any part of the statue is also part of the block of marble which is its cause.

The reason this account of causation is not particularly attractive for Nāgārjuna's opponent is that the ascription of being an inherent, non-inherent, or instrumental cause as a property something has by virtue of its *svabhāva* is hardly satisfactory. Nothing can be a *causa materialis* in itself; it depends on the existence of a *causa efficiens* to turn it into an effect. The *causa efficiens* (the sculptor working on the marble) could not exist without the inherent or material cause (the block of marble). The non-inherent cause (the properties of the marble) needs the inherent cause as something to inhere in.

It is apparent that the three kinds of cause distinguished here both notionally and existentially depend on one another, as well as on the effect they jointly bring about. Their various causal properties are therefore nothing the respective objects have from their own side, independently of other objects. For this reason this account of causation is unable to defend the claim that the causality of the cause and the effect-ness of the effect are properties that cause and effect have in virtue of their *svabhāva.*

5.3.4. Absence of Causation

The final possibility to discuss is causation that is neither self-causation nor causation by another object.[59] This is generally regarded as the absence of causation altogether, given that the first three possibilities are taken to exhaust the ways in which the relata of causation can be related. If these are ruled out, the only remaining option is that objects do not exist as causal relata since there is no causal relation.[60] We might think that there are some entities that may plausibly be taken to exist outside the causal nexus, such as mathematical objects and other abstract entities. Nāgārjuna does not talk about the metaphysical status of mathematical entities, so any account of what he would have said about these is by necessity highly speculative.[61] Moreover, he is interested in analyzing *general* accounts of how causation works. Since we would hardly want to describe all phenomena as abstract, there still remains the question of how to understand the working of causality for phenomena unlike numbers and so forth.[62]

Two distinct problems with the absence of causation are distinguished in the commentarial literature. First of all it is not clear how any facts about the world could be grasped (*gr. hyate*), given that our main route of epistemic access to the world is causal. Assuming that we are not causally connected to phenomena in the everyday world would make their epistemology as problematic as those of objects outside of the causal nexus.[63]

Second, and more important, a world without causation would be phenomenologically very much unlike the world we experience. That we experience the world as regular largely means that we experience it as causally ordered. Certain effects proceed from certain causes but not from others: blood will flow if we strike a man, not if we strike a stone. A world with no causation is a world in which more or less anything can follow anything else.[64] Without our claiming that the assumption of the absence of causation "falls to the ground through sheer inanity,"[65] it is sufficient to note that such a world is not the world we experience, and therefore the fourth alternative is no satisfactory explication of our concept of causality.

5.3.5. Identity, Difference, and Svabhāva

If we imagine a set of points on a plane connected to one another by lines, we can imagine various connective possibilities for a particular point. It can be connected to itself via a looping line, or to another point, or both to another

59. MMK 12:9b.

60. It is not quite clear who the original proponents of this view of fortuitous origination (*adhiccasamuppāda,* see Ronkin [2005: 198]) actually were. Murti (1955: 135, n. 3, 167) identifies it as the view of the *svabhāvavādin,* which is usually identified with that of the Cārvākas; see also Kalupahana (1975: 25). Namai (1996: 561) agrees and mentions *svabhāvavāda,* that is, the view that "phenomena are spontaneously diverse, there being no intervention of destiny or divine will" (Tillemans [2000: 58, n. 210]) as one of the positions held by the Cārvākas. Schayer, on the other hand, denies the ascription of this view, since the Cārvākas, he argues, denied causality only in the context of karma but did not deny all causal determinations, as they specifically assert that things are determined by their intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) (1931: n. 16, 20–21). Given the limited amount of information about the Cārvāka system we presently possess, whether their view of causation should be regarded as one implying the complete absence of causation, causation by another object (as claimed on page 164), or even selfcausation remains a moot point.

61. One might want to argue that Nāgārjuna's assertions that there is no effect without a cause (*na cāsty arthah. kaścid āhetukah. kvacit.* MMK 4:2) and nothing that is not dependently originated (*apratītyasamutpanno dharmah. kaścin na vidyate.* 24:19) rule out the existence of abstract objects altogether. Nevertheless one might read the first statement as saying that something not causally produced could not be *referred to* as an effect and remark concerning the second that dependent origination does not just mean *causal* origination. The existence of some mathematical structure might, for example, be *logically* entailed by certain concepts we have and therefore be dependent on these concepts for its existence. This possibility, however, does not mean that it is causally produced.

62. Ganeri (2001: 52–53).

63. "If the world was empty of a cause, it could not be grasped, like the hue and scent of an [imaginary] lotus in the sky." *gr. hyate nāiva ca jagad yadi hetuśūnyaṃsyād yadvad eva gaganotpalavarṇagandhau.* PP 38:7–8. This is a quotation from MA 6:100.

64. As was pointed out by Buddhapālita as quoted in PP 38:10–11: "It is not the case that things arise without cause because of the difficulty of everything arising always and everywhere." *ahetuto notpadyante bhāvāh. sadā ca sarvataś ca sarvasam. bhavaprasan˙ gāt.* For the Tibetan, see Walleser (1913–1914: 11–12). The same point is made in MA 6:99.

65. Murti (1955: 135).

point and itself, or not connected to any point at all, or it can be connected not to itself but to a proper part of itself. The conclusion Nāgārjuna wants to draw from the preceding arguments is that if we apply this conceptual structure to causation, by letting the points stand for objects or events, and the lines for the causal relation, none of the possibilities could obtain. Given that the set of connective possibilities is exhaustive, the reason must lie in the fact that we make a basic assumption about points connected by lines which is not justified when we speak about events connected by causal relations.

This assumption is that the points exist with *svabhāva,* that is that they are distinct objects existing from their own side, independently of one another as well as of the cognizing subject which attempts to connect them by lines. Nāgārjuna argues, however, that cause and effect do not exist in this way. They are both notionally as well as existentially dependent on each other, as well as dependent on us as a cognitive subject that orders a chaotic mass of diverse experiences into causal fields and the effects they bring about. If cause and effect were identical, it could obviously not be the case that the effect was dependent on the cause for its existence at a later time. Their mutual dependence would also not be compatible with cause and effect being two distinct objects in the same way as two points are distinct objects, where none brings the other into existence, nor would such dependence allow that an effect depended causally both on itself as well as on other objects. If the effect was part of the cause, the existential dependence of the effect on the cause at a later time would also not be possible. Finally, if no lines connected the points, the points would still be points, but cause and effect could not exist in the absence of causal relations.

The conclusion of Nāgārjuna's examination of cause and effect in terms of identity, difference, and parthood is therefore that such a conceptualization fails because it makes presuppositions about the existence of the objects thus related (about their notional and existential independence and existence with *svabhāva*) which are not applicable to cause and effect.[66] Cause and effect have to be conceived of as both mutually dependent, as well as dependent on the cognizing subject, and therefore as empty of *svabhāva.*

5.4. Temporal Relations between Cause and Effect

Causes and effects are events that occur against the background of a particular causal field. One metal sphere moving (the causal event) brings about the moving of another one (the event which is the effect) by colliding with it on a plane surface, in the presence of the laws of gravity, in the absence of strong currents of air, magnetic fields, and so on (the background conditions). If we consider two arbitrary events, such as Peter reading the paper and Paul drinking tea, it is clear that there are three ways in which they can be temporally related. They can be *successive* (Paul drinks his tea one hour after Peter reads the paper), they can *overlap* (Paul starts drinking his tea after Peter is halfway through the paper), or they can be *simultaneous* (they start and finish at exactly the same times). Assuming that causes and effects are events like any others, it should be straightforward to classify their temporal relations in the same way. Interestingly enough, doing this is more difficult than would be expected.

One fairly clear point is that if two events are related as cause and effect, there is a restriction on their temporal ordering: the effect cannot precede the cause. After all, the cause is what is supposed to bring the effect about, something it obviously cannot do if it arrives on the scene only *after* the effect. Unless we assume that there is *another* event before the cause which also begins before the effect comes into existence, the effect would come about without any cause at all.

In ŚS 6ab Nāgārjuna stresses this point: "If the effect existed [before the cause then what about] the cause which has this effect? [*Ex hypothesi* it does not exist yet.] If that [cause] does not exist, [however, the effect] would be similar [to something with] no cause."[67]

Nāgārjuna lists nine different ways in which cause and effect can be temporally related: the cause can be either past, present, or future, and for each of these the effect produced can also be past, present, or future.[68] Assuming that an effect cannot precede its cause, we can immediately rule out three possibilities. A past effect could not have been brought about by a cause that is either present or future, nor could a present effect be brought about by a future cause. The remaining six possibilities fall into two large groups: those in which cause and effect exist (wholly or partly) at different times, and those in which they exist at the same time.

5.4.1. Cause and Effect as Successive

Although the effect cannot begin before the cause, could we assume that the effect succeeds the cause? The idea is that some causal event (my pressing

66. Napper (1989: 63–64).

67. *'bras yod 'bras dang ldan pa'i rgyu / de med na ni rgyu min mtshungs.* As is evident from the interpolations in my translation, the interpretation of this verse is not entirely clear, to say the least. This unclarity is further exacerbated by the existence of a number of variant readings. For some different translations, see Tola and Dragonetti (1987: 25); Komito (1987: 107–108), Erb (1997: 75).

68. MMK 20:12–14.

the switch) begins, endures, and then stops. After this the effect (the light going on) begins. Unless we postulate another event which stretches right up to the time when the light goes on (thus raising the whole question of temporal relations anew, this time for the effect and *this* event), the cause will have stopped to exist before the effect begins.

Nāgārjuna considers it to be problematic that something that has already ceased could be regarded as a causal condition.[69] This problem arises specifically for the Abhidharma view of phenomena as minimally extended spacetime points.[70] Within this theory of moments (*kṣaṇavāda*) it is difficult to see how the existence of a phenomenon limited to an atomic temporal point could be compatible with its causal efficacy, as when the cause exists, the effect is still inexistent, and when the effect arises, the cause will already have ceased to be.[71] It thus appears that being brought about by a cause that is past is no better than having no cause at all.[72]

The difficulty Nāgārjuna raises with his criticism is the problem faced by presentist theories of time when they attempt to account for the causal relation. For the presentist only the present, but not the past or the future, qualifies as real. He therefore faces a problem when trying to explain that the present is the way it is because of causal influences from the past, since he will have to postulate that of the two relata of the causal relation only one (namely the present) is part of reality.[73]

Among the Ābhidharmikas this presentist difficulty is faced by the Theravāda account, according to which only the present moment, consisting of the origination, endurance, and dissolution of a phenomenon, exists and has *svabhāva,* while past and future moments are devoid of *svabhāva.*[74] This theory will then have to explain how something that is past and therefore non-existent can nevertheless assert its causal influence on the present.

It should be noted, however, that this problem does not arise for the Sarvāstivādins, whose metaphysical theories generally constitute the main target of Nāgārjuna's philosophical criticism. For the Sarvāstivādin, past, present, and future all exist, they all have *svabhāva.*[75] Such a theory obviously needs some way of accounting for the privileged status of the present. Different Sarvāstivāda thinkers have proposed different ways of doing this.[76] The most popular account, due to Vasumitra,[77] argues that the special nature of the present is due to the fact that only present phenomena manifest causal activity (*kāritra*).[78] A phenomenon is past if it has already discharged its activity, it is future if it has yet to discharge it. Despite being devoid of causal activity, a past phenomenon nevertheless continues to exist and remains able to cause presently existing phenomena.[79]

The obvious way of avoiding this problem of a succession of cause and effect within a theory of the momentary existence of phenomena in which only the present is regarded as real is to assume that cause and effect are temporally contiguous. This conception of a contiguous cause (*samanatara-pratyaya*) was adopted by a variety of schools of the Abhidharma, by the Sarvāstivādins, and, by the Sautrāntikas and the Theravādins.[80] According to this theory, whenever one phenomenon follows another one without a pause, the latter may be regarded as the cause of the former. In fact Nāgārjuna raises this problem specifically with regard to the notion of immediately preceding conditions (*anantara*), which is one of the four types of conditions distinguished by the Ābhidharmikas,[81] discussed by him in the second verse of this chapter. Immediately preceding conditions are "the countless intermediary phenomena that emerge upon the analysis of a causal chain"[82] and that happen between a particular causal event and its effect.

The main advantage of the theory of temporal contiguity of cause and effect is that it eliminates the existence of a temporal gap between the two, a gap during which the cause no longer exists because it has just ceased, and during which the effect does not yet exist because it is just about to begin. Such a gap would make it hard to explain how any causal efficacy can be passed on from cause to effect, since they are divided by the insulation of a causal vacuum, a gap in which no causation takes place. If the temporal moments of cause and

69. [. . .] *niruddhe pratyayaś ca kah. .* MMK 1:9. See also 20:10a.

70. Stcherbatsky (1923: 37–38); Kalupahana (1975: 67–73).

71. Since a two-place relation needs two arguments, the Mādhyamika will therefore argue that one of the two is a mere conceptual construction (or, as a Humean would put it, a reification of our expectations). Causation therefore does not connect things existing from their own side. See Siderits (2004: 408–409).

72. "If the cause ceased without having passed on its causal power to the effect, that effect which is born when the cause has ceased would be without cause." *hetum. phalasyādattvā ca yadi hetur nirudhyate / hetau niruddhe jātam. tat phalam āhetukam. bhavet.* MMK 20:6. The same difficulty was also pointed out by Śa*n* ̇ kara in his *Bhāṣya* on *Brahmasūtra* 2.2.20.

73. See Le Poidevin (2003: 139).

74. Ronkin (2005: 66, 119–120).

75. Dhammajoti (2004: 35, 39).

76. **Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣaśāstra,* Taisho 1545, 396a–b, Dhammajoti (2004: 82–83). See also Pradhan (1975: 296–297); Frauwallner (1995: 185–208).

77. Dhammajoti (2004: 82–83). Samghabhadra's account of the nature of *kāritra* is given in his **Abhidharmanyāyānusārā,* Taisho 1562, 631c–633b. A summary of the discussion can be found in Dhammajoti (2004: 89–92).

78. Williams (1981: 241–242); von Rospatt (1995: 39); Siderits (2003: 136, n. m); Ronkin (2005: 110, 227).

79. Cox (1995: 93); Dhammajoti (2004: 94).

80. Kalupahana (1975: 72–73, 166–167).

81. Dhammajoti (2004: 131–132).

82. Garfield (1995: 109).

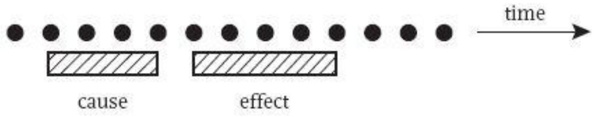


FIGURE 5.1

effect are regarded as "directly touching," however, this difficulty is avoided, even if only the present moment is regarded as existent. The past moment does not have to exist in the present in order to be causally efficacious; all that is required is that it passes on its causal power when the moment of the cause and the directly successive moment of the effect meet. Whether this account is able to provide us with a satisfactory theory of causation, however, in turn depends on the conception of time on which the view of causal contiguity is based.

If we combine the notion of the contiguity of cause and effect with a view of time that does not view moments as atomic but as divisible in turn (as the Theravādins did),[83] this approach does not seem to help us much in addressing the problem of the temporal relation between cause and effect, for in this case no matter how close we regard the last moment of the cause and the first moment of the effect to be in time, there will always be a moment between them which is different from either, thereby perpetuating the problem of the temporal gap.

If, like the Sarvāstivādins[84] and Sautrāntikas,[85] we regard time as discrete and composed of atomic, indivisible moments,[86] however, the situation we consider looks like the one depicted in Figure 5.1. Here there is obviously no temporal gap between the end of the cause and the beginning of the effect, since there is no further moment of time between these two moments. Nevertheless it does not seem to be the case that this is really a view of the temporal relation between cause and effect that the opponent of Nāgārjuna would want to defend. Obviously, the causal event does not become a cause until the first moment of the effect is present, for if the effect had never existed, the cause would not have been a cause (and, if we adopt the Nāgārjunian line of the existential dependence of the cause on the effect, in this case the cause would not have existed at all). When the first moment of the effect is present, however, the cause is already past, so that during no moment when the causal event was present was it actually a cause—the term "cause" is applied to it only *post festum.* The cause, or more precisely the causal field, comes into existence as such (as opposed to a random collection of objects) only after the effect has been produced. Only *after* the sprout has been produced can I identify all the various elements that led to its production as its cause. But this theory then implies that being a cause cannot be an essential property of the underlying event, since the event can have the property at one time (after the effect has been produced) and lack it at another time (before the effect was produced). Such a conception will therefore not support the idea that the cause exists as a cause from its own side, and that being a cause is part of its *svabhāva,* a position which Nāgārjuna's opponent will want to defend. For the Sarvāstivādin, a phenomenon's causal efficacy, like its *svabhāva,* does not undergo any change through time; it is only the phenomenon's activity (*kāritra*) that becomes existent in the present moment and then ceases as the phenomenon vanishes into the past. But, as Nāgārjuna argues, we do not call anything a cause unless it actually produces an effect; its being a cause depends on something's being the effect it produces. In the presence of such a dependence, however, being a cause cannot be part of the phenomenon's *svabhāva,* since this very notion demands its being able to exist as a cause from its own side, independent of any other object.

5.4.2. Cause and Effect as Overlapping

Suppose there are two events related in the way depicted in Figure 5.2. The causal event (my pressing the light switch) begins at time t_0 and continues until t_2. The effect (the light going on) begins at t_1 (while the cause still continues) and goes on until t_3, after the cause has ceased. On the face of it this seems to be a reasonable understanding of the temporal relation of the cause and effect involved in this case. I press the switch (t_0), after some time the light goes

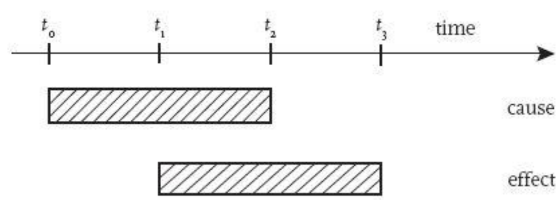


FIGURE 5.2

83. von Rospatt (1995: 60); Ronkin (2005: 62–63).

84. Ronkin (2005: 61–62); Dhammajoti (2004: 153).

85. von Rospatt (1995: 60–63).

86. There is an obvious tension between an atomic conception of time and the assumption that *each moment* is characterized by the three distinct characteristics of conditioned objects (*saṃskṛtalakṣana*) of origination, endurance, and dissolution, which can hardly be regarded as simultaneous. For a discussion of how the Sarvāstivādins dealt with this issue, see von Rospatt (1995: 49–59); for the Sautrāntika account, see 60–63.

on (t_1), then I stop pressing (t_2); and the light continues to be on until some future time t_3.

There are two main difficulties with this picture. The first and most general problem is that seeing cause and effect as overlapping—in contrast to all other accounts of their temporal relation—implies that cause and effect are temporally extended. But given that temporally extended things have temporal parts and that partite things cannot be ultimately real, this view seems to defeat the point of the argument. Nāgārjuna's opponent is interested in establishing causal relations between ultimate existents, that is, between objects that are (unlike temporally extended objects) not conceptually constructed. But conceiving of cause and effect as overlapping (whether we think that there is a clear cut-off line between cause and effect as indicated in Figure 5.2, or whether we take this process to be a gradual one) entails that we do just that, since we have to conceive of them as spread out across time.[87]

The second problem is that according to the situation depicted in Figure 5.2, the cause would be taken to cease at t_2, when the light switch-pressing event comes to an end. This, however, means that we have to regard the period between t_1 (when the light went on) and t_2 (when I stopped pressing) as part of the cause. But my pressing *after* the light went on was of no consequence for the effect in any way, so it appears to be rather strange that we take a causally inert part of the event to be part of the cause. Nāgārjuna argues that in this case what we take to be the cause would have a double nature (*ātmadvaya*): one, its causal power which is employed in bringing about the effect, and two, its causal inertness, after the causing has been done.[88] While having two incompatible properties at different times is of course not a problem in itself (an apple can be green now and red later), assuming that part of the *nature* of a cause is causally inert seems distinctly odd—if a cause has any nature at all, it seems to consist in being able to bring about an effect. It is therefore undesirable for anyone who wants to argue that being a cause is part of some object's *svabhāva* to assume that this object has a causally inert temporal part. If we now try to avoid this problem by "cutting off" the causally inert part of the cause ranging from t_1 to t_2 and only regard the event ranging from t_0 to t_1 as the cause we end up with a scenario in which cause and effect are temporally contiguous, the difficulties of which have been discussed above.

87. See Siderits (2004: 406–408).

88. "If the cause ceased to exist after having passed on the causal power of [bringing about] the fruit, the cause would have a double nature: the given [causal power] and the ceased [nature after having passed on the causal power]." *hetum phalasya dattvā ca yadi hetur nirudhyate / yad dattam. yan niruddham. ca hetor ātmadvayam. bhavet.* MMK 20:5.

5.4.3 Cause and Effect as Simultaneous

The third possibility to discuss is that of cause and effect being simultaneous, that is, coming into existence and ceasing at the same moment. The concept of simultaneous causation (*sahabhūhetu*) is of central importance in the Sārvastivāda theory of causality.[89] The principal Sārvastivāda example of simultaneous causation is a thought (*citta*) and its specific concomitants (*caitasika*)[90] which mutually depend on one another "like the poles of a tripod."[91] A thought cannot arise earlier than its concomitant factors, nor can such factors be earlier than the specific thought they accompany. The concept of simultaneous causation is essential for the Sārvastivāda theory of the existence of past and future as well as present objects. The main argument for this thesis of universal existence (*sarvāstitva*) is that since consciousness needs an existent object, and since there is consciousness of past and present phenomena, these phenomena must be existent objects. But of course this idea establishes the existence of past, present, and future objects only if the object of consciousness (the cause) and the consciousness of that object (the effect) exist simultaneously. If a past object was able to cause a consciousness of it that is present, the past *objects* could be non-existent, even though the present *consciousness* of such objects does exist.[92]

Nāgārjuna is interested primarily in the possibility of cause and effect coming into existence at the same time.[93] An immediate problem with this idea is that the cause is generally taken to be what brings the previously nonexistent effect about, and therefore something that exists while the effect does not yet exist. We distinguish the effect from the causal field by observing that the causal field (the wires, the bulb, pressing the switch) is there first, without the effect (the light going on), which appears subsequently.

A second difficulty is evident from a problem Nāgārjuna discusses in a slightly different context.[94] Speaking of cause and effect as simultaneous, we intend this to mean that there are two distinct events beginning at the same

89. Dhammajoti (2004: 116–117) gives a selection of passages from the Sārvastivāda Abhidharma literature dealing with simultaneous causation. See also Tanaka (1985); Burton (1999: 193); Dhammajoti (2003); Ronkin (2005: 217). The idea of a *sahabhūhetu* also becomes important in Yogācāra literature where the *ālayavijñāna* and *bīja* are regarded as standing in a simultaneous causal relationship. Dhammajoti (2004: 121–123).

90. Dhammajoti (2004: 162).

91. Hopkins (1983: 339). Another example used is the simultaneous existence of a lamp and its light. Dhammajoti (2004: 120).

92. Dhammajoti (2004: 38, 125).

93. MMK 20:7.

94. MMK 6:3–9.

time as one another rather than one event referred to by two different names.[95] Their being distinct, we should be able to imagine one without the other; it should be logically possible that one of the two distinct entities exists while the other does not. At least this is the case according to the sense of distinctness in the mind of Nāgārjuna's opponent, who will attempt to base the distinctness on the *svabhāva* of the respective events. Considering the interdependence of cause and effect discussed above, however, such distinctness does not obtain, so that a claim for simultaneity cannot be made.

The reader of Candrakīrti's commentary on the above passages will notice that he attempts to elucidate Nāgārjuna's assertion that cause and effect cannot exist together, observing that simultaneously existing objects such as the left and right hand,[96] or the left and right horn of an ox,[97] are never seen to stand in a causal relationship. This seems to be incorrect, as there are in fact a multitude of *prima facie* examples where cause and effect come into being at the same time: the cause of the effect of the left-hand side of a pair of scales going up (namely its right-hand side going down) begins at the same moment in time as the effect,[98] as does the cause of the cart's moving (namely the motion of the horse). If we place a ball of lead on a soft cushion, the cause (putting down the ball) and the effect (the indentation in the cushion) equally arise at the same time.[99] Nevertheless, we have to note that these are hardly the examples the critic of Nāgārjuna who wants to establish cause and effect as independent, self-sufficient entities could be looking for. The motion of the horse and the motion of the cart are simultaneous but clearly not distinct in the strong sense defined above: it is certainly physically (and presumably also logically) impossible for the cart to move forward while the horse stays where it is. This example is therefore not able to establish the simultaneity of two independently existing events.[100]

5.4.4. Cause and Effect as One Event

A final possibility Nāgārjuna raises in MMK 20:20 is the suggestion that when speaking of causes and effects we are not dealing with two events at all but in fact with only *one* single event, which in the course of its history transforms itself from a causal event into an effect event. Now the question to consider is whether the cause retains its causal nature after the transformation. If it does not, it will not be the same any longer, since for Nāgārjuna's opponent, being cause and effect are not just intrinsic features of events but also essential ones, that is, they are features an object cannot lose without ceasing to be that very object. As Candrakīrti points out, for the defender of the "transformation" theory the difference between cause and effect cannot be one just in terms of description (*sam. jñāmātrabheda*), but must be one in terms of essence (*dravyabheda*).[101]

If the event retains its causal nature, however, then after the cause has ceased, an event with the very same *svabhāva* will arise once more. This situation is problematic for the same reasons that the presence of the effect in the causal field is problematic, as was discussed in MMK 20:1: if the cause already existed, there would be no need to produce it once more. A further problem arises from the fact that it is hard to see how this kind of self-causation should ever stop. Since there were no factors present apart from the causal event that triggered its transformation into the effect (which is the very same event as the cause and is both cause and effect essentially), there is no absence of factors that could stop such a transformation. The cause would be self-perpetuating and exist forever.

5.4.5. Temporal Relations and Svabhāva

In considering any two events, it is evident that either they appear in succession (being contiguous or separated by a temporal gap), or that they are temporally overlapping, or that they happen at the same time, or that they are successive stages of one single event. As we have seen, Nāgārjuna denies that any of these possible temporal relations holds of two events which are related to one another as cause and effect. The reason is the same as what we observed in the case of the relation between cause and effect in terms of identity, difference, and

95. Garfield (1995: 156).

96. PP 395: 9–10.

97. PP 139:14, see also 224:4.

98. This example is discussed in MA 6:18–19. See also Shaw (2002: 230); Siderits (2004: 408).

99. For the origin of the last example, see Kant (1993: A 203, B 248); some commentary is in Rosenberg (1998) and Le Poidevin (1988). See also Bugault (2001: 252).

100. A different interesting argument against the simultaneity of cause and effect, attempting to show that it would undermine the existence of any succession of causes, is given in Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* (1896: I, III, II: 76). See also Munsat (1971). Suppose a cause and its effect existed at the same time, t_1. Suppose further that there was another cause of the effect which existed at t_{-1} a short instance of time before this. Given that the simultaneous cause produces the effect immediately but the earlier cause does so only after some delay (i.e., the time that passed between t_{-1} and t_1), we would want to regard only the simultaneous cause as the true cause (the earlier cause is at best an earlier part of the effect's causal history). Therefore, given the possibility of a simultaneous cause, no earlier event will be a plausible candidate for being a cause. Given that there are always events simultaneous with another event, we will always prefer to regard *these* as causes, rather than some preceding event. But if we thus assume that for any effect its cause is simultaneous, we are faced with the problem that simultaneity is transitive. If cause c is simultaneous with effect e_1, and e_1 is in turn simultaneous with whatever effect *it* may have (call this e_2), then c and e_2 are also simultaneous. Therefore all causes and effects would happen at the same time, and thereby there would be no such thing as a causal succession in time.

101. PP 397:7.

parthood. The above set of temporal relations presents us with an exhaustive classification of all possibilities only if we are dealing with distinct and mutually independent events that exist from their own side independent of a cognizing subject, that is, with events that exist by their own *svabhāva.* Cause and effect, however, do not exist in such a way, since one brings about the other. Given this dependence relation, cause and effect cannot be separated by a temporal gap, because in such a case the effect would have to depend on a nonexistent object, since the cause does no longer exists. Assuming them to be overlapping entails that the cause has a causally active and a causally inert part, which conflicts with the assumption that being a cause is part of its own nature. If cause and effect come about at the same time, it is hard to see how the effect could rely existentially on the previously existing cause, while taking them to be stages of one event again means that the cause cannot be a cause as part of its own nature, since this is a property the cause loses when turning into the effect.

The consideration of the temporal relations between cause and effect therefore demonstrates once more the inapplicability of conceptual schemes suitable for discussing mutually independent and observer-independent objects to causes and effects. Being empty of *svabhāva,* they cannot be conceived of by use of the conceptual resources intended for discussing phenomena which exist both independently of one another and independently of a cognizing subject.

Having investigated a variety of commonsensical theories of the identity relations between cause and effect, as well as theories of their temporal relations, Nāgārjuna concludes that the commonsensical view of objects underlying these theories is unsatisfactory, since it conflicts with each of the ways in which the relation between cause and effect can possibly be conceived of.

According to the view Nāgārjuna wants to establish instead of the commonsensical one, cause and effect do not exist independently of one another: they require each other both notionally and existentially. There is no point in using the concept of a cause without that of an effect, or vice versa. More important, while an effect cannot exist without being brought about by a cause (or, more precisely, by a causal field), the effect brings about the causal field as well, because without the effect there would be no indication of which phenomena are to be included in some causal field and which are to be left out. The causal field is not something found ready-made out there in the world, waiting to be discovered by the inquiring mind. It is a cognitive artifact brought about whenever the mind organizes its experiences. To this extent the causal field does not depend just on the effect that provided the justification for certain objects rather than others to be included in it, but also on the mind that does the including. Cause and effect are therefore not just mutually interdependent, but also mind-dependent. This is what Nāgārjuna means by saying that causes and effects do not exist from their own side, that is, that they are empty of *svabhāva.*

A general worry we might want to raise about Nāgārjuna's attempt to establish emptiness on the basis of causation is the following. It is clear that showing that some object causally depends on another one shows that it is empty *in some way.* For example, if we define an object to be non-empty if it is mereologically, causally, and conceptually independent, then demonstrating that some object is causally produced is obviously enough to show that it is empty. But this might not be good enough.[102] After all, it is the notion of emptiness in terms of conceptual dependence or imputation which is generally regarded as the most subtle understanding of emptiness. But it is clear that establishing that some object is causally produced does not entail that this object is also conceptually constructed.[103]

Siderits argues that this difficulty can be solved by attributing to the Mādhyamika the principle that if some object essentially involves a property that is conceptually constructed, the object is conceptually constructed too.[104] If we replace "conceptually constructed" with "fictional," the truth of the principle is immediately evident. Consider a violin performance by Sherlock Holmes as a simple example. This object essentially involves the relation "being performed by Sherlock Holmes," which is a fictional property. For this reason the performance, which incorporates this property as an essential part, is fictional too.

In the same way, the Mādhyamika will argue, each material object essentially involves reference to causality, since all these objects are causally produced. But if it is now demonstrated, as Nāgārjuna set out to do, that the causal relation does not exist from its own side, is conceptually constructed, and thus is empty, it follows that each material object must be conceptually constructed and therefore empty in the most subtle sense as well. In this way the discussion of causality is not just able to establish the comparatively crude emptiness in terms of causal interdependence, but also the more subtle one in terms of conceptual construction.

5.5. Analysis of Time

The analysis of causation is intricately bound up with that of time as it refers to temporal relations at various crucial places in the argument. Nāgārjuna

102. It is useful to remember in this context that for the Ābhidharmikas, conditioned objects (*saṃskṛta dharma*) were regarded both as having *svabhāva* and as being dependently originated.

103. See Burton (1999: 115).

104. Siderits (2004: 411).

discussed time in the shortest chapter of the MMK, which consists just of six verses. He notes first of all that the past, present, and future existentially depend on one another.[105] Not only could there be no present if there were no past or future, there could also be no present if it were not related to past and future in exactly the way it is, that is, sandwiched between them. Time is a fundamentally relational phenomenon with an intrinsic ordering. Assuming such an interdependence between the three times, Nāgārjuna claims that if the present and the future depended on the past, then the present and future would exist in the past.[106] On the face of it this seems to be the now familiar point that when a dependence relation holds between two entities, both of them must exist. If, for example, we claim a pot to exist in dependence on its parts, both the pot and its part must exist. But on the (not implausible) ascription of a presentist view of time to Nāgārjuna, according to which only the present is real, neither the present nor the future can depend on the past since the past does not exist any more. We would thus have a case of a dependence relation with only one term, since one of the relata failed to exist.

We can identify a different problem here if we assume that dependence relations exist only between objects located in time,[107] for then past, present, and future would have to be located in another time, which would in turn give rise to temporal relations located in a yet another time and so on. In the end we would need an infinitely extended hierarchy of times to make sense of the dependence between the three times. Given these difficulties of analyzing time in terms of dependently related phenomena, Nāgārjuna concludes that none of the three times can be found.[108]

The difficulty with this reading, however, is that Nāgārjuna immediately goes on to assert that "by precisely the same method," concepts such as highest, lowest, and middle should be elucidated.[109] The problem is that, *pace* Garfield, [110] the above argument cannot be generalized to cover spatial relations as well. The higher, middle, and lower part of a building can perfectly well be described as depending on one another. The second floor notionally (and architecturally) depends on the first floor, since it is only in relation to the first floor that it can be called "second floor," and it is also the first floor that keeps the second floor up. But since all these parts of a building exist simultaneously, all the relata of the dependence relation do. Therefore neither the argument from the non-existent relatum nor indeed the regress argument[111] get off the ground in the spatial case.

We could assume that what Nāgārjuna means here is just the general fact that distinctions such as high, middle, and low are essentially relational,[112] so no object could for example be regarded as essentially "middle" since this property depended on its spatial relation to objects other than itself. But this concept seems at odds with Nāgārjuna's earlier attempt to find fault with the very idea of establishing the three times as dependent entities.

Alternatively we could understand the argument as claiming that if any present or future *entity* depended on a past entity, this entity would have to have existed in the past. What the argument rejects on this interpretation is that each object has a "hard core" persisting through the three times. That today's cup is the same as yesterday's cup would be taken to mean that there is one thing (perhaps the substance of the cup) that was here yesterday and is here today and that is characterized by different accidental properties at the different times. This notion of a substantial core has been criticized by Nāgārjuna in a variety of ways in earlier parts of the MMK.

On this interpretation we could then read the statement in MMK 19:4 as claiming that in the same way in which it makes no sense to speak of a persisting substance across time, there is no spatially persisting substance either. In a house that has an upper, middle, and lower part, there is not *one* piece of matter that runs through the entire house and is characterized by the attributes upper, middle, and lower. It is rather that different parts of the house are designated in this way in relation to one another, and that they are regarded as parts of the same house by their spatial contiguity, not because of some sort of material backbone running through all of them. Similarly the different temporal parts of the cup can be conceptualized as belonging to one individual by their temporal closeness and the sharing of a significant number of properties without the need for a persistent cross-temporal unifier.

In fact this interpretation of time which does not refer to the persistence of an underlying substance is the only way for the Mādhyamika to affirm the

105. "In turn the past is not found established independent of the two [present and future]." *anapekṣya punah. siddhir nātītam. vidyate tayoh.* . MMK 19:3a.

106. *pratyutpanno 'nāgataś ca yady atītam apekṣya hi / pratyutpanno 'nāgataś ca kāle 'tīte bhaviṣyatah.* . MMK 19:1.

107. As done by Garfield (1995: 255). A similar point is made in rGyal tshab's commentary on RĀ 3:56. Hopkins (1998: 141).

108. *pratyutpanno 'nagataś ca tasmāt kālo na vidyate.* MMK 19:3b. Verse 4 makes clear that this assertion is also meant to apply to the past.

109. *etenaiva* [. . .] *kramena* [. . .] *uttamādhamamadhyādīn* [. . .] *lakṣayet.* MMK 19:4.

110. Garfield (1995: 256).

111. It makes much more sense to interpret MMK 19:5a as noting the difficulty of a temporal regress. Here Nāgārjuna argues that one could conceive of neither a static nor of a nonstatic time. (*nāstito gr. hyate kālah. sthitah. kālo na vidyate*) The reason is that in order to conceptualize time as static or nonstatic, we have to locate it in another time relative to which it changes or does not change.

112. This is the interpretation given by Tsong kha pa (2006: 397). See also Weber-Brosamer and Back (1997: 70–71).

existence of time.[113] Since Nāgārjuna described in detail the reasons for the rejection of such a substance, he would then also be forced to deny the existence of time. The Mādhyamika therefore has to explain how we can account for an object changing and persisting through time without having to assume that there is some unchanging aspect of the object which underlies all change. Nāgārjuna claims that this can indeed be done. Understanding how this can be the case becomes particularly important in the context of the Buddhist conception of the self when the temporal continuity of persons has to be explained without reference to the concept of a persisting subjective core (*ātman*).

113. "If time existed dependent on an object, from where should it come without this object? Since there is not any object, from where does time come? " *bhāvam. pratītya kālaś cet kālo bhāvād ṛte kutah. / na ca kaścana bhāvo 'sti kutah. kālo bhaviṣyati*. MMK 19:6. Note that "object" (*bhāva*) in this context is to be understood as "object with *svabhāva.*"

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter I

प्रत्ययपरीक्षा नाम प्रथमं प्रकरणम्

pratyayaparīkṣā nāma prathamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀因緣品第一(十六偈)

zhōng lùn guān yīn yuán pǐn dì yī (shí liù jié;jì)

-

| rkyen brtag pa źes bya ba ste | | rab tu byed pa daṅ po'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER I - Examination of Relational Condition

JONES (Skt):
1. Conditions

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Conditions

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
1. Analysis of Conditions

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[1] Examination of The Real Truth (14 Verse)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Enquiry into Conditions

STRENG (Skt):
Section 1 - An Analysis of Conditioning Causes (Conditions) In 14 verses

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
Chapter First
EXAMINATION OF CAUSALITY

ROBINSON (Skt):
1. the conditions (causation)

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 1. Contemplation of Causality 16 verses [Adds the two verses of the Dedicatory Verse to the karika of Ch 1]

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Conditions

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER I - Analysis of Conditions

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter I: Examination of Conditions

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER I - Examination of Conditions

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of Conditions

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER I: AN EXAMINATION OF CAUSAL CONDITIONS

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):
Including the salutation, there are sixteen verses in both the Sanskrit and the Chinese. However, the order of verses is somewhat different. Chinese 1.4 equals Sanskrit 1.5 and vice versa. Chinese 1.10 equals Sanskrit 1.11, and vice versa. (This is counting the salutation as verses 1 and 2.) A general comparison of the Sanskrit and the Chinese verses may be drawn from the following translation of the former into English and of Kumarajiva's version into "Chinglish," an ad hoc language which has Chinese grammar and English vocabulary.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter III]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter One Examination of Conditions (Pratyaya-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter I Examination of Conditions

Central to this first chapter is the distinction between causes and conditions (Skt: *hetu* and *pratyaya,* Tib: *rgyu* and *rkyen).* This distinction is variously drawn and is controversial, (fn 14. Some scholars with whom I have discussed this interpretation argue that there is no real difference between causes and conditions, some that a cause is one kind of condition, some that efficient causes are causes and all other causal factors contributing to an event are conditions. Some like my reading. I have found no unanimity on this interpretive question, either among Western Buddhologists or among Tibetan scholars. The canonical texts are equivocal as well. I do not argue that the distinction I here attribute to Nāgārjuna, which I defend on hermeneutical grounds, is necessarily drawn in the same way throughout the Buddhist philosophical world or even throughout the Prasangika-Madhyamika literature. But it is the one Nāgārjuna draws.) and it is arguably differently understood in Sanskrit and Tibetan. The way I will understand it here, I argue, makes good, coherent sense not only of this chapter, but of *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā* as a whole. Briefly, we will understand this distinction as follows: When Nāgārjuna uses the word "cause" *(hetu, rgyu),* he has in mind an event or state that has in it a *power (kriyā, bya-ba)* (fn 15. Some might quarrel with this translation, preferring to reserve "power" to translate *"stob"* (Skt: *bala* or *shakti)* and to translate *"bya-ba"* or *"kriya"* as "activity" or "action." But in this context "power," interpreted as causal power, is just right.) to bring about its effect and has that power as part of its essence or nature *(svabhāva, rang bzhin).* When he uses the term "condition" on the other hand *(pratyaya, rkyen),* he has in mind an event, state, or process that can be appealed to in explaining another event, state, or process without any metaphysical commitment to any occult connection between explanandum and explanans. In Chapter I, Nāgārjuna, we shall see, argues against the existence of causes and for the existence of a variety of kinds of conditions. (fn 16. There are two kinds of cases to be made for attributing this distinction to Nāgārjuna in this chapter: Most generally, there is the hermeneutical argument that this makes the best philosophical sense of the text. It gets Nāgārjuna drawing a distinction that is clearly suggested by his philosophical outlook and that lines up nicely with the technical terms he deploys. But we can get more textually fine grained as well; in the first verse, Nāgārjuna explicitly rejects the existence of efficacy and pointedly uses the word "cause." He denies that there are such things. Nowhere in Chapter I is there a parallel denial of the existence of conditions. On the contrary, in I: 2 he positively asserts that there are four kinds of them. To be sure, this could be read as a mere partitioning of the class of effects that are described in Buddhist literature. But there are two reasons not to read it thus: First, Nāgārjuna does not couch the assertion in one of his "it might be said" locutions. Second, he never takes it back. The positive tone the text takes regarding conditions is continued in I: 4-5, where Nāgārjuna asserts that conditions are conceived without efficacy in contrast with the causes rejected in Chapter I and where he endorses a regularist view of conditions. So it seems that Nāgārjuna does use the "cause"/"condition" distinction to mark a distinction between the kind of association he endorses as an analysis of dependent arising and one he rejects. Inada (1970) among Western commentators agrees with this interpretation. Kalupahana (1986) seems to as well (see pp. 34-35). But see Streng (1973) and Wood (1994) for a contrasting interpretation, according to which Nāgārjuna is out to reject causes and conditions in the same sense, and according to which the distinction between the four conditions provides a platform for an exhaustive refutation of production with no positive account of interdependence implicated. This latter interpretation is adopted by Tsong Khapa (Sarnath ed., pp. *12ft.)* and his followers as well. They attribute a like view to Candrakīrti. But I would disagree at that point with their reading of Candrakīrti's text.) Things are not, however, quite this simple. For in the philosophical context in which Nāgārjuna is writing, there are those - indeed including most Buddhist philosophical schools - who would accept his classification of conditions, but who would then assert that in order for conditions to function as explanatory, they must themselves have an independent inherent existence. Some - such as the Sarvastivadas or Sautantrika-Svatantrikas (despite other differences between these schools regarding causation) - would argue that the conditions must exist as substantially distinct from the conditioned; others, such as the Cittamatra, would argue that they can be of the same nature (fn 17. This account of the relevant contrastive views derives from the oral commentary of the Yen. Geshe Yeshes Thap-Khas and the Yen. Gen Lobzang Gyatso.), Nāgārjuna will evade these particular debates, however, by emphasizing that the conditions he has in mind must be thought of as empty of inherent existence and connected to the phenomena they condition neither through absolute difference nor through identity.

The argument against causation is tightly intertwined with the positive account of dependent arising and of the nature of the relation between conditions and the conditioned. Nāgārjuna begins by stating the conclusion (I: 1): Entities are neither self-caused nor do they come to be through the power of other entities. That is, there is no causation when causation is thought of as involving causal activity: (fn 18. The Yen. Lobzang Norbu Shastri has pointed out to me that this verse may not in fact be original with Nāgārjuna, but is a quotation from sutra. It appears in the *Kamajika-prajnaparamitasutra* as well as in the *Madhyamika-Salistambasutra.* But the chronological relation of these sutras to Nāgārjuna's text is not clear.)

Kārikā I.1

न स्वतो नापि परतो न द्वाभ्यां नाप्यहेतुतः।
उत्पन्ना जातु विद्यन्ते भावाः क्कचन केचन॥३॥

LVP 12,13-14 - LVP 91,9
na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyāṃ nāpy ahetutaḥ |
utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kva cana ke cana ||1||

諸法不自生 亦不從他生
不共不無因 是故知無生

T1564: vol 30, pg 2b6
zhū fǎ bù zì shēng yì bù cóng tā shēng
bù gòng bù wú yīn shì gù zhī wú shēng

།བདག་ལས་མ་ཡིན་གཞན་ལས་མིན།།གཉིས་ལས་མ་ཡིན་རྒྱུ་མེད་མིན།
།དངོས་པོ་གང་དག་གང་ན་ཡང་།སྐྱེ་བ་ནམ་ཡང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

Tg tsa 1a3-4 - Tg tsa 2b1
| bdag las ma yin gźan las min | | gñis las ma yin rgyu med min |
| dṅos po gaṅ (4)dag gaṅ na yaṅ | | skye ba nam yaṅ yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - At nowhere and at no time can entities ever exist by originating out of themselves, from others, from both (self-other), or from the lack of causes.

JONES (Skt):
[1] No entities whatsoever are found anywhere that have arisen from themselves, from another, from both themselves and another, or from no cause at all.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
No existents whatsoever are evident anywhere that are arisen from themselves, from another, from both, or from a non-cause

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Never, nowhere do any beings occur arisen from themselves, from others, from both or from no cause.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. The Real Truth is different from subjective ideas, which have been produced in human brain, or the Real Truth is never sense stimuli, which have been received from the external world.
The Real Truth is not the mixture of the subjective ideas or the objective sense stimuli, but The Real Truth is never anything illogical.
Miscellaneous things and phenomena are always manifesting themselves as they are.
And what is called existence does never exist really anywhere, or does not exist in anything.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 No things whatsoever exist, at any time, in any place, having arisen of themselves, from another, from both or without cause.

STRENG (Skt):
1. Never are any existing things found to originate From themselves, from something else, from both, or from no cause.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
I. There absolutely are no things,
Nowhere and none, that arise (anew),
Neither out of themselves, nor out of non-self.
Nor out of both, nor at random,

ROBINSON (Skt):
No existents ever occur anywhere which have arisen from themselves, from others, from both, or without a cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
1v3 Dharmas are not self-produced,
Nor do they arise from others,
Nor from both, nor without a cause,
Therefore we know there is no arising.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
No thing anywhere is ever born from itself, from something else, from both or without a cause.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Not from itself, not from another,
Not from both, and not uncaused
Nowhere does anything
Ever arise. [I.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Neither from itself nor from another,
Nor from both,
Nor without a cause,
Does anything whatever, anywhere arise.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Neither from itself nor from another
Nor from both,
Nor without a cause
Does anything anywhere, ever arise.
[Does anything whatever, anywhere arise.]

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Nothing existing is ever found to originate from itself, from another, from both itself and another, or from "out of the blue."

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Not from self, not from other,
Not from both, nor without cause:
Things do not arise
At any place, at any time. (1)

ROBINSON (Ch):
All-the dharma not self arise, also not from other arise, not both, nut inexist cause; this reason know inexist arise.

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):
"This reason know inexist arise" (therefore we know that they have no arising) is entirely added by the translators.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/3 As to 'not self-produced'; things do not exist by arising from their own substance but invariably depend upon a host of causes. Moreover, if they did arise from their own substance then each single dharma would have two substances. One would be the produced and the other would be the producer. If things were produced from their own substance without extraneous causes, then they would have neither causes nor conditions. Furthermore, arising would in turn have an arising, and there would be an endless regression of arising.

(2b10) Where there is no self there is also no other, and why? The existence of "other" depends on the existence of "self". If there is no arising from self then there is also no arising from other. Arising "from both" involves two errors, namely arising from self and arising from other. If there were no causes and yet the myriad things existed, this would be permanence, and this is not correct. Where there is no cause there is no effect; if there were no causes and yet there were effects, then giving alms, keeping the precepts and so forth could drag you down into the hells, while the ten evils and five rebellious acts could lead to rebirth in the heavens, because there would be no causal link.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[The commentary in the Introductory section above includes an analysis of this first *kārikā*.]

Refutation of origination

At this point fellow Buddhists interject: 'You said that things do not arise of themselves and that makes sense because spontaneous origination is meaningless. That they do not arise both from themselves and from another makes sense too, because one of the terms has been invalidated. And it is right to repudiate the wholly absurd view that things arise without cause. But when you say "nor do things arise from what is other than themselves" that does not make sense. The illustrious one taught that things are caused by what is other than themselves.'

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The four types of events referred to here are comparable to those mentioned by the Buddha at S 2.19-20, namely, sayamkatam paramkatam, sayamkatan ca paramkatan ca, and asayamkaramaparamkaram adhiccasamuppannam. Instead of the term utpanna (arisen), which occurs only in the last phrase, here we find the occurrence of the term kata (Sk. krta), "done," primarily because in the Upanisads, which served as background to the Buddha's teaching, the substantial self (atman) was looked upon more as a "personal agent," than as a substantial principle (svabhava, prakrti, etc.). With the sophistication in philosophical thinking in the Indian schools, the "personal agent" was gradually replaced by an "impersonal substance" (svabhava). The Sarvastivadins, who came to accept a conception of substance while at the sametime rejecting a "personal agent" (pudgala), failed to notice the similarity if not the identity of their implications. In this verse, Nagarjuna presents his negative thesis, which in the dedicatory verse he expressed with the eight negations. It is the thesis that he undertakes to prove in the fast twenty-five chapters. He has not provided any arguments yet, except saying that these four kinds of events are not evident. Probably he felt that these events needed further explanation before he proceeds to refute them.

However, Candrakīrti is all too impatient. His commentary on this verse is more than one tenth of his entire work (almost 65 pages), and it is a stupendous commentary filled with lot of metaphysical trivia and diatribes, mostly directed at Bhavaviveka and the Svatantrika tradition. After assuming that Nagarjuna had "no position" (see note on the dedicatory verses) with

which to criticize these four theories, Candrakīrti settles down to justify the reductio ad absurdum by which the inherent contradictions in a thesis are exposed. He realizes that self-causation (svata-utpatti) is based on the belief in a permanent and eternal self or substance (svabhava). Quoting Buddhapalita, he maintains: '"Things are not arisen from self," because such arising is meaningless, (tad utpadavaiyarthyat,).' For, there is no purpose in the arising of things that are already existent. This certainly is Nagarjuna's criticism of a substantialist notion of a "condition" (pratyaya) at 1.6. However, in the present verse and at I.3, Nagarjuna appears to use the argument from empiricism to deny the substantialist view.

Thus, while Nagarjuna was saying that substance is not evident (na vidyate) and, therefore, inappropriate (na yujyate), Candrakīrti was maintaining that substance is not appropriate (na yujyate) and, therefore, not evident (na vidyate). This indeed is the difference between empiricism and rationalism, a difference that is soon to lead to the conflict between the Svatantrikas and the Prasangikas.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. The fourfold classification of positions with regard to the relation between an active cause and its effect is meant to be exhaustive. But it is important to keep in mind that Nāgārjuna was aware of philosophical schools espousing each of these four positions. And each of them has something to say for itself if we begin by supposing a model of causation involving powers as essential properties of substantially real causes. The first view - held prominently by Samkhya philosophers (fn 19. At least according to Tsong Khapa's commentary on this verse.) - is that all causation is really self-causation. A proponent of this view would argue that for a cause to be genuinely the cause of an effect, that effect must exist potentially in that cause. If it does not, then the cause might exist without the effect, in which case the cause would fail to necessitate the effect, in which case it would not be a genuine cause. This is not to say that effects exist in full actuality in their causes, but that they have a genuine potential existence when their causes exist. In this case, since the effect is present in the cause, it already has a kind of existence prior to its appearance. And it is the fact of this prior potential existence that accounts for the causal character of the cause. So we can say, on this view, that a thing's prior potential existence is what gives rise to its later actual existence. So effects are in this sense self-caused. The typical kind of example appealed to in order to defend this model of causation is the seed and sprout relation. The sprout, although only actual after germination, is potential in the seed. Its potentiality is what makes the seed a seed of that sprout. Moreover, on this view, the seed and sprout cannot be distinguished as substantially different. Intuitively it makes sense to say that they are two stages of the same entity. But the seed is the cause of the sprout. Hence, the proponent of this view concludes, the sprout is self-caused.

Causation from another is a more familiar way of thinking of causation and was the dominant doctrine of causation in the Buddhist philosophical milieu in which Nāgārjuna was working. On this view, causes and their effects are genuinely distinct phenomena (fn 20. I will use the term "phenomena" throughout in the commentary as an ontologically neutral expression to cover events, states, processes, objects, properties, etc. Usually phenomena of several of these categories are at play at once. Sometimes not. Where more precision is called for, I will be more specific, unless the context makes it clear which category is relevant.). They can be characterized and can in principle exist independently of one another. But they are related by the fact that one has the power to bring the other about. The relations between parents and children is an example often appealed to in illustrating this doctrine. Parents bring their children into existence. But they are not identical entities.

The doctrine of causation by both self and other emerges through a juxtaposition of the doctrine of causation-from-another and the doctrine of self-causation. Let us return to the example of the seed. A proponent of other-causation might point out that seeds that are not planted, watered, and so forth, do not sprout. If the sprout were present in the seed, these other conditions, which are manifestly other than the sprout, would be otiose. On the other hand, the proponent of self-causation might reply: No matter how much you water, nourish, and exhort an infertile seed - one without the potentially existent sprout - nothing happens. So all of the distinct conditions in the world will not suffice absent the potential existence of the effect. The happy compromise doctrine that emerges is the doctrine of causation-by-both: Effects are the result of the joint operation of the effect itself in potentio and the external conditions necessary to raise the effect's mode of existence from potentiality to actuality.

The fourth alternative view of causation is that things simply spontaneously arise from no particular causes - that there are no links at all between events. What might motivate such a view? Well, as we shall see (and as any reader of Sextus Empiricus, Hume, or Wittgenstein will recall), there are powerful reasons for believing that none of the three alternatives just rehearsed can be made coherent. And if one believe4 that only if there were either some identity or difference between causes and effects could there be a relation of dependency between phenomena, one would be forced to the nihilistic conclusion that things simply arise causelessly. Nonetheless, Nāgārjuna notes, there are conditions - in fact four distinct kinds - that can be appealed to in the explanation and prediction of phenomena:

Kārikā I.2

चत्वारः प्रत्यया हेतुश्चालम्बनमनन्तरम्।
तथैवाधिपतेयं च प्रत्ययो नास्ति पञ्चमः॥४॥

catvāraḥ pratyayā hetur ārambaṇam anantaram |
tathaivādhipateyaṃ ca pratyayo nāsti pañcamaḥ ||2||

如諸法自性 不在於緣中
以無自性故 他性亦復無
(fn =verse I.3.)

rú zhū fǎ zì xìng bù zài yū;yú;wū yuán zhōng
yǐ wú zì xìng gù tā xìng yì fù wú
(fn =verse 1.3.)

|རྐྱེན་རྣམས་བཞི་སྟེ་རྒྱུ་དང་ནི།|དམིགས་པ་དང་ནི་དེ་མ་ཐག|
|བདག་པོ་ཡང་ནི་དེ་བཞིན་ཏེ།|རྐྱེན་ལྔ་པ་ནི་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།|

| rkyen rnam bźi ste rgyu daṅ ni | | dmigs pa daṅ ni de ma thag |
| bdag po yaṅ ni de bźin te | | rkyen lṅa pa ni yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - There are four and only four relational conditions; namely primary causal, appropriating or objectively extending, sequential or contiguous, and dominantly extending conditions. There is no fifth.

JONES (Skt):
[2] There are four conditions: the effective cause, objective support within the world, continuity with previous states, and overall influence. There is no fifth condition.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
There are only four conditions, namely, primary condition, objectively supporting condition, immediately contiguous condition, and dominant condition. A fifth condition does not exist.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
There are only four conditions, namely *hetu* (cause), *alambana*
(supporting condition), *anantaram* (contiguous condition) and *adhipati* (dominant condition). There is no fifth condition.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. The Real Truth as four are Reason, which is pervading through the Universe,
The external world, which is hanging in front of us, and the present moment, at which our action is always done,
And the Reality, which seems to be the Ruler of all things and phenomena.
But the Real Truth, which is No. 5, does never exist anywhere at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 Four only are the conditions of arising: cause, objective basis, the immediately preceding condition, and the decisive factor; there is no Fifth condition. (fn This puts a Buddhist opponent's view.)

STRENG (Skt):
2. There are four conditioning causes A cause (hetu) (1), objects of sensations (2), "immediately preceding condition," (3) and of course the predominant influence (4) there is no fifth.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
II. Four can be the conditions
(Of every thing produced),
Its cause, its object, its foregoing moment,
Its most decisive factor.

ROBINSON (Skt):
There are four conditions—the cause, the object-basis, the immediate, and the dominant. There is no fifth condition.

BOCKING (Ch) [=Skt verse 3]:
1v4 As no self-nature of dharmas
Is found in the midst of causes
So, because there is no self-nature
There is also no other-nature.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
There are four conditions: Causes, objects, immediate and dominant. There is no fifth.

DOCTOR (Tb):
There are four conditions:
Causal, objective, immediately preceding,
And, likewise, the ruling.
There is no fifth condition. [I.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. There are four conditions: efficient condition;
Percept-object condition; immediate condition;
Dominant condition, just so.
There is no fifth condition.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. There are four conditions. There is an efficient condition;
And similarly, there is the objective condition,
Immediate condition, and the dominant condition.
There is no fifth condition.

HAGEN (paraphrase):

Things appear to exist under four conditions only: 1) they show up (2) in a context (3) with a history and (4) [sometimes] by design

ROBINSON (Ch):

Cause condition, next number condition, condition condition, increase over condition, four condition produce all-the dharma. Further inexist number five condition. [3rd Verse of Chinese]

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):

"Produce all-the dharma" is added by the translators, probably because there is no verb in the first clause of the Sanskrit, where one would normally supply *asti*. The Chinese addition is interpretive, but valid. Yuan yuan 緣緣 (conditioned condition) stands for *alambana-pratyaya*. Kumarajiva more often than not translates *alambana* by *yuan* rather than by the unambiguous *p'an-yuan* 攀緣 which he sometimes uses. As a consequence Chinese Buddhists have often confused the concepts of *alambana* and *pratyaya*. See also verse 11 [=KI.8].

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/4 No self-nature of dharmas is found in the midst of causes. because of the combination of causes, we get nomenclature Self-nature means the same as self-substance. In the midst of causes there is no self-nature, and since self-nature does not exist there is no self-production. Since self-nature does not exist, other-nature does not exist either, and why? Because the existence of other-nature depends on the existence of self-nature. An "other-nature", for that other, is in fact a self-nature. If self-nature is refuted, then other-nature too is refuted, and therefore there cannot be production from other-nature. If self-nature and other-nature are refuted, then the idea of both together is refuted. To say "without a cause" is a great error. Arguments invoking cause can be refuted; how much more if you say "without a cause": Arising cannot be established in any of these four ways, and therefore there is no arising.

Question: An Abhidharmist would say that dharmas arise from four kinds of causes, so why do you say that there is no arising? What are these four causes?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Here cause (*hetu*) is taken to mean the actualizing factor; that which is determined as what actualizes something else is the causal condition (*hetupratyaya*). When a particular mind content (*dharma*) arises, it arises with reference to an object (*alambana*) and that is its objective basis. The extinction of the immediately preceding factor (*anantara*) — the cause — is the condition for the arising of the effect; for example, the immediately preceding extinction of the seed is the condition for the arising of the sprout. The decisive factor (*adhipateya*) is the factor because of whose existence something else will come to be.

These are the four conditions of arising. Such factors as prior, simultaneous or subsequent origination are included in them. Conditions such as 'god' in no way exist. Hence the restriction 'there is no fifth condition'. It follows that things do arise from other existing things: this is called 'arising from another'.

In reply we say that nothing whatsoever arises from conditions which are other than itself.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Candrakīrti's comments on this verse have misled almost everyone who analysed the contents of this chapter. He could not have been unaware that the theory of four conditions (pratyaya) was presented for the first time by the Abhidharmikas. However, he failed to distinguish the Abhidharma theory (see AK 2.61-62) from those of the interpreters of the Abhidharma, namely, the Sarvastivadins (like Vasumitra) and the Sautrantikas (see Akb p). He simply assumed that the theory of conditions represents an instance of external causation. Hence his statement: "Therefore, since things arise from those that are external, there is arising from another" (tasmad ebhyah parabhutebhyo bhavanam utpattir asti parata-utpattir iti, p. 77).

In the first place, such an interpretation would leave a rather tainted image of Nagarjuna as an unsystematic philosopher, for having spoken of four causal theories beginning with self-causation (svata-utpatti), Nagarjuna is

here represented as elaborating upon the second, namely, external causation (parata-utpatti), ignoring selfcausation altogether.

Secondly, while the four causal theories mentioned in I.1 are categorically denied by Nagarjuna, no such denial is made of the four theories of conditions (pratyaya). Thus, unlike Candrakīrti, Nagarjuna seems to have accepted the Abhidharmika theory of four conditions, without characterizing it either as self-causation or as external causation. After stating the Abhidharma theory, Nagarjuna then proceeds to analyse the views of the interpreters of Abhidharma, and, as the verse that immediately follows (I.3) seems to indicate, be found that these are the ones who produced theories of self-causation (svata-utpatti) and external causation (parataupatti) out of the Abhidharma theory of conditions (pratyaya).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. The general classification of conditions Nāgārjuna employs is pretty standard in Indian and especially in Buddhist accounts of explanation. But there are two specific features of Nāgārjuna's presentation that should be noted: First, since he is writing with specifically soteriological goals in mind, which require the practitioner to develop a deep insight into the nature of his/her own mind, there is a specifically psychological emphasis in the presentation. We must be aware both of this emphasis and of the natural generalization away from that particular domain that the account supports. Second, it will be of paramount importance to Nāgārjuna that the analysis of the relation of conditions to the conditioned involves ascribing neither inherent existence nor causal power to the conditions. Efficient conditions are those salient events that explain the occurrence of subsequent events: Striking a match is the efficient condition for its lighting. My fingers depressing the keys of this computer is the efficient condition for the creation of this text. The percept-object condition is in its primary sense the object in the environment that is the condition for a mind's perception of it. So when you see a tree, the physical tree in the environment is the percept-object condition of your perceptual state. Now things get vexed here in a number of ways. First, there is no unanimity in the world, or even in Buddhist philosophy, regarding the analysis of perception and, hence, no consensus on the view just adumbrated that external objects are the percept-object conditions of perceptual awareness. Idealists, for instance, argue that the percept-object conditions are to be located in the subject. Second, many fans of percept-object conditions, on both sides of the idealist/realist divide, argue that the substantial existence of such a condition, and the appropriate exercise of its power to produce perception, is a necessary condition of perception. Nāgārjuna will be concerned to reject any such analysis - whether idealist or realist - in virtue of his attack on the notions of substantial existence, substantial difference, and causal power. Third, within the psychological domain, the account generalizes beyond perception. Conceptual states, imaginings, reasoning - all can have percept-object conditions. To Western philosophical ears this seems odd. But from the standpoint of Buddhist epistemology and psychology, intentional (fn 21. "Intentional" is here being used in the sense of Brentano and of recent Western philosophy of mind - to mean contentful or directed upon an object. I do not use the term to mean purposeful.) activity generally is the natural kind comprised by "perception." So the point is that the intentional existence of the golden mountain is a percept-object condition of my being able to doubt that there is such - a thing. Finally, the analysis bears generalization well beyond the psychological. For at the most abstract level, what is distinct about a percept-object condition is its existence simultaneously with and as a support for what it conditions. So Nāgārjuna's attack on a substantialist understanding of this kind of explanans will apply, mutatis mutandis, to the case of a table supporting a book.

The dominant condition is the purpose or end for which an action is undertaken. My hoped for understanding of Madhyamika might be the dominant condition for my reading Nāgārjuna's text, its presence before my eyes the percept-object condition, and the reflected light striking my eyes the efficient condition. The immediate conditions are the countless intermediary phenomena that emerge upon the analysis of a causal chain, in this case, the photons striking my retina, the excitation of photoreceptor cells, and so forth. (fn 22. Georges Dreyfus (personal communication) notes that the understanding of the nature of percept-object conditions and dominant conditions in Mahayana Buddhist philosophy undergoes a significant transformation a few centuries later at the hands of Dignaga and Dharmakirti and that Nāgārjuna is here making use of older Sarvastivadin understandings of these terms to demonstrate the emptiness of conditions so understood.)

A nonpsychological example might be useful to illustrate the difference between 'the four kinds of condition and the picture Nāgārjuna suggests of explanation in the most general sense: Suppose that you ask, "Why are the lights on?" I might reply as follows: (1) "Because I flicked the switch." I have appealed to an efficient condition. Or, (2) "Because the wires are in good working order, the bulbs haven't burned out, and the electricity is flowing." These are supporting conditions. Or, (3) "The light is the emission of photons each of which is emitted in response to the bombardment of an atom by an electron, and so forth." I have appealed to a chain of immediate conditions. Or, (4) "So that we can see." This is the dominant condition. Any of these would be a perfectly good answer to the "Why?" question. But note that none of them makes reference to any causal powers or necessitation. (fn 23. Wood (1994) argues (see esp. pp. 48-53, pp. 63-64) that Nāgārjuna here argues that nothing arises at

all. He claims that the argument begins by providing an exhaustive enumeration of the ways in which a thing could arise and then proceeds to eliminate each of these. This analysis, however, is problematic on two counts: First, it ignores the distinction between conventional, dependently arisen phenomena and inherently existent phenomena. To say that inherently existent phenomena cannot arise in any way, or that there can be no inherently existent production, is not thereby to say that there is no conventional dependency, or that there are no dependently arisen phenomena. Second, Wood ignores the positive account of on conditions presented in this chapter. His interpretations of the various commentaries that he cites in defense of this nihilistic reading are similarly marked by inattention to this set of distinctions, which I (and many others, including both canonical and modern interpreters) argue are crucial to understanding this text. Wood says, "If Nāgārjuna wished to avoid the nihilistic conclusion that things do not originate *period*, he would never have said in 1.1a that things do not arise. Furthermore, he would either have had to specify the way that things *do* arise, but in some *miraculous* or *inexplicable* way" (p. 63 [emphasis in original]). But on my reading at I: 1, Nāgārjuna does not say that things do not arise period. He simply says that they do not arise by means of an inherently existent causal process. And he does both here and in subsequent chapters explain how things arise in a decidedly nonmiraculous way. But see Nagao (1989) for an interpretation in accord with my own: "Dependent co-arising refers to a causal relationship wherein no essence is present at any time in either cause or result. Thus the sentence 'Nothing arises from itself; nothing arises from another,' is not intended to refute arising. It is a negation of others that might be explained as 'from themselves' or 'from others.' " (p. 7))

The next three verses are crucial to Nāgārjuna's understanding of the nature of conditions and their role in explanation. Nāgārjuna first notes (I: 3) that in examining a phenomenon and its relations to its conditions, we don't find that phenomenon somehow contained potentially in those conditions:

Kārikā I.3

न हि स्वभावो भावानां प्रत्ययादिषु विद्यते।
अविद्यमाने स्वभावे परभावो न विद्यते॥५॥

na hi svabhāvo bhāvānāṃ pratyayādiṣu vidyate |
avidyamāne svabhāve parabhāvo na vidyate ||3||

因緣次第緣 緣緣增上緣
四緣生諸法 更無第五緣
(fn =verse I.2.)

yīn yuán cì dì yuán yuán yuán zēng shàng yuán
sì yuán shēng zhū fǎ gèng;gēng wú dì wǔ yuán
(fn =verse 1.2.)

།དངོས་པོ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་ནི།།རྐྱེན་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།བདག་གི་དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་མིན་ན།།གཞན་དངོས་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| dṅos po rnams kyi (5)raṅ bźin ni | | rkyen la sogs la yod ma yin |
| bdag gi dṅos po yod min na | | gźan dṅos yod pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - In these relational conditions the self-nature of the entities cannot exist. From the non-existence of self-nature, other-nature too cannot exist.

JONES (Skt):
[3] The self-existence of entities is not found in their conditions; and if there is no self-existence, no other-existence (i.e., the self-existence of something else [15.3]) can be found either.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The self-nature of existents is not evident in the conditions, etc. In the absence of self-nature, other-nature too is not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, no self-nature (own-being, essence) of beings occurs in the conditions of beings.
Since self-nature is not present, other nature does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. A Real Act to go belong to the motion of going,
And so how is it necessary for a Real Action to have any kind of different name at all.
The states of going on have always have the two kinds of going, that is, the motion of going, and the other is the progress of going. ,
Therefore in that case there is no new appearance at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 If there are conditions, things are not self-existent; if there is no self-existence there is no other-existence. (fn *parabhava* existence-as-other, or existence-in-dependence-on-other.)

STRENG (Skt):
3. Certainly there is no self-existence (svabhava) of existing things in conditioning causes, etc; And if no self-existence exists, neither does "other-existence" (parabhava).

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
III. In these conditions we can find
No self-existence of the entities.
Where self-existence is deficient,
Relational existence also lacks.

ROBINSON (Skt):
For own-being of existents does not occur in the conditions, etc., when own-being does not occur, other-being does not occur.

BOCKING (Ch) [=Skt verse 2]:
1v5 Causal condition, sequential cause
Objective cause, predominant cause.
Four causes produce all dharmas
There is no fifth beyond these.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The essence of things does not exist in conditions and so on. If an own thing does not exist, an other thing does not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The nature of things is not
In conditions and so forth.
If there is no thing itself,
How could there be anything other? [I.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. The essence of entities
Is not present in the conditions, etc....
If there is no essence,
There can be no otherness-essence.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. The essence of entities
Does not exist in such things as the conditions.
If the entity that is self does not exist,
The entity that is other does not exist.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
An abiding [self] nature of things is not found in the conditions as they unfold, and since selfhood is not evident, other*dom* is also not evident.

ROBINSON (Ch):
If all-the dharma own nature not be-there in condition inside, through inexist own nature reason, other nature also again inexist. [2nd Verse of Chinese]

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):
The Chinese translates *hi* (for) by *ju* 如 (if, as). The Chinese does not translate *adi* (etc.) and does not show the plural of *-adisu*.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/5 All causes which exist may be summed up as four causes, and through these four causes all things are produced. 'Causal condition' refers to all active dharmas. 'Sequential cause' refers to the dharmas of all past and present thoughts and mental configurations except the very last thoughts and mental configurations of past and present arhats. 'Objective cause' and 'predominant cause' apply to all dharmas.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If, in any way, things which arise as effects and which are other than their conditions truly pre-existed in them, either in all collectively or in each singly, or both together, or indeed elsewhere, then the effect would arise from them. But something cannot, in this sense, exist prior to its arising. If it could, it would be observed, and its arising would be purposeless. Hence if there are conditions of arising, there is no self-existence of things. But if there is no self-existence there is no other- existence (*parabhava*). Coming into existence is to exist, which is to arise. To arise from what is other is to exist in dependence on the other. But there is no such thing. So it does not make sense to say that things arise from what is other than themselves.

Or again it might be argued that things caused, like sprouts, do not exist as such in their causes seeds or whatever it is; their nature is to transform themselves; otherwise it would follow that there was no cause at all.

What is this relation of 'otherness' (*paratva*) of conditions? If Maitra and his fellow worker co-exist, their reciprocal relationship is 'otherness'. But there is no such co-existence of seed and sprout. So, as effects are not in fact self-existent, the seeds and so on cannot exist as other, i.e., there is no 'otherness'. As the very term 'other' does not hold, there can be no arising from an 'other'. This is sheer ignorance of the meaning of the scriptures. The fully realized ones could never utter pronouncements contrary to sense. The intent of the scriptures was explained earlier.

Refutation of origination from generative force

The proponent of origination from conditions is thus disposed of. There is a proponent of origination from generative force (*kriya*). Vision, colour, and the other conditions do not generate visual consciousness (the sensation or perception as mental content) directly, but are called conditions because they give rise to the force which generates perceptual consciousness. It is this force which generates the perception (*vijnana*). Therefore this force generating the perception inheres in the conditions; the conditions do not give rise to perceptual consciousness. It is like the force which cooks rice.

Nagarjuna says

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

These indeed are the most significant statements of Nagarjuna in the present chapter. The fret statement is not a simple but an emphatic denial (na hi) of the view that the substance or self-nature (svabhava) of an existent is found in the condition (pratyaya). Since the theory of conditions is primarily a Buddhist theory, and since among the Buddhist schools the first to advocate a theory of substance (svabhava, dravya) at this early stage was the Sarvastivada school, there can be little disagreement that Nagarjuna's statement represents a outright rejection of the Sarvastivada interpretation of the conditions.

This denial needs to be carefully analysed. In the first place, as noted earlier, the phrase used to express the denial is na vidyate ("is not evident") and not na yujyate ("not proper") or na upapadyate ("not appropriate"). Hence

the denial should be empirically grounded. Secondly, there is no outright denial of the "conditions" (pratyaya) but only of self-nature (svabhava). Neither the Buddha nor the early Abhidharmikas assumed that identity, defined as permanent substance or self-nature, is a necessary condition for the explanation of conditions or of dependence (pratityasamutpada).

When no such absolute identity is perceived, is it the case that absolute difference is perceived? This would be the case only if the perceptions are confined to the two extremes (anta), not otherwise. In the "Discourse to Katyayana," the Buddha maintains that he will teach a "middle position" without approaching (upagamma) the two extremes of existence and non-existence. This means that he was providing an explanation of existence without relying upon this particular form of explanation. And that middle position allows for an explanation of experience or perception of arising and ceasing in terms of dependence. It is indeed a similar view of existence and non-existence that Nagarjuna is denying, without, at the same time, denying the doctrine of conditions (pratyaya) or of dependence (pratityasamutpada).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. The point being made in the first two lines of the verse is fairly straightforward. When we examine the set of conditions that give rise to an entity - for example, the set of conditions we detailed above for the shining of a lamp, or the conditions for seeing a tree we discussed previously - no analysis of those conditions yields the consequent effect. Dissecting light switches, wires, brains, and so forth, does not reveal any hidden light. Nor is there a tree perception to be found already in the existence of the tree, the eye, and so forth. Rather these phenomena arise as consequences of the collocation of those conditions. To borrow a Kantian turn of phrase, phenomena are not analytically contained in their conditions; rather, a synthesis is required out of which a phenomenon not antecedently existent comes to be.

But Nāgārjuna, through his use of the phrase “the essence of entities” *(dngos-po rnams kyi rang bzhin),* emphasizes a very important metaphysical consequence of this observation: Given that phenomena depend upon their conditions for their existence and given that nothing answering to an essence of phenomena can be located in those conditions and given that there is nowhere else that an essence could come from, it follows that phenomena that arise from conditions are essenceless. One might argue at this point that just as phenomena come into existence dependent upon conditions, their essences come into existence in this way. But what goes for phenomena (fn 24. Especially given the analysis Nāgārjuna will develop of phenomena as empty. See especially chapters XV, XVIII, XXIV.) does not go for essences. For essences are by definition eternal and fixed. They are independent. And for a phenomenon to have an essence is for it to have some permanent independent core. So neither essences nor phenomena with essences can emerge from conditions.

The next two lines require a careful gloss, both because of the complexity of the philosophical point at stake and because of the Buddhist philosophical term of art I translate as “otherness-essence” (Skt: *parabhāva,* Tib: *gzhan dngos).* Let us begin by glossing that term. In its primary sense it means to have, as a thing’s nature, dependence upon another for existence. So for a table, for instance’, to have otherness-essence, according to a proponent of this analysis of the nature of things, might be for it to have as an essential characteristic the property of depending for its existence on some pieces of wood, a carpenter, and so forth. This way of thinking of the nature of things has great appeal - was used by those who defended the analysis of causation as production from other and the analysis of causes and their effects according to which they are linked by causal powers inhering in the causes - particularly for other Buddhist schools who would want to join with Nāgārjuna in denying essence to phenomena. For such a philosopher, it would be congenial to argue that the table has no essence of its own, but has the essential property of depending on its parts, causes, and so forth - an essential property that depends critically on another. And it would then be important to note that this nature relies on the other having an intrinsic connection to the phenomenon in question, a connection realized in the causal powers (or other inherently existent relation to the effect) of that other and, hence, in the other’s own nature. Moreover, it is crucial to such an analysis, if it is not to lapse into the absurdities that plague self-causation, that there be a real, substantial difference in entity - a difference in intrinsic nature between the dependent phenomenon and the conditions on which it depends. Absent such a difference, the otherness required in the analysis cannot be established. (fn 25. Streng (1967) makes a similar point. See pp. 44-45.) Given this understanding of otherness-essence, we can see the arguments Nāgārjuna is ostending in the last two lines of this verse. First, since all entities are without their own essences (that is, without essences that can be specified intrinsically without reference to anything else), the other with respect to which any phenomenon is purportedly essentially characterized will be without an essence, and so there will be no basis on which to build this otherness-essence. Second, without individual essences, there will be no basis on which to draw the absolute, essential distinctions necessary to establish phenomena as intrinsically other than their conditions. Without individual essences there are not substantial differences. Without

substantial differences, there are no absolute others by means of which to characterize phenomena. Third, in order to characterize phenomena as essentially different from their conditions, it is important to be able to characterize them independently. Otherwise, each depends for its identity on the other, and they are not truly distinct in nature. But the whole point of otherness-essence is that things in virtue of having it are essentially dependent. So the view is in fact internally contradictory. Given that things have no intrinsic nature, they are not essentially different. Given that lack of difference, they are interdependent. But given that interdependence, there cannot be the otherness needed to build otherness-essence out of dependence.

Now, on the reading of this chapter that I am suggesting, we can see conditions simply as useful explanans. Using this language, Nāgārjuna is urging that even distinguishing between explanans and explanandum as distinct entities, with the former containing potentially what the latter has actually, is problematic. What we are typically confronted with in nature is a vast network of interdependent and continuous processes, and carving out particular phenomena for explanation or for use in explanations depends more on our explanatory interests and language than on joints nature presents to us. Through addressing the question of the potential existence of an event in its conditions, Nāgārjuna hints at this concealed relation between praxis and reality.

Next, Nāgārjuna notes (I: 4) that in invoking an event or entity as a condition in explanation. we do not thereby ascribe it any causal power:

Kārikā I.4

क्रिया न प्रत्ययवती नाप्रत्ययवती क्रिया।
प्रत्यया नाक्रियावन्तः क्रियावन्तश्च सन्त्युत॥६॥

kriyā na pratyayavatī nāpratyayavatī kriyā |
pratyayā nākriyāvantaḥ kriyāvantaś ca santy uta ||4||

果為從緣生 為從非緣生
是緣為有果 是緣為無果

guǒ wéi cóng yuán shēng wéi cóng fēi yuán shēng
shì yuán wéi yǒu guǒ shì yuán wéi wú guǒ

|བྱ་བ་རྐྱེན་དང་ལྡན་པ་མེད།|རྐྱེན་དང་མི་ལྡན་བྱ་བ་མེད།
|བྱ་བ་མི་ལྡན་རྐྱེན་མ་ཡིན།|བྱ་བ་ལྡན་ཡོད་འོན་ཏེ་ན།|

| bya ba rkyen daṅ ldan pa yin | | rkyen daṅ mi ldan bya ba med |
| bya ba mi ldan rkyen (2a1)ma yin | | bya ba ldan yod ’on te na |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - The functional force does not inhere relational conditions, nor does it not inhere them. The relational conditions, vice versa, do not inhere the functional force, nor do they not inhere it.

JONES (Skt):
[4] Activity does not *have* conditions, nor does it *not have* conditions. Moreover, conditions do not exist with the power to act, nor without the power to act.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Activity is not constituted of conditions nor is it not non-constituted of conditions. Conditions are neither constituted nor non-constituted of activity.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Causal efficacy is not to be associated with conditions,
causal efficacy is not associated with nonconditions,
conditions are not associated with causal efficacy or
noncausal efficacy.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. The Real Act to go always belongs to the motion of going,
And something related with going on, and something related with the Real Action, have combined into one.
The True Reality can never be an imitation of Real Action,
Because it is clear that something, which might be the same as a continuous Action, really exists in front of us.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 Force is not inherent in conditions Nor is generative force not inherent in conditions. There are no conditions without generative force. But conditions have no generative force.

STRENG (Skt):
4. The efficient cause (kriya – primary condition, root cause, motive) does not exist possessing a conditioning cause, Nor does the efficient cause exist without possessing a conditioning cause. Conditioning causes are not without efficient causes, Nor are there conditioning causes which possess efficient causes.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
IV. No energies in causes,
Nor energies outside them.
No causes without energies,
Nor causes that possess them,

ROBINSON (Skt):
Action is not condition-having; action is not non-condition-having; conditions are not non-action-having and are not action-having, either.

BOCKING (Ch):
1v6 Do effects arise from causes?
Or do they arise from non-causes?
Do these causes have effects?
Or do these causes have no effects?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
There is no activity which has conditions. There is no activity which does not have conditions. There are no conditions which do not have activity, and none which do have activity.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Actions do not have conditions,
Yet there are no actions without conditions.
Without an action there are no conditions,
Yet no conditions are involved in an action. [I.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. Power to act does not have conditions.
There is no power to act without conditions.
There are no conditions without power to act.
Nor do any have the power to act.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. Action does not have conditions.
There is no action without conditions.
There are no conditions without action.
Nor do any have action.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The power to produce an effect is not in the conditions nor is it not in the conditions. Conditions are neither with nor without the power to produce an effect.

ROBINSON (Ch):
Effect is-it from condition arise? Is-it from non condition arise? This condition is-it have effect? This condition is-it have-no effect?

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):
The Sanskrit negates the alternatives, while the Chinese poses them as affirmative alternative questions. *Kuo* 果 (effect) points to a Sanskrit *karya* rather than *kriya* (Hatani, Chukanbu I, p. 65, n. 27). If Kumarajlva read *karya*, though, he could not have read the feminine *pratyayavati*. *Ts'ung . . . sheng* 從…生 (from . . . arise) paraphrases -*vant* (having) inaccurately, and obscures the idea of the inherence of the effect, or the potency to produce it, in the cause. *Apratyayavati* could be either "having a non-condition" or "non-having a condition." *Fei-yuan* 非緣 means "non-condition." The other alternative would translate as *wu-yuan* (have-no condition). Compare *wu-kuo* 無果 (have-no effect, effectless) for *apratyayavati* in the second half of this verse.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/6 If, as you say, there are effects, do these effects arise from causes, or do they arise from non-causes? If as you say, there are causes, do these causes have effects or do they have no effects? Both of these are wrong, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

4a *Force is not inherent in conditions*

If there were any such force it would, being inherent in the conditions, generate perceptual consciousness by means of the eye and the other conditions. But it is not so. Why? Should this force be supposed after the perception exists, or before it exists or even as it is generated? To suppose it after the perception exists makes no sense because a force produces something real. If something has been produced what need would it have of a force? This has been made clear in the *Madhyamakavatara* in such passages: 'A second birth of what is already born makes no sense.'

Supposing a force before the perception exists makes no sense either. To quote the *Madhyamakavatara* again: 'Generation cannot, intelligibly, take concrete form in the absence of an agent.' Nor is force possible which is born simultaneously with the generation of the perception because there can be no generation independently of what is generated or not generated.

As has been said: 'What is being generated is not generated, because it is only half generated; else it follows that absolutely everything is in the state of being generated.' As, thus, a generative force is not possible in past, present or future it follows that such does not exist. That is why Nagarjuna says: 'Force is not inherent in conditions.' In the *Madhyamakavatara* it is explained 'There can be no characterization without something characterized.' The son of a barren woman cannot be said to possess a cow.

It makes no sense either, Nagarjuna says, that generative force is not inherent in conditions.

4b *Nor is generative force not inherent in conditions.*

If generative force is not inherent in conditions, how could it exist as non-inherent, for it would be non-causal? How could it be supposed to be sensible that if cloth is not inherent in threads it is inherent in coarse grass? It follows that generative force does not generate things. If someone objects: 'If it is impossible that causation stems from generative force, then conditions themselves will generate things', Nagarjuna continues:

4c *There are no conditions without generative force.*

If there is no force then conditions will lack generative force, will have no inherent force, will be non-causal. How will they give birth to anything? But as they give birth to something they do possess generative force.

Nagarjuna concludes:

4d *But conditions have no generative force.*

The negation derives from the *kārikā* as a whole; the word 'but' adds emphasis. The meaning is that generative forces do not exist. How can there be generative forces in conditions? As it was claimed that there is a force generating perceptual consciousness, so should similar forces be understood. There is no origination of things from forces. The very term 'arising' is devoid of meaning.

Refutation of conditions

Someone may object: What is the point of this discussion concerning conditions having inherent force? After all some things, such as perceptual consciousness, arise in dependence on other things, such as the eye, as their conditions. Therefore the eye and so on are 'conditions' because perceptual consciousness arises from them.

Nagarjuna says that this makes no sense either:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The former reads santy atu, which is corrected in the latter as santy uta. The term kriya, used in philosophical discourse, can convey two meanings. First, it can refer to an inherent activity, a power or potentiality (sakti) in something to produce an effect (artha). Activity would then be an embodiment of a condition (kriya pratyayavati) or a condition would be an embodiment of activity (pratyaya kriyavantah). In either case, the activity or the condition is said to produce the effect (artha). This, once again, is the substantialist interpretation of causation. If the philosophical explanation of experience is confined to the two alternatives, then the contrasting view would be that activity is not an embodiment of a condition (apratyayavati kriya) or that a condition is not an embodiment of activity (pratyaya akriyavantah). And Nagarjuna says no to both extremes.

The denial of the above extremes does not mean the denial of a second meaning that can be attributed to both kriya and pratyaya, namely, the pragmatic view which defines both in terms of the effect (artha). Nagarjuna was not unaware of such an explanation of activity, for in the Buddhist context kriya is generally identified with arthakriya (-karitra) or simply karitra.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. This is the beginning of Nāgārjuna's attack on the causal power/ cement-of-the-universe view of causation and his contrastive development of his regularity view of conditioned dependent arising. Causal powers, according to those who posit them, are meant to explain the causal nexus - they are meant to explain how it is that causes bring about their effects, which is itself supposed to be otherwise inexplicable. But, Nāgārjuna argues, if there were a causal power, it itself, as a phenomenon, would either have to have conditions or not. If the former, there is a vicious explanatory regress, for then one has to explain how the powers to act are themselves brought about by the conditions, and this is the very link presupposed by the friend of powers to be inexplicable. One could posit powers the conditions have to bring about powers and powers the powers have to bring about effects. But this just moves one step further down the regress.

If, on the other hand, one suggests that the powers have no condition, one is stuck positing uncaused and inexplicable occult entities as the explanans of causation. If what is to be explained is how it is that all phenomena are brought about by causal processes, it is a bit embarrassing to do so by reference to unobserved entities that are explicitly e){empted from this otherwise universal condition. Moreover, there is then no explanation of how these powers arise and why they come to be where they are. This is all startlingly anticipatory of Wittgenstein's famous echo of Hume in the *Tractatus:* 6.371 The whole modern conception of the world is founded on the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena. 6.372 Thus people today stop at the laws of nature, treating them as something inviolable, just as God and Fate were treated in past ages. And in fact both are right and both are wrong: though the view of the ancients is clearer in so far as they have a clear and acknowledged terminus, while the modern system tries to make it look as if *everything* were explained. (fn 26. There is, as Tuck (1990) has noted, a current fashion of using Wittgenstein to explicate Nāgārjuna and other Mādhyamika philosophers. Most (e.g. Huntington [1983a, 1983b, 1989], Gudmunson [1977], and Thurman [1984]) emphasize connections to the *Philosophical Investigations*, indeed with good reason. But (as Waldo [1975, 1978] and Anderson [1985] as well as Garfield [1990, 1994, unpublished] have noted) the *Tractatus* is also a useful fulcrum for exegesis, particularly of Nāgārjuna's work. Tractarian ideas also inform my discussion of Nāgārjuna on positionlessness, the limits of expressibility, and the relation between the two truths below. None of this, however, should be taken either as implying that Nāgārjuna would agree with everything in the *Tractatus* (assuredly he would not) or that the parallels drawn between Mādhyamika philosophy and themes in the *Philosophical Investigations* are spurious. They are in fact often quite illuminating.) In the next two lines, as we will often see in the text, Nāgārjuna is speaking in two senses - first, from the conventional standpoint, and second, from the ultimate. In the third line of the verse, he notes that conditions can certainly, in a perfectly legitimate sense, be appealed to as the things that bring about their effects; in that sense, we can say that they are efficacious - that they have the power to act. But in the fourth line he emphasizes that we cannot, so to speak, quantify over this power, identifying it as a phenomenon or property possessed by the conditions. There are no powers in that sense. Just as we can act for someone else's sake, despite there being no sakes, we can appeal to the potency of conditions despite their being no such potency. The trick is to make correct use of

conventional locutions without reifying denotata for all of the terms. For example, we might ask a farmer, “Do these seeds have the power to sprout?” as a way of asking whether they are fertile. It would be then perfectly appropriate for him to answer in the affirmative. But if we then asked him to show us where in the seed the power is located, he would be quite justified in regarding us as mad. (fn 27. This example was suggested to me in conversation by the Yen. Geshe Lobzang Gyatso.)

Our desire for light does not exert some occult force on the lights. Nor is there anything to be found in the flicking of the switch other than the plastic, metal, movement, and connections visible to the naked eye. Occult causal powers are singularly absent. On the other hand, Nāgārjuna points out in this discussion that this does not mean that conditions are explanatorily impotent. In a perfectly *ordinary* sense - not the sense that the metaphysicians of causation have in mind - our desire *is* active in the production of light. But not in the sense that it contains light potentially, or some special causal power that connects our minds to the bulbs. What is it, then, about some sets of event pairs (but not others) that make them dependently related if not some causal link ‘present in those cases but not in others?

Kārikā I.5

उत्पद्यते प्रतीत्येमानितीमे प्रत्ययाः किल।
यावन्नोत्पद्यत इमे तावन्नाप्रत्ययाः कथम्॥७॥

utpadyate pratītyemān itīme pratyayāḥ kila |
yāvan notpadyata ime tāvan nāpratyayāḥ katham ||5||

因是法生果 是法名為緣
若是果未生 何不名非緣

yīn shì fǎ shēng guǒ shì fǎ míng wéi yuán
ruò shì guǒ wèi shēng hé bù míng fēi yuán

།འདི་དག་ལ་བརྟན་སྐྱེ་བས་ན། །དེ་ཕྱིར་འདི་དག་རྐྱེན་ཅེས་གྲག།
།ཇི་སྲིད་མི་སྐྱེ་དེ་སྲིད་དུ། །འདི་དག་རྐྱེན་མིན་ཇི་ལྟར་མིན།།

| ’di dag la brten skye bas na | | de phyir ’di dag rkyen ces grag |
| ji srid mi skye de srid du | | ’di dag rkyen min ji ltar min |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - Only as entities are uniquely related and originated can they be described in terms of relational conditions. For, how can non-relational conditions be asserted of entities which have not come into being?

JONES (Skt):
[5] Conditions are called “conditions” because something arises dependent upon something else. But as long as that “something” does not arise, why are the conditions not really non-conditions?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
These are conditions, because depending upon them these [others] arise. So long as these [others] arise, why are they not non-conditions?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What arises “depends” on these so-called conditions.
So long as there is no arising, how are these not nonconditions?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. In the continuity of going on, and in the Real Action of going on,
What is called the attached situations may be the two kinds of separated parts,
The one is just the concrete facts of continuous going on,
And the other is just the Real Act here, which is the Real Action to go here again.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 Let those things, dependent on which something arises, be conditions; how will such things not be non-conditions so long as nothing arises?

STRENG (Skt):
5. Certainly those things are called "conditioning causes" whereby something originates after having come upon them; As long as something has not originated, why are they not so long (i.e. during that time) "non-conditioning-causes" ?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
V. Let those facts be causes
With which coordinated other facts arise,
Non-causes will they be,
So far the other facts have not arisen.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
I.5 Something is called ‘condition’ because in dependence on it something else arises. But as long as the second something does not arise, why do we not refer to the first something as a ‘non-condition’?

ROBINSON (Skt):
When [anything] arises having depended on these, these are indeed conditions. So long as this is not arisen, why are these not non-conditions?

BOCKING (Ch):
1v7 When an effect arises from a certain dharma,
This dharma is called a cause.
If such an effect has not yet arisen,
How can we not call it a non-cause?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Since something is born in dependence upon them, then they are known as “conditions”. As long as it is not born, why are they not non-conditions?

DOCTOR (Tb):
They are known as conditions
Because things arise in dependence on them.
Yet as long as nothing arises,
Why would they not be nonconditions? [I.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. These give rise to those,
So these are called conditions.
As long as those do not come from these,
Why are these not non-conditions?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. Since in dependence on these there is arising,
These are *called* conditions.
As long as those do not arise,
Why are they not nonconditions?

HAGEN (paraphrase):

[We may think] effects depend on conditions, but how can what does not appear as an object (i.e. field-like conditions) depend on conditions?

ROBINSON (Ch):

Rest-on this dharma arise effect, this dharma name be condition. If/when this effect not-yet arise, why not name non condition?

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):

The translators supply *kuo* 果 (effect), which corresponds to a remote antecedent of *utpadyate* (arises), and *shih fa* 是法 (this dharma/dharmas), which corresponds to the pronouns *iman* and *ime*. This is a good explicative paraphrase.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/7 All causes are indeterminate, and why? Because if their effects have not yet arisen, then they are not yet called causes. I is only because we see with our eyes effects arising out of causes that we declare them to be causes. They become causes by virtue of the effects. Since the effects follow after and the causes go before, when there is not yet any effect how can we call something a cause? It is like a jug, produced through the combination of water and earth. It is because we see the jug that we know water and earth to be the causes of the jug, but if the jug were not yet produced, how could we not declare the water and earth to be non-causes? Therefore effects do not arise from causes, and if there is no arising with causes, how much more so without causes?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If perceptual consciousness arises dependent on the eye, colour and so on as conditions, then these are said to be its conditions. But surely as long as what is called the perception — the 'effect' — has not arisen, the eye, colour and so on cannot fail to be non-conditions? The meaning is that they are non-conditions. There can be no arising from non-conditions, even as sesame oil cannot arise from grains of sand.

Again' there might be this thought: What are at one time non-conditions become causally effective through relationship to some other condition. But this makes no sense either. The very condition which is other than the non-condition but is supposed to be its causal efficacy will itself be a cause only if it really is causally efficacious. In this case precisely the same consideration arises as before, and it does not make sense.

If, in this example, the eye, colour and so on are conceived as the conditions of perceptual consciousness, they must be conceived as the conditions of either an existing or of a non- existing perception. But Nagarjuna says there is no way in which either can make sense.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The first line of this verse presents a definition of a condition (pratyaya) that would satisfy the pragmatic sense referred to earlier and therefore would be acceptable to the early Buddhist as well as Nagarjuna. However, Nagarjuna wants to make sure that there are no metaphysical interpretations of this definition of condition. Would someone assume that for this statement to be true the dependence has to be invariable and eternal? In fact, the Sarvastivada notion of self-nature, in terms of which they defined a condition, implied such eternalism. In spite of the Sarvastivada assertion, no such guarantee can be given on empirical grounds. If so, it is appropriate to ask the question as to whether the so-called condition has to be called a non-condition so long as the effect does not arise. This means that it is inappropriate to say that a condition is such by its own nature (svabhava). Instead, it becomes a condition depending upon the arising of the effect.

5. ("So these are called" - fn 28. The verb here is *"grog"* (Skt: *kilo),* which indicates that the embedded content is not endorsed. That is, the first two lines of this verse are in the mouth of the opponent.)

One might answer this question, Nāgārjuna notes in the opponent's suggestion in the first two lines, by noting the presence of some relation of "giving rise to," realized in a power. But, he rejoins in the final two lines, this move is blocked: For having shown the ·absence and the theoretical impotence of such a link, it· would follow that there would be no conditions. Nāgārjuna hence suggests here that it is the regularities that count. Flickings give rise to illuminations. So they are conditions of them. If they didn't, they wouldn't be. Period. Explanation relies on regularities. Regularities are explained by reference to further regularities. Adding active forces or potentials adds nothing of explanatory utility to the picture. (fn 29. The Madhyamika position implies that we should seek to explain regularities by reference to their embeddedness in other regularities, and so on. To ask why there are regularities at all, on such a view, would be to ask an incoherent question: The fact of explanatorily useful regularities in nature is what makes explanation and investigation possible in the· first place and is not something itself that can be explained. After all, there is only one universe, and truly singular phenomena, on such a view, are inexplicable in principle. This may connect deeply to the Buddha's insistence that questions concerning the beginning of the world are unanswerable.)

In reading the next few verses, we must be hermeneutically cautious ,and pay careful attention to Nāgārjuna's use of the term "existent" (Tib: *yod-pa, Skt: sat)* and its negative contrastive "nonexistent" (Tib: *med-pa, asat).* For Nāgārjuna is worried here about *inherent* existence and *inherent* nonexistence, as opposed to *conventional* existence or nonexistence. For a thing to exist inherently is for it to exist in virtue of possessing an essence - for it to exist independently of other entities and independently of convention. For a thing to be inherently nonexistent is for it to not exist in any sense at all - not even conventionally or dependently. With this in mind, we can see how Nāgārjuna defends dependent arising while rejecting causation:

Kārikā I.6

नैवासतो नैव सतः प्रत्ययोऽर्थस्य युज्यते।
असतः प्रत्ययः कस्य सतश्च प्रत्ययेन किम्॥८॥

naivāsato naiva sataḥ pratyayo ’rthasya yujyate |
asataḥ pratyayaḥ kasya sataś ca pratyayena kim ||6||

果先於緣中 有無俱不可
先無為誰緣 先有何用緣

guǒ xiān yū;yú;wū yuán zhōng yǒu wú jù;jū bù kě
xiān wú wéi shuí yuán xiān yǒu hé yòng yuán

།མེད་དམ་ཡོད་པའི་དོན་ལ་ཡང་། །རྐྱེན་ནི་རུང་བ་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།
།མེད་ན་གང་གི་རྐྱེན་དུ་འགྱུར། །ཡོད་ན་རྐྱེན་གྱིས་ཅི་ཞིག་བྱ།།

| med dam yod pa’i don la yaṅ | | rkyen ni ruṅ (2)ba ma yin te |
| med na gaṅ gi rkyen du ’gyur | | yod na rkyen gyis ci źig bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - Relational condition does not validly belong to either being or non-being. If it belongs to being, for what use is it? And if to non-being, for whose use is it?

JONES (Skt):
[6] A condition is not admitted for either what is not real or for what is real: if something is *nonexistent,* how could it have a condition? And if something is *already existing,* how could it have a condition?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A condition of an effect that is either non-existent or existent is not proper. Of what non-existent [effect] is a condition? Of what use is a condition of the existent [effect]?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Neither being nor nonbeing are associated with conditions of usefulness.
Of what [use] are conditions for nonbeing? And to whom [is there use] in conditions for being?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. The two factors, the one is a person to go and the other is an Action to be done, are combined into one,
The two factors of the Real Action to go, that is, a person to go, and an Action to be done, are combined into one confirmedly.
Generally speaking, a person, who is criticized by others, is prone to be the objects of others1 censure.
Therefore the problem of Action to go itself is prone to disappear naturally.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 A condition either of what exists or of what does not exist makes no sense: How could there be a condition of the non-existent and how can ‘condition’ apply to what exists?

STRENG (Skt):
6. There can be a conditioning cause neither of a non-real thing (1) nor of a real thing (2). Of what non-real thing is there a conditioning cause? And if it is already real, what use is a cause?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
VI. Neither non-Ens nor Ens
Can have a cause.
If non-Eus, whose the cause?
If Ens, what for the cause?

ROBINSON (Skt):
It is not valid that an existing thing have a condition, nor that a non-existing one. What non-existing one has a condition? And what use is a condition to an existing one?

BOCKING (Ch):
1v8 An effect already given in a cause
Can neither exist nor not exist
If previously non-existent, what would the cause produce?
If already existent, why would the cause be needed?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is impossible for something that either exists or not to have conditions. If it were non-existent, of what would they be the conditions? If it were existent, why would it need conditions?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Neither for the nonexistent, nor for the existent,
Could there possibly be conditions.
For the nonexistent, what would be conditioned?
For the existent, what role could conditions play? [I.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. For neither an existent nor a non-existent thing
Is a condition appropriate.
If a thing is non-existent, how could it have a condition?
If a thing is already existent, what would a condition do?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. For neither an existent nor a nonexistent thing
Is a condition possible:
If a thing is nonexistent, of what would its condition be the condition?
If a thing is already existent, what would a condition do?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Neither existent nor non-existent effects have conditions. If it doesn't exist, what need is a condition? And if it does exist already, what need is a condition?

ROBINSON (Ch):
Effect before in condition inside, exist inexist together not OK. Before inexist sake-of who condition? Before exist what use condition?

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):
A good, clear paraphrase with the same explicative additions as in verse 7 [KI.5]

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/8 There is no prior existence of effects in causes, nor prior non-existence. If an effect already existed, nothing could be called its cause, since the effect was already existent. Similarly, if the effect was all the time inexistent we could not describe something as its cause, since it would not have produced any further entity.

Question: You have refuted causality comprehensively, but now we wish to hear these causes negated one by one.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

6 *A condition* (fn *Pratyaya*: In this passage one would think 'cause' in English) *either of what exists or of what does not exist makes no sense:*

And so he says:

How could there be a condition of the non-existent and how can 'condition' apply to what exists?

If something is non-existent, how can there be a condition of what factually is not? If some future existent is meant, something that will be, this won't do. 'One may refer to a future something, but it cannot be created without a present force.' (*Madhyamakavatara* VI, 58) This logical flaw has been dealt with previously. If something is factually existent, already produced, the idea of its condition is simply pointless.

Refutation of the four special conditions

Having, in this way, shown that conditions in general are inefficacious because of their inability to give rise to effects, Nagarjuna goes on to show the inefficacy of the types of conditions one by one.

Someone may object: Even though, in this sense, conditions are impossible, none the less, because its definition can be given, the idea of condition is commonly accepted. For example, the definition of condition as cause (hetu) (fn 1 this is the first of the four kinds of condition given in *kārikā* 2) is that it brings forth something. But to give the definition of something non-existent, like the son of a barren woman, does not make sense.

We reply: There would be condition as cause if it had a definable nature (*laksanam*). So:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here the condition (pratyaya) is examined in relation to the effect (artha). Even though the criticism up to now has been directed on the metaphysical notion of a substantial condition, and not on a pragmatic definition understood in relation to the effect, the present verse is intended to clarify the nature of the effect. The question is: In terms of what kind of effect should a condition be defined? An existent effect or a non-existent effect? An effect existent in terms of self-nature needs no support for its arising and, as such, a condition would be meaningless. An effect that is non-existent in the sense of being absolutely different from the condition will not be related in any way to a condition.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. He notes here that if entities are conceived as inherently existent, they exist independently and, hence, need no conditions for their production. Indeed, they could not be produced if they exist in this way. On the other hand, if things exist in no way whatsoever, it follows trivially that they have no conditions. (fn 30. See Bhattacharya (1979), esp. pp. 336-37, for a good discussion of this argument.) The following three verses make this point with regard to each of the four kinds of conditions:

Kārikā I.7

न सन्नासन्न सदसन् धर्मो निर्वर्तते यदा।
कथं निर्वर्तको हेतुरेवं सति हि युज्यते॥९॥

na san nāsan na sad asan dharmo nirvartate yadā |
kathaṃ nirvartako hetur evaṃ sati hi yujyate ||7||

若果非有生 亦復非無生
亦非有無生 何得言有緣

ruò guǒ fēi yǒu shēng yì fù fēi wú shēng
yì fēi yǒu wú shēng hé dé;děi;de yán yǒu yuán

|གང་ཚེ་ཆོས་ནི་ཡོད་པ་དང་||མེད་དང་ཡོད་མེད་མི་འགྲུབ་པས|
|ཇི་ལྟར་སྒྲུབ་བྱེད་རྒྱུ་ཞེས་བྱ||དེ་ལྟར་ཡིན་ན་མི་རིགས་སོ||

| gaṅ tshe chos ni yod pa daṅ | | med daṅ yod med mi ’grub pa |
| ji ltar sgrub byed rgyu źes bya | | de lta yin na mi rigs so |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - When a factor of experience does not evolve from being, non-being, nor from both being and non-being, how can there be an effectuating cause? Thus (such) a cause is not permissible. - Note: This verse treats the concept of the primary causal condition (hetu-pratyaya)

JONES (Skt):
[7] So too, when no existing, nonexisting, or existing-and-nonexisting basic phenomena are produced, how is a cause admitted?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Since a thing that is existent or non-existent or both existent and non-existent is not produced, how pertinent in that context would a producing cause be?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Whenever an event that is existent, nonexistent, or both existent and nonexistent does not originate,
how can a cause that thus brings [events] about be reasonable?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. When a person, who acts, is criticized,
A problem of the Real Action to do, does not appear actually to be the special object discussed at all.
If there were no chance for everyone to do anything at all, it might be very happy,
But where is it possible for anyone to have such a happy condition, even anywhere at all?

SPRUNG (Skt):
7. As no putative element of existence, whether existent, non-existent or both is brought forth, how can it make sense that a cause brings something forth?

STRENG (Skt):
7. If an element (dharma) occurs which is neither real nor non-real (4) nor both real- and-non- real (3), How can there be a cause which is effective in this situation?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
VII. Neither an Ens nor a non-Ens,
Nor any Ens-non-Ens,
No element is really turned out.
How can we then assume
The possibility of a producing cause?

ROBINSON (Skt):
When neither an existing nor a non-existing nor an existing-and non-existing dharma generates, how can it be valid, this being so, that [there is] a generating cause?

BOCKING (Ch):
1v9 If neither an existent effect is produced -
Nor an inexistent one is produced,
Nor an existent-and-inexistent one is produced
How can you say that there are causes?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When things cannot be established as either existent, non-existent or both, how can one speak of an “establishing cause.” Such would be impossible.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If no existent, nonexistent, or both existent and nonexistent
Phenomenon comes into being,
How can we speak of “effectuating conditions’’?
When this is the case, they do not make sense. [I.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. When neither existents nor
Non-existents nor existent non-existents are established,
How could one propose a "productive cause?"
If there were one, it would be pointless.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. When phenomena are established
Neither as existent, nor nonexistent, nor as both,
How could one propose a cause for a thing’s existence?
In this case, it would make no sense.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Since effects that exist (or don’t exist, or both exist and don’t exist) are not produced, what sense does it make to speak of what causes them?

ROBINSON (Ch):

If/when effect non exist arise, also again non inexist arise, also non exist inexist arise, how get say exist condition?

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):

The participles *sat* (existing) and *asat* (non-existing) are translated by *yu* 有 (exist, have) and *wu* 無 (inexist, have-no), which elsewhere do duty for a great variety of derivatives of *as* and *bhu*. *Ho te* 何得 (how get) translates *katham yujyate* (how can it be valid). Nirvartako (producer) is not translated by anything. The Sanskrit text of the second line is doubtful. La Vallee Poussin reconstructs from the Tibetan (Prasannapada , p. 83): "*katham nirvartako hetur ity evarh sati na yujate*." The Chinese yen 言 (say) points to *iti* in the original. I suggest as a possible reading: "*katham nirvartako hetur evarh satiti yujyate*."

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/9 If causes could produce effects, then these would be of three kinds; either existent, or inexistent, or both existent-and inexistent. As was argued in the previous verse, if the effect were already existent within its cause, then we could not say that it was produced, because it existed already, and if the effect were previously non-existent, then we could not say that it had been produced, since it did not exist, and because it would be similarly uncaused. As to 'existent-and-inexistent' effects being likewise not produced; 'existent-and-inexistent' means half existent and half inexistent, yet to speak of both at once is wrong. Moreover, existence is the opposite of inexistence, and inexistence is the opposite of existence; how could there be one dharma with two characteristics? Since these three ways of seeking for the characteristic of to producer of an effect' lead nowhere, how can you assert that there are "causal conditions"? As to the 'sequential condition';

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Here 'to bring forth' means to produce. If the element of existence (*dharma*) which is to be brought forth were really brought forth the producing cause would 'produce' it. But it does not come forth: nothing, whether existent, non-existent or both, is brought forth. Nothing existent is brought forth, because it is in existence; nothing non-existent is brought forth because it is not in existence; nor anything both existent and non-existent, because no one thing has mutually contradictory attributes and because of the faults of each view already given. So, as no effect is produced, there is in consequence no cause. Therefore the claim that cause must be factual because its definition can be given does not make sense .

Now, with a view to refuting condition as the objective basis (*alambana*) Nagarjuna says:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is an examination of the first of the four conditions referred to in I.2, namely, a primary condition (hetupratyaya).

After examining the nature of a condition (pratyaya) and the effect (artha) or the causally arisen phenomena (pratityasamutpanna dharma), in this and the next three verses Nagarjuna is directing his attention to the four specific conditions formulated by the Abhidharmikas.

In defining the primary condition, the Abhidharma refers to five of the six causes (hetu)(AK 2.61). They are (1) a "co-operative cause" (sahabhu-hetu) or factors that work together in producing another; (2) the "complementary cause" (sabhaga-hetu), which is a cause helping other causes of its kind; (3) the "associated cause" (samprayuktaka-hetu); (4) the "all pervading cause" (sarvatrage-hetu) and (5) the "fruitioning cause" (vipaka-hetu). However, the interpreters of the Abhidharma defined a primary condition (hetu-pratyaya) as a producing (nirvartaka) or a root cause (mulathena hetu upakarakatthena paccayo, Vism). Nagarjuna, in the hope of clarifying the implications of this definition, raises the question as to whether this condition is supposed to give rise to an existent (sat) phenomena or a non-existent (asat) phenomena or something that is both existent and nonexistent (sad asat). The early Abhidharmikas do not seem to have involved themselves in such speculations regarding the absolute identity or absolute difference between a condition and its effect; hence this criticism of Nagarjuna applies only to the later interpreters of the Abhidharma conception of a primary condition.

Kārikā I.8

अनालम्बन एवायं सन् धर्म उपदिश्यते।
अथानालम्बने धर्मे कुत आलम्बनं पुनः॥१०॥

anārambaṇa evāyaṃ san dharma upadiśyate |
athānārambaṇe dharme kuta ārambaṇaṃ punaḥ ||8||

果若未生時 則不應有滅
滅法何能緣 故無次第緣
(fn =verse I.9.)

guǒ ruò wèi shēng shí zé bù yīng yǒu miè
miè fǎ hé néng yuán gù wú cì dì yuán
(fn =verse 1.9)

།ཡོད་པའི་ཆོས་འདི་དམིགས་པ་ནི།།མེད་པ་ཁོ་ན་ཉེ་བར་བསྟན།
།ཅི་སྟེ་ཆོས་ནི་དམིགས་མེད་ན།།དམིགས་པ་ཡོད་པར་ག་ལ་འགྱུར།།

| yod pa’i chos ’di (3)dmigs pa ni | | med pa kho na ñe bar bstan |
| ci ste chos ni dmigs med na | | dmigs pa yod par ga la ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - It is said that a true factor of experience does not have an appropriating or objectively extending relational condition. If it does not exist, then again, wherein is this type of relational condition?

JONES (Skt):
[8] Something real is shown to be unsupported by another real thing. When a thing exists without such a support, what purpose would an objective support serve?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A thing that exists is indicated as being without objective support. When a thing is without objective support, for what purpose is an objective support?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
This event that exists is described as without a supporting condition.
But where an event is without a supporting condition, again, why [talk of] a supporting condition?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Just the hanging world is this world,
Therefore the Real Universe has been shown already.
Just in the hanging world, or in the Universe,
Where is it necessary for us to find the hanging world again?

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 An existing mental content is, as such, held to be without an objective basis. If it exists without an objective basis, why would there be an objective basis subsequently?

STRENG (Skt):
8. Just that which is without an object of sensation is accepted as a real element; Then if there is an element having no object of sensation, how is it possible to have an object of sensation?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
VIII. A mental Ens is reckoned as an element,
Separately from its objective (counterpart).
Now, if it (begins) by having no objective counterpart.
How can it get one afterwards?

ROBINSON (Skt):
This existing dharma is declared to be without object-basis; then when the dharma is without object-basis, where else is there an object-basis?

BOCKING (Ch):
1v10 Where an effect has not yet arisen
There cannot have been cessation.
Yet how can a ceased dharma be a cause?
Therefore there is no 'sequential cause'.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
An existent phenomenon is clearly said to have no object at all. If the phenomenon has no object, where can the object exist?

DOCTOR (Tb):
It is explained that, with existent phenomena,
There are no observations whatsoever.
How could a phenomenon for which there is no observation
Ever relate to an observation? [I.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. An existent entity (mental episode)
Has no object.
Since a mental episode is without an object,
How could there be any percept-condition?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. You have stated emphatically that it is not the case that
An existent phenomenon has any object at all.
So since phenomena are without objects,
How could there be an objective condition?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
To exist is to be without need of an other. When one thing can exist without another, what purpose would the other serve?

ROBINSON (Ch):

As all-the Buddha what speak true real subtle marvelous dharma, in this inexist condition dharma, say how exist condition condition? [Verse 9 of the Chinese]

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):

Chu fo 諸佛 (all the Buddhas) is added by the translators. *Chen-shih wei-miao fa* 真實微妙法 (real, exquisite Dharma) is redundant by three characters in order to fill out the line. Kumarajiva seems to have read *saddharma* (True Dharma), thus making the verse a scriptural allusion. The *Prasannapada* text is faulty here, and La Vallee Poussin supplies *san dharma* with the note, "Mss. sa dharma, sarvadharma." Kumarajiva's reading may be preferable.

INADA FOOTNOTE

Note: Alambana is normally translated as the object of cognition but here it hardly seems applicable to the concept of dharma (factor of experience).

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/10 All the dharmas of thoughts and mental configurations are produced consecutively in the three periods of time. The cessation of the dharma of a present thought or mental configuration constitutes the sequential cause for a future thought. Yet for what does it constitute a sequential cause if the future dharma has not yet been produced? And if that future dharma is already existent, it is already produced, so what use does it have for a sequential cause?

There is no time when the dharmas of present thoughts and mental configurations are at rest. If they are never at rest, how can they act as sequential causes? If they were at rest, then they would be inactive dharmas. Why is this? Because active dharmas always have the characteristics of cessation. If they have ceased, they cannot act as sequential causes. If you say that a ceased dharma still exists, then this implies permanence, but if there is permanence then there can be no sin and merit, and so forth. If you hold that the moment of cessation can act as a sequential cause, then the moment of cessation must be half ceased and half not-yet-ceased. Apart from these there is no third dharma to be called the moment of cessation. Moreover the Buddha has taught that "all active dharmas cease in successive instants. There is not one single instant when they abide", so how can you say that a present dharma is both on the point of cessation and not on the point of cessation? If you assert that one instant does not include this on the point of cessation and not on the point of cessation, you deny your own dharma. Your Abhidharmist speaks of a dharma of cessation, a dharma of non-cessation, a dharma of on the point of cessation and a dharma of not on the point of cessation. The dharma of on the point of cessation includes present dharmas which are about to cease; the dharma of not on the point of cessation includes, with the exception of present dharmas which are about to cease, the remaining present dharmas plus past, future and inactive dharmas; these are termed not on the point of cessation dharmas. reasons there are no 'sequential causes'.

As to the 'objective cause':

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Which mental contents (*dharma*) are held to be dependent on an objective basis? (fn 2 In the opponent's view.) According to scripture all the contents of consciousness (*cittacaitta*) are. Whatever objective cause - colour or other sense object — produces the contents of consciousness that is their objective basis. It must be thought of as the cause of either existing or of non-existing mental content. In the first case there need be no objective cause of mental contents which exist; indeed the objective cause is conceived in order to explain the arising of mental content; this exists in fact prior to there being an objective cause. The contents of consciousness being thus established as independent and without objective cause, why would a connection with an objective cause be supposed? Consciousness and its contents exist factually without objective causes. To say they have objective causes is the merest caprice, for there is no connection whatsoever between them and objective causes. (fn 3 The Madhyamika view is rather that objective cause and mental content are interdependent and singly unintelligible.)

Second, an objective cause of a non-existing content of consciousness is imagined, which makes equally little sense. 'Mental content is, as such, without an objective basis', as the *kārikā* says. There can be no conjunction of non-existing mental content with an objective cause.

'An existing mental content is, as such, held to be without an objective basis.' Our opponent would have to substitute the phrase 'with objective basis'. 'If a mental content exists without an objective basis, why would there be an objective basis subsequently?' This is a question which gives the explanation. The meaning then becomes: If, thus, a mental content is without an objective basis, it is factually non-existent; how can it then have an objective cause? The thought is that because what justifies the objective cause does not exist, the objective cause itself cannot exist.

But in what sense do the contents of consciousness have objective causes? This is a characterization which holds for the delusive everyday world, but not for the higher truth; so it is not to be faulted.

And now Nagarjuna refutes the idea of condition as the 'immediately preceding condition'.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Abhidharma defines the objectively supporting condition as all "phenomena" (sarvadharmah) (AK 2.61). It was intended to explain the occurrence of all ideas of experience. Buddhism recognized external objects as conditions for the arising of ideas of experience (in contrast to the ideas of imagination). For example, it is admitted that "depending upon eye and visible form arises visual consciousness" (cakkhuñ ca paticca rupe ca uppajjati cakkhuvinnanam, M 1.111-112), and these serve as conditions for the ideas of perceptual experience.

During the Abhidharma period these various conditions as well as the ideas of experience came to be categorized into mind (citta), mental concomitants (caitta, cetasika), and material form (rupa), even though they were not sharply distinguished into substantially different entities as mind and matter. Yet those who defined these categories ultimatley ended up recognizing mental substances and material substances, the mental substances have the capacity to perceive their own mental concomitants (caitta), even though these concomitants are conditioned by materially constituted objects. The mental substances thus became the subject, the mental concomitants the contents of perception and the material form the objective condition. Such speculation not only led to the belief in a cogito, thinking of its own subject-matter (caitta) carrying with it all the metaphysical implications, but also raised the question as to the need for an external object (alambana) as a support for the concomitants. While the question regarding the cogito is taken up by Nagarjuna in Chapter III, the need for an external objective support is raised in the present verse.

Thus, it is recognized by Candrakīrti that the question regarding objective support is raised by Nagarjuna because those whose views he was criticizing admitted a cogito (athaivam analambane dharme svatmana prasiddhe kim asyalambanayogena parikalpitena, (P) 84; (V) 29) This is similar to the refutation of a "material object" by the Western philosopher George Berkeley. If the object appears to the perceiving mind in its own form (i.e. in the form of a mental impression) (svatmana prasiddhe), there is no need for an objective support (alambana). If it does not appear to be the perceiving mind in its own form, it will never be perceived, since the perceiving mind and the material object are of completely different natures (paratman?). This is indeed not a rejection of the notion of an objective support (alambana-pratyaya) per se, but an object that is conceptualized in a metaphysical way, that is, as an object constituted of a material substance distinguished from a mental substance.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. (8. "An existent entity (mental episode)" – fn: 31. The Tibetan is literally *"yod pa'j chos,* " or existent entity. But as both Tsong Khapa (pp. 31-32) and dGe·'dun-grub (p. 12) argue, the entity in question can only be a mental episode.)

Kārikā I.9

अनुत्पन्नेषु धर्मेषु निरोधो नोपपद्यते।
नानन्तरमतो युक्तं निरुद्धे प्रत्ययश्च कः॥११॥

anutpanneṣu dharmeṣu nirodho nopapadyate |
nānantaram ato yuktaṃ niruddhe pratyayaś ca kaḥ ||9||

如諸佛所說 真實微妙法
於此無緣法 云何有緣緣
(fn =verse I.8.)

rú zhū fú;fó suǒ shuì zhēn shí wēi miào fǎ
yū;yú;wū cǐ wú yuán fǎ yún hé yǒu yuán yuán
(fn =verse 1.8.)

|ཆོས་རྣམས་སྐྱེས་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།འགག་པ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
|དེ་ཕྱིར་དེ་མ་ཐག་མི་རིགས།།འགགས་ན་རྐྱེན་ཡང་གང་ཞིག་ཡིན།།

| chos rnams skyes pa ma yin na | | ’gag pa ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |
| de phyir de ma thag mi rigs | | ’gags (4)na rkyen yaṅ gaṅ źig yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - It is not possible to have extinction where factors of experience have not yet arisen. In an extinguished state, for what use is a relational condition? Thus the sequential or contiguous relational condition is not applicable.

JONES (Skt):
[9] When basic phenomena have not arisen first, cessation does not occur. Thus, the condition of “continuity” is not applicable. And when the reality has ceased, what condition applies?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When things are not arisen [from conditions], cessation is not appropriate. When [a thing has] ceased, what is [it that serves as] a condition? Therefore, an immediate condition is not proper.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
When events do not arise, cessation does not happen.
Hence what condition is suitable for a noncontiguous condition in cessation?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. In the Universe, which hasnʇt been accomplished yet,
The self-regulation does never appear actually at all.
The ceaseless considerations can never be any kind of fetters for us at all.
The Real Truth in our self-regulation might be just something ineffable.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 The coming to an end of elements of existence which have never arisen is not logically possible. Hence the immediately preceding condition makes no sense: how could what has come to an end be a condition indeed?

STRENG (Skt):
9. When no elements have originated, their disappearance is not possible. Therefore it is not proper to speak of an "immediately preceding condition"; for if something has already ceased, what cause is there for it.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
IX. If (separate) elements do not exist.
Nor is it possible for them to disappear.
The moment which immediately precedes
Is thus impossible. And if ‘tis gone,
How can it be a cause?

ROBINSON (Skt):
When dharmas have not arisen, cessation is not a fact. And what condition is there in the ceased? Hence the immediate [preceding condition] is not valid.

BOCKING (Ch):
1v11 According to the true and subtle Dharma
Taught by all the Buddhas,
In this Dharma without causes
How can there be objective causes?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If phenomena are not born, it is invalid for there to be cessation. Therefore, an immediate [condition] is unreasonable. What, having ceased, can also be a condition?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If phenomena have not arisen,
Cessation makes no sense.
Hence, an immediately preceding condition is untenable.
If it has ceased, how could it be a condition? [I.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. Since things are not arisen,
Cessation is not acceptable.
Therefore, an immediate condition is not reasonable.
If something has ceased, how could it be a condition?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. Since phenomena are not arisen,
Cessation is not tenable.
Therefore an immediate condition makes no sense.
If something has ceased, how could it be a condition?

HAGEN (paraphrase):

When a thing doesn't appear, it can't cease to appear. When a thing ceases to appear, how can it be conditional? It doesn't exist.

ROBINSON (Ch):

Effect when not-yet arise time, then not ought exist cease. Cease dharma how able condition? Reason inexist next number condition. [Verse 8 of the Chinese]

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):

Jo… shin 若…時 (when … time) renders the locative absolute. *Pu ying yu* 不應有 (not ought exist) stands for *nopapadyate* (is not a fact, is not true to fact). Wu 無 (inexist) stands for *na yuktam* (it is not valid). In the Sanskrit text the third and fourth *padas* are reversed. As Candrakīrti says: "*tenaivam pathah—niruddhe ca pratyayah kah, nanantaram ato yuktam iti*." My translation and the Chinese both follow this principle, the Chinese thus confirming Candrakīrti.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/11 For these The Buddha teaches in the Mahayana that the characteristics of dharmas - whether they have form or do not have form, whether they have shape or do not have shape, whether they have outflows or do not have outflows, whether they are active or inactive, and so forth - all these characteristics enter into the Dharma-nature; 0 everything is entirely empty and so there are no characteristics and no conditions. It is just as if everything flowed into an ocean and merged into one essence. You may believe in the true Dharma, but what is taught as an expedient does not constitute true reality. Therefore there are no objective causes.

As to the 'predominant cause':

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In the last sentence of this *kārikā* the two halves should be transposed; and the word 'indeed' should precede 'come to an end'. The sentence would then be, 'If something has indeed come to an end, how can it be a condition? The immediately preceding condition makes no sense.' It was put the other way for the purposes of verse structure.

In this argument the definition of the immediately preceding condition (*anantara*) is this: the immediately preceding cessation of the cause is the condition of the effect arising (fn 4 Existence is conceived as a series of discrete moments, each perishing before the next arises, yet each being, as it were, the material cause of its successor.).This should be examined. If elements of existence in the form of effects, for example a sprout, do not in fact arise, it is not logically possible that their 'cause', for example a seed, could cease to exist. There being, in this way, no cessation of a cause, what could be the immediately preceding condition of the sprout? Perhaps it is held that the seed ceases to exist before the effect arises. If this is so, when the seed has ceased to exist, is non-existent, what will be the cause of the sprout? Or what will be the cause of the extinction of the seed? Both are without cause; as Nagaijuna put it: 'If something has indeed come to an end how will it be a condition?' The word 'indeed' refers back to the phrase 'which have never arisen'. It follows that if the sprout does not come into existence because the seed and the other factors are considered to have ceased to exist, it must be that both (fn 5 i.e. the extinction of the seed and the arisal of the sprout) are without cause. The 'immediately preceding condition' does not make sense.

Or it might be that Nagarjuna had in mind the general rejection of causation of the first *kārikā* when he said, 'The coming to an end of elements of existence which have never arisen is not logically possible. Hence the immediately preceding condition makes no sense.' The remaining part: 'How could what has come to an end be a cause indeed?' can be explained exactly as before.

And now Nagarjuna, with a view to refuting, independently, the idea of condition as 'decisive factor' says:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The immediately contiguous condition (samanantara-pratyaya) was first formulated by the Abhidharmikas in order to account for certain kinds of relations implied in the Buddha's statements such as: "In this way, monks there is the immediate (anantara) waning of defilements,'" (S 3.58). The Abhidharmikas, therefore, specified the relation as one among mind and mental concomitants (cittacaita acarama uppannah samanantarah, AK 2.62). With the acceptance of

a theory of moments (ksana), the interpreters of the Abhidharma were faced with several questions: Does this relation obtain among events of a similar nature (svajati)? How can the emergence of dissimilar events be explained? (Akb p). The problems are not different from those that are associated with the conception of a series (similar to the problems faced by empiricists like David Hume). The question as to how one momentary event can give rise to another or how one series could pave the way for a different series was discussed, in relation to the problem of knowledge, especially the knowledge of the future. Some of the interpreters of the Adhidharma recognized an unimaginable range of comprehension on the part of the Buddha (acintyo hi buddhanam buddhivisaya iti, Akb), which was probably a view advocated by the Sarvastivadins, who admitted the possibility of knowing the existence of everything (sarvam asti) belonging to the past, the present and the future. The Sautrantikas, who refused to accept such a position, maintained that the Buddha follows 'signs' (naimittako) and that even in the absence of direct perception of future events (na saksatkari) he is able to predict them on the basis of "intention" (icchamatrena, ibid.).

Nagarjuna, realizing the difficulties inherent in such speculations, raises questions regarding the very conception of 'arising' in such a context. Neither the momentary events, nor the substances that were posited to account for the continuity of series of such events, according to Nagarjuna, can be described as "arisen" (utpanna). If they are not arisen (anutpanna), their cessation is also inconceivable. If they were to cease momentarily, they could not serve as conditions (pratyaya).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. In I:7, Nāgārjuna is reasoning that since an inherently existent phenomenon is by definition independent, it could not have been produced by anything else. An inherently nonexistent phenomenon certainly cannot be produced; if it were, it would be existent. An existent nonexistent (for instance, something posited by a Meinongian ontology - existing in a logical space, though not. in the actual world) cannot be produced since its actual production would contradict its nonexistence and its production in some other way would contradict the inherent existence of the other sort posited for it.

The argument in I:8 is a bit different and is directed more specifically at the special. status of simultaneous supporting conditions, such as those posited in perception, as discussed above. Nāgārjuna is making the following point: If we consider a particular moment of perception, the object of that perceptual episode no longer exists. This is so simply because of the mundane fact that the chain of events responsible for the arising of perceptual consciousness takes time. So the tree of which I am perceptually aware now is a tree that existed about one hundred milliseconds ago; not one that exists now. The light took some time to reach my eye; the nerve impulses from the eye to the brain took some time; visual processing took still more time. So if the story about how the tree is the percept-object condition of my perception according to which the tree exists simultaneously with the perception and exerts a causal power on my eye or visual consciousness were accepted, perception would be impossible. Moreover, the objects of many mental episodes are themselves nonexistent (like the golden mountain). But non-existents can’t be causally responsible for anything.

Verse 9 contains two arguments. In the first half of the verse, Nāgārjuna is offering a quick reductio on the idea that immediately preceding conditions can exist inherently. By definition, an immediately preceding condition is a momentary element of a causal chain. And, by definition, something that is inherently existent is independent; hence, it cannot arise depending on something else and, therefore, cannot cease to exist. But immediately preceding conditions must arise and cease. In the final line of the verse, Nāgārjuna develops a related problem. Immediately preceding conditions must cease before their effect arises. If their existence and exertion of causal power is what explains the arising of the cause, the arising of the cause is then inexplicable. (This argument is also used by Sextus Empiricus in *Against the Logicians.*)

What is important about this strand of the argument? Nāgārjuna is drawing attention to the connection between a causal power view of causation and an essentialist view of phenomena on the one hand, and between a condition view of dependent arising and a conventional view of phenomena on the other. If one views phenomena as having and as emerging from casual powers, one views them as having essences and as being connected to the essences of other phenomena. This, Nāgārjuna suggests, is ultimately incoherent since it forces one at the same time to assert the *inherent existence* of these things, in virtue of their essential identity, and to assert their *dependence* and *productive* character, in virtue of their causal history and power. But such dependence and relational character, he suggests, is incompatible with their inherent existence. If, on the other hand, one regards things as dependent merely on conditions, one regards them as without essence and without power. And to regard something as without essence and without power is to regard it as merely conventionally existent. And this is to regard it as existing dependently. This provides a coherent mundane understanding of phenomena as an alternative to the metaphysics of reification that Nāgārjuna criticizes. Verse 10 is central in this discussion:

Kārikā I.10

भावानां निःस्वभावानां न सत्ता विद्यते यतः।
सतीदमस्मिन् भवतीत्येतन्नैवोपपद्यते॥१२॥

bhāvānāṃ niḥsvabhāvānāṃ na sattā vidyate yataḥ |
satīdam asmin bhavatīty etan naivopapadyate ||10||

諸法無自性 故無有有相
說有是事故 是事有不然

zhū fǎ wú zì xìng gù wú yǒu yǒu xiàng;xiāng
shuì yǒu shì shì gù shì shì yǒu bù rán

།དངོས་པོ་རང་བཞིན་མེད་རྣམས་ཀྱི།།ཡོད་པ་གང་ཕྱིར་ཡོད་མིན་ན།
།འདི་ཡོད་པས་ན་འདི་འབྱུང་ཞེས།།བྱ་བ་འདི་ནི་འཐད་མ་ཡིན།།

| dṅos po raṅ bźin med rnams kyi | | yod pa gaṅ phyir yod min na |
| ’di yod pas na ’di ’byuṅ źes | | bya ba ’di ni ’thad ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - As entities without self-nature have no real status of existence, the statement, "from the existence of that this becomes," is not possible.

JONES (Skt):
[10] Since the existence of entities without self-existence is not found, we cannot say "This reality existing, that one comes to be."

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Since the existence of existents devoid of self-nature is not evident, the statement: "When that exists, this comes to be," will not be appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Since beings lacking self-nature do not occur as existence per se,
this [statement] "when that is, this comes to be" does not obtain.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. All existences themselves originally do not have any characteristics,
The facts of existences are never recognized as something ordered.
And even though there is an idea that this world is existing relying upon the world itself,
Such situations of the real world can never be seen like that at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 Things lacking in self-existence are never real; therefore the principle (fn The earliest formulation of the Buddhist conception of 'causality'; it is attributed to the Buddha.) 'this being, that becomes' is not intelligible in any way.

STRENG (Skt):
10. Since existing things which have no self-existence are not real, It is not possible at all that: "This thing 'becomes' upon the existence of that other one."

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
X. If entities are relative,
They have no real existence.
The (formula) "this being, that appears"
Then loses every meaning.

ROBINSON (Skt):
As realness does not occur for existents that lack own-being, that 'this being, that becomes' is not a fact, either.

BOCKING (Ch):
1v12 Since dharmas do not have self nature
The characteristic of existence does not occur
To assert 'because this things exists
That thing exists' is not correct.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Because the existence of essence-less things does not exist, it is incorrect to say:"When this exists, that arises."

DOCTOR (Tb):
Since there is no existence
Of things that have no nature,
Saying, "this occurs because of that"
Would not make any sense. [I.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. If things did not exist
Without essence,
The phrase, "When this exists so this will be,"
Would not be acceptable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. Since there is no existence
Of essenceless things,
The statement "When this exists, this will arise"
Is not tenable.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Since things devoid of self-nature do not exist, to say "when this is, that becomes" does not make sense.

ROBINSON (Ch):
All-the dharmas have-no own nature, reason no exist exist mark. Speak 'exist this fact reason, this fact exist' not so.

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):

Yu hsiang 有相 (exist mark) translates *satta* (realness, being, the fact of being). This use of *hsiang* 相 (mark) to represent the abstract noun suffixes *-tva* and *-ta* is fairly common in Kumarajiva's works. *Wu yu* 無有 (has no existence) renders *na vidyate* (is not found, does not occur). *Pu jan* 不然 (is not so, is not true) renders *nopapa- dyate* (is not a fact, is not true to fact).

INADA FOOTNOTE

Note: This verse treats the concept of the dominantly extending relational conditional (adhipati-pratyaya). Stecherbatsky interprets the Sankrit phrase, satidam asmin bhavatity, as the formula for the twelve-fold causal chain as found in the Nikayas. However, Ryotai Hatani points out as a note to this particular verse that the phrase is not to be restricted to the general formula on causation but should simply mean the significance of the existence of one entity from another. To be operative, the fourth cause (adhipati-pratyaya) must assume the existence of an entity. However, Nagarjuna's fundamental standpoint is that of the non-self-nature (nihsvabhava) of an entity and therefore rules out any imputation of a causal or relational connection of entities in a one-to-one manner.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/12 In relation to the sutras' teaching of the twelve causal links, to say that 'because this thing exists, therefore that thing exists', is wrong, and why? Because dharmas are produced from causes and do not have a fixed nature of their own. Since they have no fixed nature of their own, they do not have the characteristic of 'existence'. Where the characteristic of existence does not exist, how can you say 'this thing exists, therefore that thing exist. s'? Therefore, there is no predominant cause. It was only in accordance with the distinction made by ordinary people between existence and nonexistence that the Buddha spoke of them.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The definition of condition as 'decisive factor' (*adhipateyam*) assumed here is this: a factor which, on being present, something arises, is the decisive factor of the latter. But as nothing is self-existent, all things arising in mutual dependence, how can the 'this' be represented as a cause (*karanatva*)? And how can the 'that' be represented as an effect (*karyatva*)? So, though 'decisive factor' is defined, it has not been established.

Final repudiation of condition, origination and effect

Someone may object: Having seen that cloth and such things are made of threads and so on it is said that threads are the condition of the cloth. We reply: But cloth and such things do not emerge truly as self-existent effects; how will the causal efficacy (*pratyayatva*) of conditions be established?

In what sense there is no emergence of cloth and such things as effects Nagarjuna expounds in this way:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The notion of dominance was understood in a very general and broad way in the early discourses. For example, oneself (atta), the world (loka), and righteousness (dhamma) were considered dominant conditions (adhipateyya) in the matter of refining one's moral life (A 1.147-150). The Abhidharmikas defined the dominant condition as an active cause (karana-hetu) and this differed from the other five causes (see note on I.7) because of the dominant effect of this cause. Dominance, of course, can be of different sorts. For example, a seed may be a dominant cause of the sprout, just as much as water is. The Abhidharmikas reserved the notion of dominant condition (or active cause) to explain the latter kind of relationship, namely, that between water and the sprout. Hence it was defined as something "other than itself" (svato 'nye, AK 2.50). However, this distinction between self and other came to be "reified" to such an extreme that the later interpreters of the Abhidharma were left with the notions of serf-nature (svabhava) and other-nature (parabhava). It became almost impossible to speak of 'this' and 'that' without getting involved in a discussion of self-nature and othernature. Therefore, when the Buddha's formulation of the general causal principle as: "When that exists, this comes to be," (asmin satidam bhavati) came up for discussion, the metaphysicians were quick to interpret sat (occurring in the locative absolute construction asmin sati)

as substantial existence of the two entities referred to by asmin (that) and idam (this).

Here too Candrakīrti, in spite of his leanings towards "no views," presents dependent arising as a position from which to criticize serf-nature or self-existence (svabhava). He argues: "Because existents are dependently arisen and, therefore, without self-nature, how can that statement: 'When that (exists),' be intended as an active cause?'" (Bhavanam pratityasamutpannatvat svabhavabhave kutas tad yad asminn iti karanatvena vyapadisyate, (P) 87; (V) 30). Nagarjuna's criticism, therefore, leaves the Buddha's general formula of causation untouched, for it was not the Buddha's intention to reify either "this" or "that."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. Nāgārjuna is replying here to the causal realist's inference from the reality of causal powers to their embodiment in real entities whose essences include those powers. He turns the tables on the realist, arguing that it is precisely because there is no such reality to things - and hence no entities to serve as the bearers of the causal powers the realist wants to posit - that the Buddhist formula expressing the truth of dependent arising (fn 32. A formula familiar in the *suttas* of the Pali canon.) can be asserted. It could *not* be asserted if in fact there were real entities. For if they were real in the sense important for the realist, they would be independent. So if the formula were interpreted in this context as pointing to any causal power, it would be false. It can only be interpreted, it would follow, as a formula expressing the regularity of nature. (fn 33. This verse is very often translated and interpreted in a diametrically opposed way: "Since things exist without essence the assertion, 'When this exists, this will be' is not acceptable." Readings like this are to be found in Inada (1970), Streng (1967), Sprung (1979), and Kalupahana (1986). They may be suggested by Candrakīrti's comments to the effect that this phrase would make no sense were it asserted by the realist. But such a translation is not supported by the dialectical structure of the chapter and forces an excessively negative interpretation on the chapter as a whole. Moreover, as we shall see in Chapter XXIV, this would entail an untenable absolutism with respect to the ultimate truth and a corresponding untenable nihilism with respect to the conventional world. But see Nagao (1989) for a better reading: The meaning of the traditional expressions "dependent upon this," or "if this exists then that exists" is not that when one essence exists, then some other essence exists apart from it. On the contrary, it is because both this and that do not exist as essences that, when this exists, then that also exists. (p. 7)) In the next three verses (I: 11-13), Nāgārjuna anticipates and answers the causal realist's reply:

Kārikā I.11

न च व्यस्तसमस्तेषु प्रत्ययेष्वस्ति तत्फलम्।
प्रत्ययेभ्यः कथं तच्च भवेन्न प्रत्ययेषु यत्॥१३॥

na ca vyastasamasteṣu pratyayeṣv asti tat phalam |
pratyayebhyaḥ kathaṃ tac ca bhaven na pratyayeṣu yat ||11||

略廣因緣中 求果不可得
因緣中若無 云何從緣出

cháng guǎng yīn yuán zhōng qiú guǒ bù kě dé;děi;de
yīn yuán zhōng ruò wú yún hé cóng yuán chū

།རྐྱེན་རྣམས་སོ་སོ་འདུས་པ་ལ།།འབྲས་བུ་དེ་ནི་མེད་པ་ཉིད།
།རྐྱེན་རྣམས་ལ་ནི་གང་མེད་པ།།དེ་ནི་རྐྱེན་ལས་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེ།།

| rkyen rnams so so ’dus pa la | | ’bras bu de ni med pa ñid |
| rkyen (5)rnams la ni gaṅ med pa | | de ni rkyen las ji ltar skye |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - The effect (i.e., arisen entity) does not exist separated from relational condition nor together in relational condition. If it does not exist in either situation, how could it arise out of relational conditions?

JONES (Skt):
[11] An effect does not exist in conditions that are either separate or combined. And how can what does not exist *in* the conditions come from those conditions?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The effect does not exist in the conditions that are separated or combined. Therefore, how can that which is not found in the conditions come to be from the conditions?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The effect is not in the conditions either separately or together.
How could that which is not in the conditions be from the conditions?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. Never being scattered from each other, or accumulated together,
Because of the Real Truth, a concrete result does exist really.
But how is it possible for the result to be, relying upon the True Reality.
However in that case the result is never expected because of relying upon such miscellaneous Real Truths.

SPRUNG (Skt):
11 The effect is not in its conditions, either singly or collectively; how could something which was not in conditions emerge from them?

STRENG (Skt):
11. The product does not reside in the conditioning causes, individually or collectively, So how can that which does not reside in the conditioning cause result from conditioning causes?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XI. Neither in any of the single causes
Nor in all of them together
Does the (supposed) result reside.
How can you out of them extract
What in them never did exist?

ROBINSON (Skt):
In the dispersed and the conjoined conditions there is not that effect. And how con that which is not in the conditions come into being from the conditions?

BOCKING (Ch):
1v13 In causes and conditions, whether summarized or at length,
You search in vain for an effect.
If an effect does not exist within conditions
How can you say that it issues from them?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
There is no effect at all in the conditions individually or together. How can that which is not in the conditions itself be born from conditions?

DOCTOR (Tb):
In separate conditions and their gathering,
The effect is entirely absent.
How could something that does not exist in the conditions
Ever arise from them? [I.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. In the several or united conditions
The effect cannot be found.
How could something not in the conditions
Come from the conditions?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. The effect is neither in the several
Nor in the united conditions at all.
How could something not in the conditions
Arise from the conditions?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Effects do not exist in the conditions in any way. How can what is not found in the conditions come from the conditions?

ROBINSON (Ch):

Brief expansive cause condition inside, seek effect not can get. Cause condition inside if inexist, say how from condition go-out?

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):

Lueh-kuang 略廣 (briefly and at length) mistranslates *vyasta-samasta* (separately and together). It looks as if Kumarajiva read the Sanskrit text aloud and an assistant picked the wrong equivalent out of a bilingual glossary. At any rate, Kumarajiva did not revise this verse carefully. The Middle Treatise commentary says: "*Lueh*—in the combined conditions there is no effect. *Kuang*—in the conditions [taken] one by one there is also no effect." If Kumarajiva understood this commentary, then he understood the verse. Yet neither he nor his assistants noted that *vyasta-samasta* here is not equivalent to Chinese *lueh-kuang*. This seems to be a striking instance of mechanical mistranslation. *Ch'u* 出 (go-out, come-out) renders *bhavet* (may be, would/could come into being).

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/13 'Summarized' means; in the causes taken in combination there is no effect. 'At length' means; in the causes taken one by one there is likewise no effect. If there is no effect within the causes, whether taken in summary or at length, how can you say that effects issue from causes?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In this case the cloth does not exist in any of the conditions taken singly, i.e. in the threads, the weaver's brush, the loom, the shuttle, the pins and so on, because it is not perceived in them and because from multiple causes, multiple effects would follow. Nor does the cloth exist in the threads and the other conditions taken collectively. As the effect as such is not present in any part, it would have to arise part by part. It follows from the absence of a self-existent effect that there can be no self-existent conditions.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Once again, the question raised in the second line: "How can that which is not found in the conditions come to be from the conditions?" is grounded on the assertion or premise mentioned in the first line. What is denied in the first line is that the effect is found in the causal conditions taken either separately or together. It does not mean a denial of the statement that the effect comes to be depending upon a condition or a group of conditions. In other words, it is a rejection of the essentialist method of looking for the effect even before it comes to be. A truly empiricist approach would not be concerned with such an enter-prize.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. Here the realist argues that the conclusion Nāgārjuna draws from the unreality of causal power - the nonexistence of things (where "existence" is read "inherent existence") - entails the falsity of the claim that things dependently arise. For if there are no things, surely nothing arises. This charge has a double edge: If the argument is successful it not only shows that Nāgārjuna's own position is vacuous, but that it contradicts one of the most fundamental tenets of Buddhist philosophy - that all phenomena are dependently arisen. Moreover, the opponent charges, on Nāgārjuna's view that the explanandum is not to be found potentially in the explanans, there is no explanation of how the former is to be understood as depending upon the latter. As Nāgārjuna will emphasize in I: 14, however, the very structure of this charge contains the seeds of its reply. The very emptiness of the effect, an effect presupposed by the opponent to be nonempty, in fact follows from the emptiness of the conditions and of the relationship between conditions and effect. Nāgārjuna will, hence, reply to the opponent's attempted refutation by embracing the conclusion of his reductio together with the premises it supposedly refutes.

Kārikā I.12

अथासदपि तत्तेभ्यः प्रत्ययेभ्यः प्रवर्तते।
अप्रत्ययेभ्योऽपि कस्मात्फलं नाभिप्रवर्तते॥१४॥

athāsad api tat tebhyaḥ pratyayebhyaḥ pravartate |
apratyayebhyo ’pi kasmān nābhipravartate phalam ||12||

若謂緣無果 而從緣中出
是果何不從 非緣中而出

ruò wèi yuán wú guǒ ér cóng yuán zhōng chū
shì guǒ hé bù cóng fēi yuán zhōng ér chū

།ཅི་སྟེ་འབྲས་བུ་དེ་མེད་ཀྱང་།།རྐྱེན་དེ་དག་ལས་སྐྱེ་འགྱུར་ན།
།རྐྱེན་མིན་ལས་ཀྱང་འབྲས་བུ་ནི།།ཅི་ཡི་ཕྱིར་ན་སྐྱེ་མི་འགྱུར།།

| ci ste de ni med par yaṅ | | rkyen de dag las skye ’gyur na |
| rkyen ma yin pa dag las kyaṅ | | ci yi phyir na skye mi ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - Now then, if non-entity arises from these relational conditions, why is it not possible that the effect (i.e., arisen entity) cannot arise from non-relational conditions?

JONES (Skt):
[12] If the effect that develops from conditions does not exist in those conditions, why does it not develop without those conditions?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If that effect, being non-existent [in the conditions] were to proceed from the conditions, why does it not proceed from non-conditions?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Moreover, if the effect, nonexistent in those [conditions], is set in motion
from those conditions, why is it not set in motion from no conditions?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. Actually there, something real, and even something concrete,
Are going on following miscellaneous Real Truth itself.
In the case relying upon the wrong Real Truth, all things and phenomenon will vanish,
But it is perfectly impossible for result itself to go ahead at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
12 If an effect which does not even exist can issue forth from its conditions, Why should an effect not issue forth from non- conditions?

STRENG (Skt):
12. Then the "non-real" would result from those conditioning-causes. Why then would a product not proceed also from non-causes?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XII. Supposing from these causes does appear
What never did exist in them,
Out of non-causes then
Why does it not appear?

ROBINSON (Skt):
Then [if] even though non-existing [in them] that [effect] proceeds from those conditions, why does the effect not proceed from non-conditions, too?

BOCKING (Ch):
1v14 If you maintain that causes have no effects
And yet effects arise from within causes,
Then why should these effects not
Issue from non-causes?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If, although the effect is not there, it is born from those conditions, why is an effect not born from what are not its conditions?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If, without being present there,
It were still to arise from conditions,
Why would it not also arise
From that which is not a condition? [I.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. However, if a nonexistent effect
Arises from these conditions,
Why does it not arise
From non-conditions?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. However, if without that,
It arose from these conditions,
Why does it not arise
From that which is not a condition?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If effects not found in the conditions were to come from the conditions, why wouldn’t they also come from non-conditions?

ROBINSON (Ch):
If think condition have-no effect, but from condition inside go-out, this effect why not from non condition inside this-way go-out?

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):

Wu 無 (inexist) stands for the participle *asat* (not being, non-existing). *Kuo* 果 (effect) is clearer than the pronoun *tat* (it, that) which it stands for.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/14 If you seek for effects within causes you cannot find them, so why should they not issue from non-causes? As an analogy, there is no jug in the clay, so why should one not issue from milk? Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

12ab *If an effect which does not even exist can issue forth from its conditions*

This would be the opinion of our opponent.

12cd *Why should an effect not issue forth from non-conditions?*

An effect cannot pre-exist in non-conditions either. Therefore cloth cannot issue forth from straw and other such non- conditions. No self-existent effect ever arises.

You may object: If the effect (*phala*) were one thing and its conditions quite another then the question whether the effect pre-exists in its conditions or not would be understandable. But the effect is not distinct from its conditions. On the contrary it is the conditions themselves.

Nargarjuna replies:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

So far, most of the arguments were directed against self-causation and the substantial existence of the effect in the condition that gives rise to it. The present verse is a direct refutation of the view that the effect is different from the condition, that is, the basic premise of the theory of external causation. As implied by Nagarjuna, in such a context, the term "condition" loses its meaning, for if the cause and effect were sharply distinguished, one could maintain that anything can come out of anything. It is in, fact, the contrary of the substantialist view: "Nothing comes out of nothing."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

12. How, the opponent asks, are we to distinguish coincidental sequence from causal consequence, or even from conventional dependence? And why don't things simply arise randomly from events that are nonconditions since no special connection is posited to link consequents to their proper causal antecedents?

Kārikā I.13

फलं च प्रत्ययमयं प्रत्ययाश्चास्वयंमयाः।
फलमस्वमयेभ्यो यत्तत्प्रत्ययमयं कथम्॥१५॥

phalaṃ ca pratyayamayaṃ pratyayāś cāsvayaṃmayāḥ |
phalam asvamayebhyo yat tat pratyayamayaṃ katham ||13||

若果從緣生 是緣無自性
從無自性生 何得從緣生

ruò guǒ cóng yuán shēng shì yuán wú zì xìng
cóng wú zì xìng shēng hé dé;děi;de cóng yuán shēng

།འབྲས་བུ་རྐྱེན་གྱི་རང་བཞིན་ནི།།རྐྱེན་རྣམས་བདག་གི་རང་བཞིན་མིན།
།བདག་དངོས་མིན་ལས་འབྲས་བུ་གང་།།དེ་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་རྐྱེན་རང་བཞིན།།

| ’bras bu rkyen gyi raṅ bźin na | | rkyen rnams bdag gi raṅ (2b1)bźin min |
| bdag dṅos min las ’bras bu gaṅ | | de ni ji ltar rkyen raṅ bźin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - The effect (i.e., arisen entity) has the relational condition but the relational conditions have no self-possessing (natures). How can an effect, arising from no self-possessing (natures), have the relational condition?

JONES (Skt):
[13] The effect is not constituted by its conditions. Conditions are not selfcreated. So how can an effect that arises from conditions that are themselves not self-created be created by those conditions?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The effect is made of conditions, but the conditions are themselves not self-made. How can that effect made of conditions [arise] from what is not self-made?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The effect is created by conditions, but the conditions are not created by themselves.
How can an effect created by conditions be from what is not created by itself?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. Actually speaking, results are just enemies against the Real Truth,
And the Real Truths just hurts poor people.
Even though result has tendency to bring up poverty,
How is it possible for result to have the power to destroy the Real Truth absolutely?

SPRUNG (Skt):
13 If the effect consists of its conditions then the conditions are not, strictly speaking, conditions; if the effect arises from conditions which are not strictly conditions, how can it consist of conditions?

STRENG (Skt):
13. On the one hand, the product consists in its conditioning causes; on the other hand, the causes do not consist of themselves. How can a product resulting from conditioning causes not consisting of themselves be consisting of those causes?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XIII. The result is cause-possessor,
But causes are not even self-possessors,
How can result he cause-possessor,
If of non-self-possessors it be a result?

ROBINSON (Skt):
The effect is made out of the conditions, and the conditions are not made out of themselves. How can that effect which [emerges] from [conditions] that are not made out of themselves be made out of conditions?

BOCKING (Ch):
1v15 If effects arise from causes
And these causes have no self-nature,
Then effects arise from things which have no self-nature,
So how can they arise from causes?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Effects [are of] the nature of conditions. Conditions do not have own nature. How can those effects of what does not have own nature [be of] the nature of conditions?

DOCTOR (Tb):
The effect may be of its conditions’ nature,
But these conditions have no nature of their own.
How could the effect of that which is not an entity itself
Be of the nature of that which conditions it? [I.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. If the effect's essence is the conditions,
But the conditions don't have their own essence,
How could an effect whose essence is the conditions
Come from something that is essenceless?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. If the effect had the nature of the conditions,
The conditions would not have their own nature.
How could an effect of something without its own nature
Have the nature of conditions?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If effects are conditional, but not the conditions themselves, how can what is conditional arise from what is not?

ROBINSON (Ch):

If effect from condition arise, this effect have-no own nature. From have-no own nature arise, how get from condition arise?

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):

The translation *ts'ung yuan sheng* 從緣生 (arise from condition/s) for *pratyaya-mayam* (consisting of conditions) obscures the concept of *satkaryavada* (inherence of the effect in the cause) which Nagarjuna is attacking. *Ho te* 何得 (how get, how can) renders *katham* (how can). *Wu tzu hsing* 無自性 (no own nature) paraphrases *asvamaya* and *asvayammaya* (not made out of itself/themselves) obscurely but not incorrectly.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

It does not make sense to say that an effect consists of its conditions or is a mode of them, because these very conditions are not, strictly, conditions. That they are not self-existent conditions is what is meant. The opponent thinks that cloth consists only of threads. Cloth would consist only of threads if self-existent threads themselves were real. But they consist of small parts, are modifications of small parts; they are not real as self-existent. So, as the effect, which has the name 'cloth', arises from these small parts which have no self-nature and are not self-existent, how can it consist of threads?

It has been said: 'Cloth is supposed to be realized from a cause and this cause from another cause; but how can what is not realized in its own right be the cause of something else?'

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The first line of this verse contains two assertions. First of these is that "the effect is made of causal conditions" (phalam pratyayamayam), which is already negated at I.4 (kriya na pratyayavati) where the term kriya is equivalent in meaning to the term phalam in the present context. So does the term pratyayavati convey the same meaning as pratyayamayam. It is a statement asserting the identity between the condition and the effect. However, the next statement implies difference between the conditions that give rise to the effect and those other conditions that produce the conditions themselves, for the former are not "self-made" (asvayammayah). This, therefore, is a theory that attempts to accommodate both identity and difference in the causal process, and Nagarjuna sees this as a self-contradiction. It is indeed a refutation of the third theory of causation negated at I.1, namely, causation through both self and other (dvabhyam).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

13. Finally, the opponent asks, since the phenomena we observe clearly have natures, and since those natures clearly derive from their causes, how could it be, as Nāgārjuna argues, that they proceed by means of a process with no essence, from conditions with no essence? Whence do the natures of actual existents arise? Nāgārjuna again will reply to this last charge by pointing out that since on his view the effects indeed have no essence, the opponent's presupposition is ill-founded. This move also indicates a reply to the problem posed in I: 12. That problem is grounded in the mistaken view that a phenomenon's lack of inherent existence entails that it, being nonexistent, could come into existence from nowhere. But "from nowhere," for the opponent, means from something lacking inherent existence. And indeed, for Nāgārjuna, this is exactly the case: Effects lacking inherent existence depend precisely upon conditions that themselves lack inherent existence. Nāgārjuna's summary of the import of this set of replies is terse and cryptic. But unpacking it with the aid of what has gone before provides an important key to understanding the doctrine of the emptiness of causation that is the burden of this chapter:

Kārikā I.14

तस्मान्न प्रत्ययमयं नाप्रत्ययमयं फलम्।
संविद्यते फलाभावात्प्रत्ययाप्रत्ययाः कुतः॥१६॥

tasmān na pratyayamayaṃ nāpratyayamayaṃ phalam |
saṃvidyate phala_bhāvāt pratyayāpratyayāḥ kutaḥ ||14||

果不從緣生 不從非緣生
以果無有故 緣非緣亦無

guǒ bù cóng yuán shēng bù cóng fēi yuán shēng
yǐ guǒ wú yǒu gù yuán fēi yuán yì wú

|དེ་ཕྱིར་རྐྱེན་གྱི་རང་བཞིན་མིན། །རྐྱེན་མིན་རང་བཞིན་འབྲས་བུ་ནི།
|ཡོད་མིན་འབྲས་བུ་མེད་པས་ན། །རྐྱེན་མིན་རྐྱེན་དུ་ག་ལ་འགྱུར།།

| de phyir rkyen gyi raṅ bźin min | | rkyen min raṅ bźin ’bras bu ni |
| yod min ’bras bu med pas na | | rkyen min rkyen du ga la ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):

Verse 14 - Consequently, the effect (i.e., arisen entity) is neither with relational nor without non-relational condition. Since the effect has no existing status, wherein are the relational and nonrelational conditions?

JONES (Skt):

[14] Therefore, an effect is not made either by conditions nor by nonconditions. But in the absence of an effect, where are conditions or nonconditions found?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):

An effect made either of conditions or of non-conditions is, therefore, not evident. Because of the absence of the effect, where could conditions or non-conditions be evident?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):

The effect is created neither from conditions nor from no conditions.
How can an effect be obtained from nonexistent conditions and no conditions?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):

14. Therefore result can never have any power to destroy the Real Truth at all.
And at the same time result does never have any power to destroy wrong Real Truth at all.
When we have got from the synthetic point of view that result does never actually exist at all,
Where can we find the Real World, which is constructed from the combination of Real Truth and wrong Real Truth together totally?

SPRUNG (Skt):

14 Therefore not as its conditions themselves, Nor does an effect exist as its non-conditions. As the effect is non-existent, how could there be either conditions or non-conditions?

STRENG (Skt):

14. Therefore, that product does not consist in those causes; yet it is agreed that a product does not consist of non-causes. How can there be a conditioning cause or non-cause when a product is not produced?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):

XIV. There is, therefore, no cause-possessor,
Nor is there an effect without a cause
If altogether no effect arises,
(How can we then distinguish)
Between the causes and non-causes?

WESTERHOFF (Skt):

I.14b Because the effect is absent, where would conditions or non-conditions come from?

ROBINSON (Skt):

Therefore no effect occurs either made out of conditions or made out of non-conditions. Because of non-existence of the effect, how can conditions or non-conditions [exist]?

BOCKING (Ch):

1v16 Effects do not arise from causes
And they do not arise from non-causes.
Since the effects do not exist,
Causes and non-causes likewise do not exist.

BATCHELOR (Tb):

Therefore, [it does] not have the nature of conditions, nor is there an effect with the nature of non-conditions. Since there is no effect, what could [be its] non-conditions or conditions?

DOCTOR (Tb):

Hence, it is not of the nature of its conditions,
Nor of the nature of that which are not its conditions.
As there is no effect, how could there be
Conditions as well as nonconditions? [I.14]

GARFIELD (Tb):

14. Therefore, neither with conditions as their essence,
Nor with non-conditions as their essence are there any effects.
If there are no such effects,
How could conditions or non-conditions be evident?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):

14. Therefore, effects have neither the nature of conditions,
Nor the nature of non-conditions.
If there are no such effects,
How could there be conditions or nonconditions?

HAGEN (paraphrase):

Effects, either conditional or not, are not evident. If there are no such effects, where are either conditions or non-conditions evident?

ROBINSON (Ch):

Effect not from condition arise, not from non condition arise. Through effect no exist reason, condition non condition also inexist.

ROBINSON (Ch - Remarks):

Wu yu ku 無有故 (because . . . has no existence) translates the nominal -*abhavat* (because of the non-existence/absence of. . .). *Wu* 無 (inexists) in the last clause renders *sam vidyate kutah* (where/ how can it occur); a negative statement replaces an affirmative rhetorical question.

ROBINSON (Ch I Overall Conclusion Remarks)

To summarize the virtues and faults of this translation: The Chinese is often more explicit than the Sanskrit. It relies less heavily on anaphora, and so is clearer. It sometimes supplies explanatory phrases such as one finds in the prose paraphrases of Sanskrit commentaries. In verses 6 and 11 the Chinese reflects Sanskrit variants which are as good as, or perhaps better than, those in the extant Sanskrit text. The Chinese copes successfully with syntactic features such as the locative absolute and statements of reason by means of ablative noun compounds. It possesses a device for handling the highly-important abstract-noun suffixes.

As for the defects: There are several lexical mistakes, and a number of renderings that misrepresent the meaning of the original. The terms *yu* and *wu* do duty for all the derivatives of *as* and *bhu* as well as for *upapadyate*, *yujyate* , *vidyate* , and their negatives. Sometimes a number-neutral Sanskrit term is pluralized in translation, and sometimes plurals are neutralized in translation. The worst defect in this chapter and also in the others is the handling of the logical operators — *upapadyate, yujyate*, and *prasajyate*. When the latter occurs, it is usually rendered by *shih shih pu jan* (this thing is not so/true), which fails to indicate the exact sense—the ensuing of a logical consequence that is unwelcome to the opponent. The translations of these three terms are not consistent, however, and *pu te* (is not got) may render *na vidyate* (is not found, does not exist) as well as *nopapadyate* and *na yujyate* . In the *Prajna Sutras* , *te* also does duty for *upalabdhi* (perception). This confusion of the existential, the modal, the logical, and the epistemological prevents anyone who does not know the Sanskrit from grasping the subtler points of the text.

The substitution of rhetorical questions for negative statements and vice versa is neither a virtue nor a defect. Placing attributive phrases after the headword is un-Chinese, but it adds a certain flexibility to this translation style, and does not lessen the accuracy of the translation itself.

The defects of such a translation are bothersome to the scholar who wishes to reconstruct a Sanskrit original but, with the exception of the mishandling of logical terms, I do not think that the mistranslations prevent the reader from understanding the Madhyamika system in the aggregate. Individual verses are wrong or misleading, but there is sufficient repetition in the text that if the student takes over-all consistency as his standard he will not be misled very much by blemishes in the translations. He will be more likely to miss right ideas than to conceive wrong ones.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

1/16 Effects arise from causes, but these 'causes' do not have self-nature. If they do not have self-nature then they are not dharmas. If they are not dharmas, how can they arise? Therefore, effects do not arise from causes. As for not arising from non-causes; in denying causes we stated that there were non-causes, but in reality there are no such dharmas as non-causes, and therefore there is no arising from non-causes. If there is no arising from either of these two then there are no effects. Since there are no effects, there are neither causes nor non-causes.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

14a *Therefore not as its conditions themselves. . . .*

does an effect exist. If we assume, on the contrary, that it is its non-conditions:

14b *Nor does an effect exist as its non-conditions.*

If cloth does not consist of threads, how could it consist of straw?

Our opponent objects: There may be no effect as such but there is in fact an inherent regularity (*niyama*) in both conditions and non-conditions. You say: 'If a non-existent effect can issue from its conditions why should it not equally well issue from its non-conditions?' But, if the effect whether cloth or straw mat — did not exist, it would not make sense that the conditions — threads or straw — should be causally effective. Therefore the effect too is real. (fn 6 i.e. certain 'conditions' are in fact connected with certain 'effects'.)

We reply. The effect would exist if conditions and non- conditions existed. If the effect existed we could say such are its conditions and such are its non-conditions. After thorough investigation, however, that is not the case.

14cd *As the effect is non-existent, how could there be either conditions or non-conditions?*

The point is the same for conditions and non-conditions.

The conclusion is that things do not arise as entities having their being in themselves (svabhavatah).

As is said in the *Ratnakara Sutra*: 'One who lives the absence of being does not exist as a fact, like the flight of a bird through the air; what in no wise possesses self-existence will never be a cause of something else.

'What does not possess self-existence, how can it, lacking self-existence, be caused by anything else? How can what is lacking in self-existence give birth to anything else? Such is the nature of cause as taught by Buddha.

'All the elements of existence are by nature immovable, not variable, beyond affect and blissful; they are imperceptible like a flight path in the sky and the unenlightened misconceive them.

'As the rocky mountains are immovable so are the elements of existence immovable. They do not pass away nor do they arise: in this way has the victorious Buddha taught the truth.'

And from another source, 'The truth of things as revealed by the victorious one, the lion among men, is neither born nor does it arise, it does not decay, it does not die. In it are merged all living beings.

'What is not self-existent in any sense, cannot attain other- existence either from within or from without, the lord is realized everywhere. Buddha has revealed the way of being at peace though no definable way has been attained; there you will walk what is called the way of liberation. Yourself free, you will free many other beings.'

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Thus, the identity of condition and effect (pratyayamayam phalam), as implied in the identity theory of causation, as well as the difference between condition and effect (apratyayamayam phalam), as envisaged in the non-identity theory of causation, are both not evident (na samvidyate). The second statement is, indeed, the final conclusion of Nagarjuna in this immensely significant chapter. A superficial interpretation of this statement is bound to leave the impression, generally popular among the interpreters of Nagarjuna, that he rejected any form of causation, including the arising of an effect depending upon a cause or condition or a group of such causes or conditions (pratityasamutpada). Hence, Nagarjuna is perceived as a trancendentalist who recognized an "absolute" beyond all linguistic expression. (Following the prevalent interpretation, the present author himself has taken that position, see Buddhist Philosophy, p). A more careful contextual analysis would reveal that the effect (phala) Nagarjuna was referring to in this verse, as well as in the entire chapter, is one that is identical with the cause or different from it. It is only an effect understood in such a manner, as clearly indicated in the present statement, that he was categorically denying. If no such effect is seen, why speak of a condition (pratyaya) that is identical with an effect, or a non-condition (a-pratyaya) that is different from the effect?

14. First, Nāgārjuna points out, the opponent begs the question in asserting the genuine existence of the effects in question. They, like their conditions, and like the process of dependent origination itself, are nonexistent from the ultimate point of view. That is, they have no essence whatever. Hence, the third charge fails. As a consequence, in the sense in which the opponent supposes that these effects proceed from their conditions - namely that their essence is contained potentially in their causes, which themselves exist inherently - these effects need not be so produced. And so, finally, the effect - containing conditions for which the opponent charges Nāgārjuna with being unable to account are themselves unnecessary. In short, while the reificationist critic charges the Madhyamika with failing to come up with a causal link sufficiently robust to link ultimately real phenomena, for the Madhyamika philosopher the core reason for the absence of such a causal link is the very absence of such phenomena in the first place. We are now in a position to characterize explicitly the emptiness . of causation and the way this doctrine is identical with the doctrine of dependent origination from conditions adumbrated in this chapter. It is best to offer this characterization using the via media formulation most consonant with Nāgārjuna's philosophical school. We will locate the doctrine as a midpoint between two extreme philosophical views. That midpoint is achieved by taking conventions as the foundation of ontology, hence rejecting the very enterprise of a philosophical search for the ontological foundations of convention (Garfield 1990). To say that causation is nonempty, or inherently existent, is to succumb to the temptation to ground our explanatory practice and discourse in genuine causal powers linking causes to effects. That is the reificationist extreme that Nāgārjuna clearly rejects. To respond to the arguments against the inherent existence of causation by suggesting that there is then no possibility of appealing to conditions to explain phenomena - that there is no dependent origination at all - is the extreme of nihilism, also clearly rejected by Nāgārjuna. To assert the emptiness of causation is to accept the utility of our causal discourse and explanatory practice, but to resist the temptation to see these as grounded in reference to causal powers or as demanding such grounding. Dependent origination simply is the explicability and coherence of the universe. Its emptiness is the fact that there is no more to it than that.

Keep this analysis in mind, for when we reach Chapter XXIV, in which the most explicit analysis of emptiness itself and of the relation of emptiness to the conventional world is articulated, we will see that the principal philosophical move in Nāgārjuna's demystification of emptiness was this attack on a reified view of causality. Nāgārjuna replaces the view shared by the metaphysician and the person in the street, a view that presents itself as common sense, but is in fact deeply metaphysical, with an apparently paradoxical, thoroughly empty, but in the end commonsense view not only of causation, but of the entire phenomenal world. This theme - the replacement of apparent common sense that is deeply metaphysically committed with an apparently deeply metaphysical but actually commonsense understanding of the phenomenal world - will recur in each chapter of the text.

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Chapter II

गतागतपरीक्षा द्वितीयं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀去來品第二(二十五偈)

།འགྲོ་བ་དང་འོང་བ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་གཉིས་པའོ།།

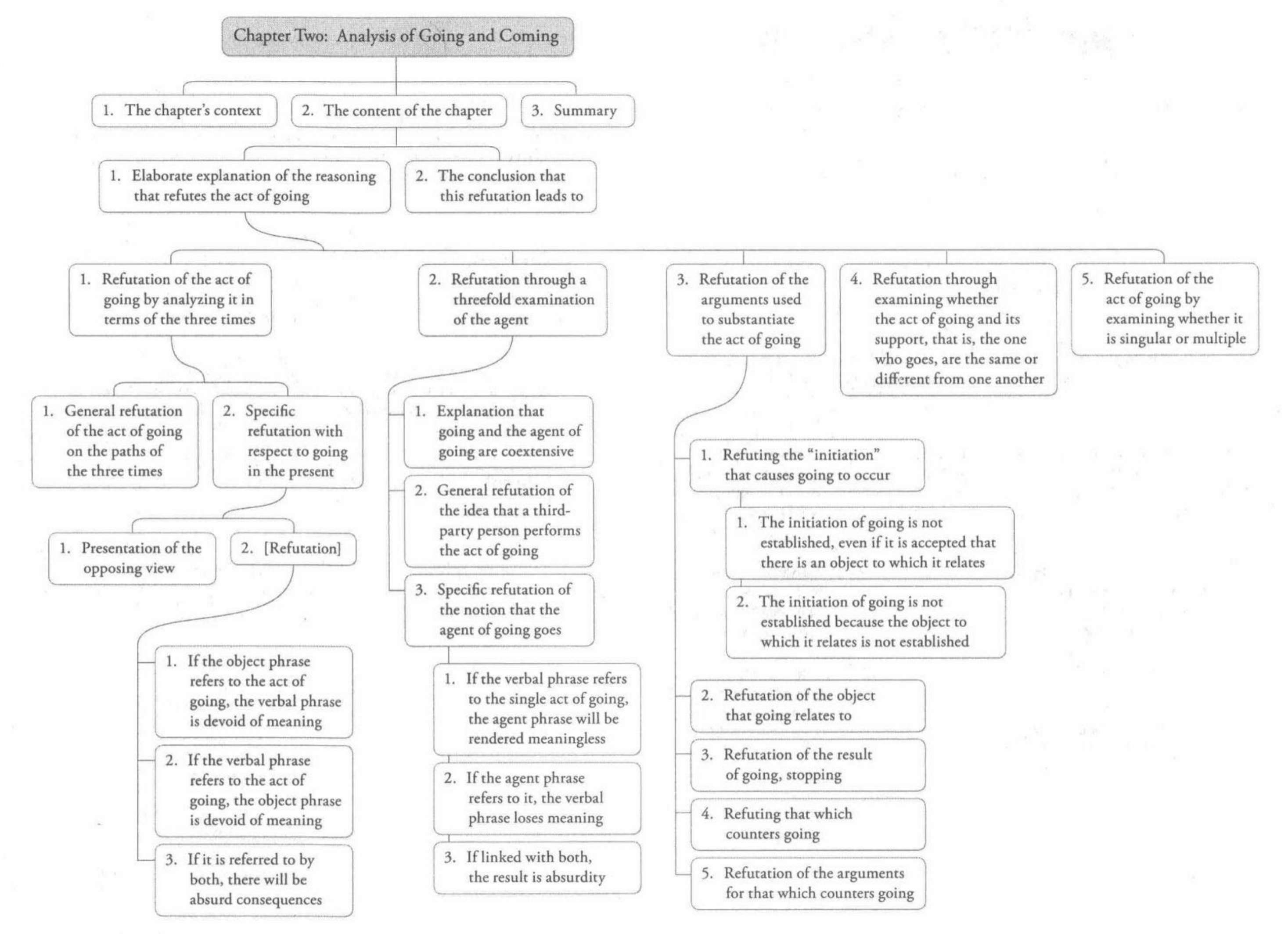
gatāgataparīkṣaṇaṃ nāma dvitīyaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter II: Examination of Motion

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter II

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the first of the three parts of the text, the demonstration that dependent origination is essentially empty, and within that, we are still in the first of its two sections, the main point. Within that section we are still in the first of its two parts, the brief presentation.We have concluded the first section of the brief presentation, the refutation of the essence of phenomena through the examination of the agency and action of cause and effect **[91:18]**, and we now turn to the second section, the refutation of the essence of the self through the examination of the action and agent of going and coming. This chapter constitutes that second section.

EXPLANATION:

Here it should be stated that although it has been explained through the refutation of arising **[92]** that the nonexistence of such things as cessation is established in order to establish that there is no coming or going in dependent origination, it is necessary to provide refutatory arguments specific to that topic. Here the refutation of coming and going should be understood as the refutation of coming and going as the nature of the object of uncontaminated wisdom. The commentary to the eighth chapter explains that since the goer and the action of going exist in mutual dependence, but do not exist inherently, the inherent existence of going and coming is the object of negation.

SUMMARY:

One should understand clearly the grasping by means of which one grasps the goer, the place where he goes, and the going not as posited as existing merely through the force of nominal convention, but as existing inherently. Having understood that, one should ascertain that when one searches to determine whether or not they exist in the way that they are grasped, their existence is undermined in various ways through the arguments explained above. The refutations through various analytic arguments are for the purpose of leading one to realize the untenability of the framework of action and agent in the context of inherent existence, **[114]** but not for the purpose of demonstrating the nonexistence of coming and going.

By understanding that, one should transform the mind which previously took all conventional things such as coming and going to exist inherently. One should then ascertain that agent and action is tenable only in the context of emptiness of inherent existence or essence. Thus, *Prasannapada*, commenting on

Through action and agent All remaining things should be understood. [VIII: 13cd]

says,

Having refuted the inherent existence of going and the goer, one should understand that they merely exist in mutual dependence. [64b]

This can be understood through the following rearrangement:

The goer depends upon going. Going depends on the goer as well. Apart from depending arising One cannot see any cause for their existence.

First, one should ascertain the manner in which coarse manifest phenomena such as coming and going are essenceless. Thereafter one should ascertain how this applies to the case of a person coming from a previous life to this one and going to the next. With respect to the phenomena as well, one should practice by applying these arguments to that which, while arising, does not come from anywhere and which, while ceasing, does not go anywhere. One should also apply this in the same way to all cases of action and agent. Thereby one will develop profound analytic wisdom with regard to the way things really are, and all activities such as going, walking, sleeping, sitting, etc., will appear to be illusionlike.

This is the commentary on the second chapter, having twenty-five verses, called "the examination of coming and going."

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER II - Examination of What Has and What Has Not Transpired

As the title suggests, this chapter is an examination of what is known to have transpired or gone (gata) and what is known not to have transpired or gone (agata). There is a temptation to translate the Sanskrit terms as simply the past and the future respectively, but on critical reading of the Karaka the argument centers on the idea of a past (transpired moment) and does not justify any assertion of a future in the ordinary sense. In developing the argument, however, the use of another term is necessitated in relating gata with agata. This term is gamyamana or the passing away in or from the present. Thus the above terms are respectively translated as "that which has transpired or passed (gata)," "that which has not transpired or passed (agata)" and "present passing away (gamyamana)."

The argument in the present chapter is undoubtedly addressed to those who maintain the idea of an individuality in things (the pudgalavadins) such as the case was with the Saimmitiya and the Vatsiputriya. The division of passage or movement (gati, gamana) in time is refuted on the grounds that to assert any one of the three moments does not necessitate the introduction of any of the other two terms. The chapter is a necessary sequence in the development of the doctrine of pratityasamutpada set forth in the opening chapter and it also engenders the mood and pattern for the critical analysis of the opponent's views expressed in the remaining chapters.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

2. *Change or movement* (*gatagata*). Chapter II of the Karikas is an attempt to reconsider this conception of impermanence, i.e., change or movement. Such a reconsideration, like the examination of causality, was necessitated *not* by a desire to transcend it but by a desire to return to the original teachings of the Buddha. Here too the waters were muddied by the speculations of the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas. In the first instance, Nagarjuna was compelled to re-examine the conception of causality because these two schools were confronting each other as a result of the former's recognition of a self-nature or substance (*svabhava*). Why did the conception of self-nature emerge at all? As we have seen, the two schools had wrongly conceived of change and impermanence.

The Buddha described time and temporality in a more empirical way when he said that the arising of phenomena, the change of what has come to be and their cessation are evident.67 The three temporal periods of past (*atita*), present (*paccuppanna*), and future (*anagata*) in relation to phenomena were thus recognized. To refer back to the discourse on "Linguistic Conventions" (*Niruttipatha*) mentioned earlier, the Buddha even examined the three linguistic conventions (*adhivacana*) such as "existed" (*ahosi*), "exists (*atthi*) and "will exist" (*bhavissati*), pointing out that these should not be ignored.

However, in their enthusiasm to demarcate the boundaries of the three periods of time, the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas were led to an atomic notion of time and temporality.68 unaware of the dangers that lay ahead of them. In order to overcome the difficulties they faced as a result of their acceptance of an atomic conception of time, the Sarvastivadins were bold enough to admit an underlying substance that remains unchanged, even though they did not realize that such a doctrine was incompatible with the Buddha's notion of non-substantiality (*anatman*). The Sautrantikas, on the contrary, denying such a substance and claiming themselves to be the faithful interpreters of the discourses, still maintained the momentary destruction (*ksanabhanga*) of phenomena. They did not realize that their conception of the momentary destruction of phenomena was forcing them to recognize a subtle transmigrating entity. Hence, they came to be characterized by their opponents as "transmigrationists" (*samkrantivadin).*

Nagarjuna's attempt, therefore, was to show that a speculative notion of time and temporality such as the one emphasized by the Sautrantikas was not an empirically justifiable one. A modern critic of a similar conception of time, William James, has provided the following analysis:

In short, the practically cognized present is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look into two directions into time. The unit of composition of our perception of time is a *duration,* with a bow and a stern, as it werea rearward- and a forward-looking end. 69 The very first verse in Chapter II suggests the kind of movement or motion that is under criticism: "What has moved is not being moved."

For someone to claim that what has already moved (= present), the underlying assumption is that even though there is a distinction in terms of temporality, there is indeed the sense in which what is being moved in the present is not different from what, on an earlier occasion, was also in a state of moving. This can easily give rise to the view that phenomena are in a constant flux, a continuous uninterrupted flow (*santati*). While such an explanation may account for the continuity of phenomena that are analysed into discrete events, it also explains the identity of each individual stream (*santana*). This latter idea, carried to its extremes, led to the metaphysical notion of a subtle but substantial personality *(putgala*), neither idential nor different from the aggregates (*skandha*). This is the school of "personalists" (*pudgalavada).*

Thus, following the same method that he adopted in criticizing the substantialist notion of causality, Nagarjuna focuses his attention on the metaphysical interpretations of ideas of change and movement, without attempting to deny the concepts such as "the moved" (*gata*), "the not moved" (*agata*), or "the present moving" (*gamyamana) per se.* After a detailed analysis of the unhealthy consequences of such metaphysical interpretations, Nagarjuna, in the end, specifies the sort of view he is criticizing when he maintained: An existing mover does not carry out the movement in any of the three ways. Neither does a nonexisting mover carry out the movement in any of the three ways. Nor does a person carry out a movement, both existing and non-existing, in any of the three ways. Therefore, neither the motion, nor the mover, nor the space moved is evident. (II.24-25.)

The 'existing mover' (*sadbhuto ganta*) is indeed similar to the 'exitent' (*bhava*) possessing self-nature (*svabhava*) which was criticized in the previous chaper. The denial of motion, the mover, and the space moved is thus not a categorical denial but the denial of a substantialist interpretation of these phenomena. Even though the refutation of the substantialist view of existence (*bhava*, *svabhava*) remains the primary, concern in Chapters I and II, the ideas examined in Chapter I seems to be predominantly those of the Sarvastivada school, while Chapter II seems to concentrate more on the tenets of the Sautrantikas, who were more aligned with the "transmigrationists" (*samkrantivadin*) and the "personalists" (*pudgalavadin*). The method developed in these two chapters provides a large framework on the basis of which the innumerable concepts are analysed in the chapters that follow.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Walking

I do not walk between
The step already taken
And the one I'm yet to take,
Which both are motionless.

Is walking not the motion
Between one step and the next?
What moves between them?
Could I not move as I walk?

If I move when I walk,
There would be two motions:
One moving me and one my feet -
Two of us stroll by.

There is no walking without walkers,
And no walkers without walking.
Can I say that walkers walk?
Couldn't I say they don't?

Walking does not start
In steps taken or to come
Or in the act itself.
Where does it begin?

Before I raise a foot,
Is there motion,
A step taken or to come
Whence walking could begin?

What has gone?
What moves?
What is to come?

Can I speak of walkers,
When neither walking,
Steps taken nor to come ever end?

Were walking and walker one,
I would be unable to tell them apart;
Were they different,
There would be walkers who do not walk.

These moving feet reveal a walker
But did not start him on his way.
There was no walker prior to departure.
Who was going where?

JONES (COMMENTARY)

2. Motion

It may seem odd to place a chapter on motion so near the very beginning of his work, but there are good reasons for it: motion, after all, is a principal example of change and action; the argument is also a template for other arguments in the *Karikas* (3.3,7.14,10.13,16.7); and It is directly related to the Buddhist soteriological concern of sentient beings moving through the cycling of rebirths *(samsara)*.

The argument of verses 3-11 is this: if the mover moves, then we have separated the agent and the action into distinct, independent, self-existent entities. If someone is a mover without there being motion, then motion is separate and cannot occur because it is not connected to a mover (v. 7). There would also be a mover without motion - but by definition, a mover moves, and so there can be no mover without movement. There cannot *be* a mover that is not moving, so we cannot find a mover independent of the motion who *has* the motion. A mover must be moving and thus does not begin to move. A mover is labeled a "mover" only once he or she is moving – there is no pre-existing, non-moving entity gaining a new attribute with a new action by a distinct entity. (This reasoning occurs in other contexts. For example, 23.17: "Errors do not arise in one who is already in error, nor do error arise in one who is not now in error," and so errors cannot arise.) Again, Nagarjuna is highlighting not only conceptual connections, but how our concepts of "moving" and "mover" seem to make independent entities – our conceptualizing-mind artificially parses up the situation into distinct realities and cannot put them back together again.

It is possible to give a spacialized reading to this chapter - i.e., it is examining *where* moving begins. (See Mabbett 1984; Westerhoff 2008, 2009: 129-52.) For example, verse 12 becomes: "Moving is not begun on the place moved over or on the place not yet moved to, or on the place currently being moved over - so where can moving begin?" This reading is inspired by translators who are familiar with the Greek Zeno's arguments about the nonreality of motion. (Consider his example of an arrow in flight: the arrow either occupies the space it is in or another space. But it cannot occupy a space it is not in, and if it occupies the space it is in, then it is not. moving it cannot occupy more or less than the space it is in, so the arrow is not really moving at all. All movement and by extension all other types of changes are illusions.) But verses 12-13 are parallel to Zeno even if we do not spatialize the argument: motion cannot begin in something that is already moving or in what is not moving at all - so where can it begin? The spatial reading may be a result of reading Nagarjuna

through the lens of Western philosophy rather than anything he actually meant. In fact, Nagarjuna is actually arguing the *opposite* of Zeno: Zeno and his mentor Parmenides thought *change was an illusion,* not part of true reality; for Nagarjuna, entities and activities seen as self-existent realities are the illusion, and *the constant flux of what* is *actually real* is affirmed. That is, Nagarjuna affirms there is the (empty) motion and denies any self-existent realities are involved; the Greeks denied the motion and affirmed permanent realities.

For Nagarjuna, a non-mover cannot be describeed in any terms of motion. This includes "non-motion" - if there is no motion, then there is nothing in reality to contrast with it. and so the concept of "non-motion" is meaningless. A "non-mover" is a *change* in a mover (like *bhava* and its absence *[abhava]*), not someone who has not moved. So there still is nothing sta-tionary, but someone who had moved (v. 15).

Note that the logical form of the second line of verse 15 is x and not-x and no third possibility: this is an implicit recognition of the law of the excluded middle - everything is either one thing or its opposite, with no third possibility in between. This will be discussed in the Essay.

A mover does not stop moving (v. 17) since one would no longer be a *mover* in that case. Verse 17 parallels the impossibility of anyone starting to move: no one can stop. We are either moving or not, and there is no third state of transition between them; so whether we are moving or not. no one ever *stops* moving.

Verses 18-20 again reveal the problems caused if we treat motion and a mover as self-existent entities. Motion and a mover are not identical - if motion is the same as the one who moves, then when the act of motion stops, the mover ceases too. But if they are distinct then there would be motion without a mover, and someone labeled "a mover" who does not move, which by definition is not possible. The next two verses reiterate the conceptual interdependence of the concepts of "motion" and "a mover." (But as will be discussed in the Essay, a person – here, "a mover" – can exist prior to the act by which he or she gains an attribute – here, moving.)

In verse 21, Nagarjuna mentions *establishing* (*siddhi*) something for the first time. By "esta-blishing," he means *establishing that something exists* – i.e., proving something supposedly that supposedly exists by self-existence actually exists by self-existence, or proving the emptiness of something (VV 21 Comm). Notice that is establishing the reality of *something* and not establishing *a claim,* as modern philosophers would do. (See below on "valid [*upapanna*]" in the commentary on VV 2.).

Since someone is not called "a mover" until he or she moves, there is no "mover" prior to the motion (vv. 22-23). But, on the other hand, this mover does not make a move other than the move by which he or she becomes called "a mover," since only one move occurs; so someone who is called a "mover" does not make a new move.

Verses 24-25 suggest that motion does not exist: a truly existing mover does not move, nor does a nonexistent mover, nor does an existing-and-nonexisting mover exist. Thus, a motion, a mover, and the place of the motion are not found. But again, he is not arguing that motion is an illusion as with Zeno. Rather, he is arguing that if self-existent entities were involved, there could be no real motion and no real mover. Since we obviously see motion, Nagarjuna's opponent's premise of self-existence must be rejected. The result is an ontology of empty but nonetheless efficacious (and thus "real" in this sense) entities. Only motion as a substantive, self-generated reality is rejected.

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

2

An Examination of Coming and Going

In the Sutra Requested by the Bodhisattva "Shining Intelligence," the Buddha taught:

Form does not come and it does not go.

IN THIS CHAPTER, Nagarjuna proves the validity of this statement with logical reasoning.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to those who claimed, "Things are not of the nature of emptiness because they come and go—we see them coming and going all the time, so how could they not exist?" This is how it is for confused sentient beings: We see things coming and going, we think this coming and going is real, and we have experiences that seem to confirm to us that coming and going are real. As a result of these three occurrences, we conclude that phenomena are not empty of true existence. Thus, it was necessary for Nagarjuna to demonstrate that coming and going are not truly existent in order to help his opponents, and us as well, to understand that things are actually of the nature of emptiness.

These three occurrences—that coming and going appear to be real, that we then think they are real, and that we have further experiences with regard to them that seem to confirm our belief that they are real—are not enough to prove that coming and going truly exist. All of these things happen in dreams, for example, and yet the coming and going that appear in dreams are not real at all. Similarly, they happen in illusions, in movies, with e-mail, and with water- moons. All of these examples of empty forms demonstrate that just because something appears to be real, that does not prove that it is.

Think of all the shapes and colors, all the different forms that appear to us in dreams. Whatever it might be that appears in the dream, it did not come from anywhere, and it

does not go anywhere. Similarly, all of the sentient beings in all of the six realms of samsara do not come from anywhere, and they do not go anywhere. If the beings in samsara came from somewhere else, then they would have to come from somewhere that is not samsara, meaning that they would have had to come from nirvana to samsara, and then they would go back to nirvana. That is not how it is, however—the beings in samsara did not come from nirvana to samsara, so they did not come from anywhere, and therefore they are not going anywhere either. The true nature of sentient beings is empty of coming and going.

Since sentient beings themselves neither come nor go, then this must also be the case for sentient beings' ignorance and their mistaken belief in the true existence of the self, which are the roots of cyclic existence, as well as for the mental afflictions arising from these and the suffering that comes from the mental afflictions. These are all things that really do not come from anywhere and do not go anywhere. Their nature transcends coming and going.

In the Prajnaparamita Sutras, the Sutras of Transcendent Wisdom, the Buddha taught that all phenomena are of the nature of emptiness because they are empty of coming and going. For example, in the Heart of Wisdom Sutra the Buddha stated:

There is no ignorance nor any ending of ignorance.

Ignorance does not truly exist because it does not come from anywhere and it does not go anywhere, and since it actually does not exist in the first place, there can be no real ending of it either.

The first verse from this chapter reads:

On the path that has been traveled, there is no moving,
On the path that has not been traveled, there is no moving either,
And in some other place besides the path that has been traveled and the path that has not,
Motions are not perceptible in any way at all.

When we ask the question "Does movement really happen?" then we have to look for movement on the path where it would happen if it did actually exist. When we do, we can say that in fact there is no movement along this path, because there is no movement on the part of the path that one has already traveled; there is no movement on the part of the path that one has yet to travel; and in between those two, there is no place where you can see any movement happening at all. For these three reasons, therefore, there is no such thing as motion.

The first reason, that there is no motion on the path that one has already traveled, is valid because we have already crossed that part of the path. There is nothing happening there by definition because one has already moved along that part of the path. There is no longer any movement possible there.

The second reason is also valid. There is no motion on the path one has yet to traverse because movement there has not arisen yet. No motion has happened there yet because one has not yet been there. So there is no motion there either.

The third reason is also valid—that is that no motion is observable on some part of the path that one has neither traversed nor not traversed. The reason for this is that no such part of the path exists—there is no such place that one either has not already been or has yet to go. Besides the part of the path that one has already been on and the part that one has not been on yet, there is nothing in between. If we divide the path into these two parts, we cannot find any third part. Therefore, there is no motion there either.

Similarly, besides the motion that has happened in the past and the motion that has not happened in the future, there is no present motion; there is no action of moving. Someone may say, "There is motion after all, because there is the present movement of the legs walking." Actually, though, that motion is just mere appearance, because in between the motion that has already happened and the motion that has yet to happen, there is no present moment of motion—you just cannot find it. For example, think of your finger moving back and forth. At any one point in time, in between the movement that has already happened and the movement that has yet to happen, you cannot find even the tiniest instant in which motion could occur. Thus, whatever point in time you are looking at you cannot find any present motion, if you think about it in this subtle way. There is no moving of the finger because in between the motion that has already happened and the motion that has yet to happen there is no present movement.

Snap your fingers and see if you can find the finger snap as it is happening. Is it happening in the present? When you snap your fingers, is that the present or the past? The first finger snap that has happened is the past—it is already over. The second snap has not happened yet, so that is the future. And in between these two, there is no present moment of the finger snap.

This is not an examination dealing with things on a coarse level; it is an examination that is looking at things from the perspective of the most subtle moments of time. For example, when we look at a finger snap, that moment can be divided into sixty-four individual units or instants, and those are said to be the most subtle moments of time in terms of what can actually be measured. But we can even go further than that. We can examine even these most subtle moments and see that they too are composed of millions of billions of tinier instants, and each of those instants is composed of an infinite number of subinstants, until finally we realize that there is no truly existent moment of time at all—there simply is no such thing as a "present moment." Thus, since there is

no time in which motion could occur, in genuine reality it does not occur. There is no coming, no going.

Since it is the case that in genuine reality phenomena neither come nor go, that their true nature is beyond coming and going, it is also the case that our suffering neither comes from anywhere nor goes anywhere. The same is true of our mental afflictions—our attachment, aversion, pride, jealousy, and stupidity—they neither come from anywhere nor go anywhere. Finally, all of our thoughts— no matter how profound or noble, no matter how vile or base—do not come from anywhere or go anywhere.

It is important for us to apply our understanding that things neither come nor go to these three things: our suffering, our mental afflictions, and our thoughts. Just as appearances in dreams, experiences in dreams, and thoughts in dreams neither come from anywhere nor go anywhere, so it is with all phenomena, and it is in this way that we have to analyze. For example, if it were the case with our suffering and our mental afflictions that some evil spirits were sending them into us, then they would in fact come to us from somewhere else. If there were some creator who was sending all of these bad experiences into us, then again they would come from somewhere else to where we are. Neither of these is the case, how- over, and therefore suffering, mental afflictions, and thoughts do not come to us from somewhere else, and they do not go anywhere when they are finished with us. Nevertheless, it is still the case that there are superficial appearances, mere appearances of these things, which arise due to the coming together of causes and conditions.

This is why in his Song of the Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range, the lord of yogis Milarepa sang:

When you're sure that conduct's work is luminous light,
And you're sure that interdependence is emptiness,
A doer and deed refined until they are gone—
This way of working with conduct, it works quite well!

In this verse, Milarepa sang of his certainty that appearances arise in dependence upon the coming together of causes and conditions, and at the same time they appear, they have no inherent nature— their nature is emptiness. We have to apply ourselves to gaining the same certainty that Milarepa did.

Therefore, we have to take this analysis of things that shows they neither come nor go and apply it to our suffering, our mental afflictions, and our thoughts and see that these three things do not come or go. To put this into verse:

While we look with our eyes and it seems that things come and go,
When we analyze with intelligence, we cannot find any coming or going at all.
Therefore, know that coming and going are like dreams and water-moons.

A water-moon is a very good example to refer to in this analysis of coming and going. If a water-moon is shining on a lake and you walk around the lake to the right, due to the coming together of certain causes and conditions, the moon appears to follow you to the right. For your friends who are walking around the lake to the left, however, due to other causes and conditions, the moon appears to be following them to the left! And for your friends who are just standing still, the moon appears to be motionless. All the while, though, there is no moon that is moving at all. In this way, at the same time that things appear to come and go due to the coming together of causes and conditions, in reality there is no coming or going at all. To put this into verse:

When we analyze with intelligence, we cannot find any suffering;
Nevertheless, suffering is something we directly experience.
Therefore, know that suffering is appearance-emptiness, just like suffering in a dream.

When you gain certainty that the suffering that appears is empty of coming and going, the suffering will dissolve all by itself, and you will experience its true nature, which is open, spacious, and relaxed.

WESTERHOFF (Chapter 6)

6

Motion

At a prominent place at the beginning of the MMK Nāgārjuna analyzes the concept of motion. This discussion, which takes up the whole of the second chapter, is concerned primarily with the investigation of two questions: first, "Where is the *locus of motion*?" i.e. where is motion taking place,[1] and second, "What is the *object of motion*?" i.e. what is it that has the property of moving?[2]

Imagine a car driving down a road, turning right at an intersection, then driving on. Where is it moving? We obviously do not want to locate motion anywhere where the car has just been, say twenty seconds ago, since this is not where motion is *presently* happening. Nor is a place where it has not been at all (say, turning left at the intersection) any better—not only is no motion presently taking place there, it has also not taken place there in the past. Neither the places the car has driven through in the past nor those it has not driven through are plausible candidates for locating its motion in the present moment.[3] The car is obviously moving in the space it presently traverses, which constantly changes as what is present changes: for each moment, the car is presently moving where it is moving when that moment is the present moment. The locus of motion must be the space that is presently being traversed.[4]

Second, what moves? Not the car which is parked nearby and is stationary (*agantr.*) but the one being presently driven. It is only the mover that moves.[5] Now it appears that one of the main aims of Nāgārjuna in this chapter is to analyze both these commonsensical answers—that present motion happens in the presently traversed space and that it is the mover that moves—in order to demonstrate that they are more problematic than they might initially seem. This impression is largely correct, but as we shall see, matters are in fact a bit more complicated.

The second chapter of the MMK has attracted considerable attention in the contemporary commentarial literature, not least among scholars interested in a certain kind of cross-cultural comparison, setting out to compare Nāgārjuna's arguments with Zeno's paradoxes.[6] The ways in which the chapter has been understood are very diverse and it does not seem that an interpretative consensus has yet been reached. This inconclusiveness is hardly surprising, given that this chapter in particular brings out the difficulty of doing two things at the same time: understanding the internal structure of Nāgārjuna's arguments *and* placing them in the argumentative context of his philosophical enterprise. After all, these arguments were not intended as particularized dialectical curiosities but occupy a central point in the structure of the MMK.

6.1. Arguments Concerning Motion

The arguments presented in the second chapter of the MMK can be best understood if we divide its 25 verses into three groups. The first group (verses 1–6, 8–11, 15–16, 22–25) investigates the locus and the object of motion by two arguments which I call the *property-absence argument* and the *property-reduplication argument*.[7] As I will argue later on, these arguments are not specifically about

1. MMK 2:1.

2. MMK 2:8.

3. "As far as the place moved over does not move, the place not moved over does not move either." *gatam. na gamyate tāvad agatam. naiva gamyate*. MMK 2:1a.

4. *gamyamāne gatis*. MMK 2:2b.

5. *gantā gacchati*. MMK 2:10.

6. Such as Siderits and O'Brien (1976); Mabbett (1984); Galloway (1987).

7. There is also a further argument supposed to show that there can be no motion in the space presently traversed. This is the so-called foot argument given by Candrakīrti in his commentary on verse 1. Candrakīrti presents this as a refutation of the opponent's claim (supposedly implicit in verse 1) that motion takes place in the space presently traversed. This argument is slightly peculiar, as the opponent will explicitly make this claim in the following verse.

The argument attempts to show that the foot cannot be at the place presently traversed, since the foot is made up of atoms. But a place behind some atom at the front of the foot is already moved over, while some atom in front of some atom at the back is not yet moved over. There is some debate about how to interpret this argument (see, for example, Siderits and O'Brien [1976: 289] and Galloway [1987: 81–85] for diverging accounts).

motion. Nāgārjuna rather uses the example of motion to give an example of a *form* of argument which can be applied to a variety of subject-matters and is indeed referred to again and again in different contexts within the MMK. The second group of verses (12–14, 17) discusses the interdependence of the concepts "beginning of motion" and "end of motion" and the division of the triple division of the space and time where motion takes place. This is a division of space into a space not yet traversed, a space presently traversed, and a space to be traversed, and a division of time into the times of past, present, and future motion. Nāgārjuna's aim in these verses is to establish that the concepts of beginning and end of motion and the triple division cannot exist independently of one another.

The third group (7, 18–21) considers the relation between mover and motion and sets out to establish that these two mutually depend on one another.

6.1.1. The Property-Absence Argument

In the property-absence argument Nāgārjuna seems to assert that some individual can be said to have a property only if it is at least conceivable that it lacks that property. An apple can have the property "red" because it is conceivable that it lacks redness and has some other property instead, such as being green. However,

[H]ow suitable is it to attribute motion to the space presently traversed, as far as attributing non-motion to it is not suitable? For whom motion is attributed to the space presently traversed, there should be such a space without motion—but "presently traversed space" means "movement takes place there."[8]

How suitable is it to say "a mover moves," as far as a mover without motion is certainly not suitable? For the one who holds the position that a mover moves and who is looking for the motion of the mover, there is a mover without motion.[9]

We might wonder why it is a problem to say that the mover moves, or that motion takes place in the place presently traversed. After all those statements are not just true, but necessarily true. Furthermore, if "the mover moves" is true, "the mover does not move" is false. Yet Nāgārjuna asserts that if someone "holds the position that the mover moves [. . .] there is a mover without motion." How are we going to make sense of these statements?

What Nāgārjuna has in mind here is the difficulty of analyzing the referents of statements like the above in terms of an ontology of mutually independent objects. If we consider the referent of a statement such as "the apple is red," it makes sense to regard the constituents of the state of affairs to which this refers (namely the individual apple and the property red) as distinct objects. After all, there are apples that are not red, and red things that are not apples. We rely here on the Humean principle that for things to be distinct we must be able to conceive of them independently of one another.[10]

For statements such as "the mover moves" or "bachelors are unmarried," however, this thinking does not hold: there are no movers that are stationary, nor moving objects that are at rest; there are no married bachelors, nor unmarried non-bachelors. Nāgārjuna argues that in order to ascribe the property of motion to the individual that is the presently traversed space, or to the mover, we have to be able to conceive of this individual while the property is absent, in the same way as we can conceive of an apple lacking the property of redness, since it is green.

But in the case under consideration the individual depends[11] on the property it instantiates. We therefore cannot analyze the referent of propositions such as "the mover moves" in the same way as that of "the apple is red." Such

Fortunately we do not have to settle this issue here, since this specific argument belongs more properly to the thought of Candrakīrti than to that of Nāgārjuna. I share Bhattacharya's concern (1985: 8) about the mathematical gloss Candrakīrti's commentary imposes on the reading of the first four verses of chapter 2 (see also Mabbett [1984: 409–410]). For more discussion of the "spatio-temporal" interpretation see section 6.1.1.

8. *gamyamānasya gamanaṃkatham. nāmopapatsyate / gamyamānam vigamanam. yadā naivopapadyate // gamyamānasya gamanam. yasya tasya prasajyate / ṛte gater gamyamānam. gamyamānam. hi gamyate.* MMK 2:3–4. The reading *vigamanam.* (non-motion) in verse 3 follows May (1959: 55, n. 19). PP 94:7 has *dvigamanam.* (double motion), Inada (1970: 44) has *hy agamanam.* . See also de Jong (1978: 36). For some discussion of the varying philosophical interpretations suggested by these different readings, see Siderits and O'Brien (1976: 290–291).

9. *gantā tāvad gacchatīti katham evopapatsyate / gamanena vinā gantā yadā naivopapadyate // paks. o gantā gacchatīti yasya tasya prasajyate / gamanena vinā gantā gantur gamanam icchatah.* . MMK 2:9–10. In order to understand the structure of the argument, it is important to realize that 2:9–10 spell out the assertion made in 2:8, namely that neither the mover nor the non-mover moves. In fact Nāgārjuna considers only the first alternative; he does not specify why the non-mover does not move. But we can infer what he would say from 2:16, which elucidates 2:15, being just the mirror-image of 2:8. 2:15 claims that neither the mover nor the non-mover is not moving. Here Nāgārjuna considers only the alternative of the mover not moving, a presupposition that is contradictory and therefore is to be discarded.

10. "We have observed that whatever objects are different are distinguishable, and that whatever objects are distinguishable are separable by the thought and imagination. And we may here add that these propositions are equally true in the inverse, and that whatever objects are separable are also distinguishable, and that whatever objects are distinguishable, are also different. [. . .] [A]ll ideas, which are different are separable. For it follows from thence that if the figure be different from the body, their ideas must be separable as well as distinguishable: if they be not different, their ideas can neither be separable nor distinguishable." Hume (1896: I, I, VII: 18, 24–25).

11. The dependence of the individual on the property it instantiates may be notional or existential, depending on whether the individual has the property in question essentially. As nobody is essentially a bachelor a bachelor who marries would still continue to exist, but we would no longer describe him as a bachelor. But since ice is essentially frozen, when we heat up a block of ice to more than 30°C it is not just that we would no longer describe the result as ice, the ice would have ceased to exist.

an analysis would assume the existence of two distinct entities, a property and an individual, existing independently of one another (and therefore, as Nāgārjuna's opponent would put it, each existing by its own *svabhāva*) which come together in a state of affairs where one instantiates the other.

A much later Tibetan commentary, Tsong kha pa's *rTsa she ṭik chen*, also detects the property-absence argument in these passages. Commenting on MMK 2:4, Tsong kha pa notes that "it is admissible to posit that agent and action are merely established by force of convention. However, it is impossible to assert that the action of going exists through its own characteristic."[12] If we regard the individual which is the agent, the one moving, and the action of motion, which is the property it instantiates as capable of existing without each other "through their own characteristics" like the apple and its redness, we are unable to make sense of how motion and mover could "fit together," since they cannot "be taken apart." But if we see them as two different ways of conceptualizing the same entity, as will be explained in more detail below, this difficulty does not arise.

THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL INTERPRETATION. We should note that there is a different interpretation of the two passages under discussion which, unlike the interpretation just presented, regards them as an argument specifically concerned with motion rather than more generally with the instantiation of properties.[13] This spatio-temporal interpretation[14] sees Nāgārjuna as concerned with refuting a particular conception of space and time by demonstrating that motion would not be possible given such presuppositions. These presuppositions are that space is infinitely divisible, but that time is not, and that it consists of a succession of temporal atoms of minimal duration. The argument then runs as follows. Let there be a moving object and consider the portion of space traversed by this object during one temporal atom. Even if this portion is very small, since space is infinitely divisible we can break it up into further portions of space. Now take some point within this portion of space. The moving object cannot have passed it during the course of its motion, since the time it would take to reach it would be a fraction of the temporal atom and since atoms are indivisible no duration that short exists. So motion cannot happen in the space presently traversed, since all that happens is that the moving object is at the beginning of the portion of space before the temporal atom, and is at its end afterward, without having moved through any of the points in between. We are thus dealing not with motion, but rather with a succession of rests. As a result, we (unsuitably) have to attribute non-motion to the space presently traversed. The same interpretation can be given to verses 9 and 10 of this chapter: a mover moving in an infinitely divisible space during a temporal atom would be a mover without motion (*gamanena vinā gantā*), because he does not traverse any of the infinitely many spatial points between the beginning and the end of the space traversed. Such a mover would be a mover at rest.

I do not want to deny that the spatio-temporal reading allows us to give a consistent interpretation of the individual verses discussed, as well as of some later verses in the chapter (always presupposing, of course, that Nāgārjuna really made these particular assumptions about the divisibility of space and time), and it provides an interpretative framework of which many later commentators availed themselves. Nevertheless I think that the interpretation in terms of properties and individuals has advantages which deserve to be brought out more clearly.

My main worry with the spatio-temporal interpretation (apart from a lack of explicit statements by Nāgārjuna concerning the views about space-time structure that he supposedly has in mind) is that the various references to the arguments in chapter 2 throughout the MMK[15] are very hard to make sense of on the spatio-temporal interpretation. For example, Nāgārjuna remarks in the discussion of fire and fuel in chapter 10 that the remaining points concerning these have been discussed in the treatment of the presently moving object, the moved and the non-moved.[16] If we follow Candrakīrti's interpretation that this statement means we can substitute "what has burned" (*dagdha*) for "what has moved" (*gata*), "what has not burned" (*adagdha*) for "what has not moved" (*agata*), and "what is presently burning" (*dahyamāna*) for "what is presently moving" (*gamyamāna*) throughout the second chapter,[17] it becomes evident that this makes much more sense if we read it as an argument about the relation between properties and individuals rather than as an argument about the structure of space and time. For example, by substituting in MMK 2:3 we get something like the following:

How suitable is it to attribute burning to the presently burning fire, as far as attributing nonburning to it is not suitable? For whom burning is attributed to the presently burning fire, there should be such

12. *bya byed tha snyad kyi dbang gis bzhag pa tsam du 'dod pa la de ltar bzhag pas chog kyang | 'gro ba'i bya ba lta bu rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub par 'dod na me rung ngo.* (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 1973: 98:6–8.) For an English translation see Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (2006).

13. Siderits and O'Brien (1976: 291); Galloway (1987); Siderits and Katsura (2006); Siderits (2007).

14. Siderits and O'Brien (1976: 289) refer to it as a "mathematical" interpretation.

15. In the dedication, as well as in 3:3, 7:14, 10:13, and 16:7.

16. "In the place of 'fire,' all the other cases can be expressed by 'what is presently moving,' 'what has moved,' 'what has not moved.' " *atrendhane śeṣamuktam. gamyamānagatāgataiḥ.* . MMK 10:13b.

17. PP 211:8–12.

a fire without burning—but "burning fire" means "burning takes place there."

If this argument has essentially the same structure as MMK 2:3, we should also understand it according to the spatio-temporal interpretation "as an argument against the model of motion which presupposes discontinuous time but a spatial continuum."[18] But this interpretation cannot be quite right, since the above passage does not refer to motion at all, so perhaps we should better say it is "an argument against the model of *change* which presupposes discontinuous time but a spatial continuum." This solution then faces the problem that not all change involves spatial displacement; a burning flame, for example, changes while staying where it is. Is it then to be understood just as "an argument against the model of change which presupposes discontinuous time"? Of course there are some arguments in Nāgārjuna's writing that can be understood in just such a way, such as the various formulations of the *traikālyāsiddhi* argument[19] ("if we assume there are temporal atoms, nothing could change during the present since this change would entail that the 'present' atom had temporal parts"), but the above argument is not of this kind.

If, on the other hand, we refrain from interpreting the above in spatiotemporal terms, things become more transparent. If we read it as an argument about the relation between properties and individuals, we can see that Nāgārjuna makes the point that the fire and its property (i.e., burning) cannot be conceived of as mutually independent objects, like an apple and its redness, which come together in a state of affairs, for whereas it is possible for the apple and the property of redness to exist one without the other (if the apple is green, and redness is instantiated elsewhere), there cannot be an individual that is a fire and also not burning, nor can the property of burning be instantiated by something that is not a fire.[20]

The widespread use of the discussion of the mover, the non-mover, and the presently moving object throughout the MMK suggests, I think, (and this point will become more evident in the following discussion), that this section of the second chapter was not meant to be a specific investigation of the problem of motion and the various structural properties of time and space. Rather it uses the discussion of motion as an example to illustrate an argumentative template which can be used in a variety of contexts.[21] I would want to argue that the main issue addressed here is that of instantiation. The point Nāgārjuna wants to establish by investigating the notion of a mover and its motion in MMK 2–3 and 9–10 is that the standard analysis of instantiation in terms of independently existent individuals and properties is not universally applicable, since a variety of predications (such as "the mover moves," "the fire burns," and so forth) cannot be analyzed by it.

The use of the example of *motion* for the illustration of this template is explained by its centrality in the Buddhist worldview. After all, the term "mover" (*gati, 'gro ba*) does not just denote moving objects in the everyday sense of the term, but more specifically refers to beings in transmigratory existence. In analyzing the mistaken presuppositions behind statements such as "the mover moves," Nāgārjuna thereby attempts to clear away misconceptions likely to arise at the very core of the Buddhist view of human existence.

6.1.2. The Property-Duplication Argument

The property-reduplication argument raises another difficulty with the statements "present motion happens in the presently traversed space" and "a mover moves." If motion is ascribed to the presently traversed space or to the mover, we suddenly end up with two motions rather than just one.

If there is motion in the presently traversed space this eventuates two motions: that by which it is a presently traversed space, and also the motion itself.[22]

Also, if the mover moves, two motions would be implied: that in virtue of which it is manifested as a mover, and, it being a mover, that [motion] with respect to which it moves.[23]

18. Siderits and O'Brien (1976: 291).

19. See Katsura (2000).

20. See also Cheng (1980: 233–234).

21. This fact is also noticed by Schayer (1929–1930: 44, n. 26): "It has to be stressed that the critique of the *gati* bears no direct relationship to the problem of motion. 'Going' is only used as an example to demonstrate the general impossibility of action (*kriyā*)"; Walser (1998: 204): "Nāgārjuna's root text indicates that there is something about the form of the argument in chapter 2 which should serve as a model or pattern for any subsequent argument"; and, interestingly enough, by Siderits and O'Brien themselves (at least concerning some verses of the second chapter): "The attack is not against motion *per se* but against a certain attitude towards language, and so its basic point will have effect wherever noncritical metaphysics is practiced" (1976: 294).

22. *gamyamānasya gamane prasaktam gamanadvayam / yena tad gamyamānam. ca yac cātra gamanam. punah.* . MMK 2:5.

23. *gamane dve prasajyete gantā yady uta gacchati / ganteti cāyate yena gantā san yac ca gacchati*. MMK 2:11. La Vallée Poussin's edition has the beginning of 11b as *ganteti cocyate*, "in virtue of which it is called a mover" (99:6). This is one of several places (such as 99:7, 105:15, 106:11) in the second chapter of this edition where the root *vac* ("to say") instead of *añj* ("to cause to appear," "to manifest") is used. The Tibetan translation as *mngon pa* supports the latter reading (see de Jong [1978: 37–38], May [1959: 62, n. 46]). The philosophical content of these passages is largely unaffected by this reading apart from the fact that the reading with *añj* places less emphasis on the role of language in conceptualizing the mover as a mover.

To understand this argument, it is essential to note that Nāgārjuna regards both the presently moving object (*gamyamāna*) and the mover (*gantr.*) as *thin individuals*. For an example of what I mean by a thin individual, consider the case of some object that is green, cubical, and heavy. When referring to such an object in language, we will generally form the nominalization of one of the predicates denoting its properties, which we then take to denote the object which instantiates the other two properties. Calling the object a "green, heavy cube," we have turned the predicate *cubical* into the common noun *cube*, of which *green* and *heavy* are then predicated. According to the standard ontological interpretation of this expression, we are thereby referring to an individual with two distinct monadic properties. Let us call the property we turned into an individual by nominalizing the predicate the *constitutive property*, since it brings about or constitutes the individual referred to (in our example this is *being cubical*), and call the other two *instantiated properties*, since they are instantiated by the individual thus constituted (*being green, being heavy*). Which properties we regard as constitutive and which as instantiated depends on our choice. With equal justification we could have chosen to speak of a "heavy, cubical green thing" (so that *being green* is constitutive, *being heavy* and *being cubical* instantiated), or a "green, cubical heavy thing " (so that *being heavy* is constitutive, *being green* and *being cubical* instantiated). In each case we would have referred to a different individual with different properties.

Nāgārjuna distinguishes explicitly between constitutive and instantiated properties. The constitutive property of the presently moving object is that "by which that is a presently moving object" (*yena tat gamyamānam*)[24]; the constitutive property of a mover is that "in virtue of which it is manifested as a mover" (*gantā iti cācyate*)[25] or "the motion by which the mover is manifested" (*gatyā yayājyate gantā*).[26] An instantiated property of a presently moving object is "motion itself " (*yat* [. . .] *gamanam*)[27]; an instantiated property of the mover that "[motion] with respect to which it moves, it being a mover" (*gantā san yac ca gacchati*).[28]

In the example of the green heavy cube we are dealing with a case where constitutive and instantiated properties are distinct; the cube is therefore a *thick individual*. A *thin individual*, on the other hand, is an object whose only instantiating properties are its constitutive property or properties entailed by its constitutive property.[29]

A good example of a thin individual is a clap of thunder. A clap of thunder is a particular sound-event caused by rapidly expanding air along an electric discharge known as lightning. The particular sound made is the constitutive property of the thunder-clap; it is what makes a thunder-clap a thunder-clap. Of course a clap of thunder does not just have the property of making the sound it makes, it also has a certain volume, goes on for a certain length of time, can be heard only in a particular area, and so forth. But all of these properties are entailed by the thundering's constitutive property of making the thundering sound. A clap of thunder does not have any other properties apart from these.

Nāgārjuna argues that in the case of thin individuals the familiar analysis in terms of objects instantiating properties no longer works.[30] This problem is evident when we compare a statement about a thin individual, such as "The thunder roars" with one about a thick one, such as "Farinelli sings." In the case of the latter it is clear that Farinelli existed before he started to sing, and at that time there was a silent Farinelli. But it would make little sense to apply this idea to the roaring thunder. There was no silent thunder present before it began to roar; it is the roaring as its constitutive property that brings the thunder about. We are therefore faced with essentially the same problem we encountered when discussing the property-absence argument. Since the thunder and the sound it makes are mutually dependent on one another for their existence, we cannot analyze states of affairs in which they feature in the same way in which we analyze those involving a thick individual, namely as being constructed of various independently existing entities, like the cube, the property of being green, and the property of being heavy.

If, however, we insist on conceiving of a thin object in the way in which we usually conceive of thick objects, we will end up with a duplication of properties. [31] A thick individual has some properties that are logically independent of one another (in the case of Farinelli, for example, being a singer and having dark hair), and one of these can be used to constitute an object of which the other is then predicated as an instantiated property. But in the case of a thin object there is only the constitutive property and the properties this entails. If we think that every object is to be analyzed like a thick object, that is, by regarding

24. MMK 2:5b.

25. MMK 2:11b.

26. MMK 2:22a, 23a.

27. MMK 2:5b.

28. MMK 2:11b.

29. This concept of a thin individual should not be confused with the concept of a thin *particular* familiar from the contemporary metaphysical discussion. This concept denotes the object which is left when all the nonrelational properties are abstracted away. See Armstrong (1997: 109–110, 123–126).

30. Compare Bhāviveka's commentary on MMK 2:22. Ames (1995: 330).

31. MMK 2:5, 6, 23.

it as a collection of at least two distinct properties, one of which is regarded as an individual to provide the metaphysical condensation nucleus which can instantiate the other property, we end up with having to split up the single property into two: one of which does the work of a constitutive property, the other that of an instantiated property.[32] Such a split is ontologically hard to make sense of, since we seem to be dealing only with one property seen in two different ways, and not with two distinct properties.

Tsong kha pa's commentary underlines this point when he says:

The action of moving the foot is the referent of both phrases "the space which is being gone over" and "going." As there is not more than one action of going and it would be contradictory for the action of going to be the referent of both terms, it is said that if either term was meaningful, the other would be devoid of meaning.[33]

Tsong kha pa notes here that the very same motion can be conceived of both as an individual (namely the place where motion takes place) and as a property (the moving that takes place there). There is of course nothing contradictory in that, but there would be a problem if we thought that something about the nature of the motion determined that it was "really" an individual or a property. In this case one conceptualization would be objectively right in capturing the nature of motion, the other would be wrong. But both are equally feasible depending on our interests, and there is no possibility of deciding between the two in terms of some hard ontological distinction. It is a distinction that exists in our words and concepts but not in some reality beyond these.

The fundamental problem Nāgārjuna is concerned with here is that the conceptualization of some situation in terms of an individual instantiating a property is purely a result of cognitive convenience. We conceptualize something that is green, heavy, and cubical as a green heavy *cube* if cubes are what most interests us in the present context. But it is a mistake to rest an ontological distinction on such an intrinsically pragmatic fact by assuming that our conceptualization corresponds to the way reality itself is carved up, namely as consisting of an individual (the cube) instantiating some properties (greenness, heaviness). The examples of thin individuals and the resulting multiplication of properties show us where the problem lies. But it is important to realize that Nāgārjuna's arguments are not just directed against specific problems arising only for thin individuals.[34] It is rather that these present a particularly extreme case indicating difficulties with the assumption of a ready-made world sliced up into individuals and properties in general.

The same problem of property duplication also arises when we consider this argument against the background of the classical Indian theory of grammar going back to Pāṇini. As Nāgārjuna makes clear, a duplication of the action of movement requires a duplication of its agent, and therefore two movers.[35] Candrakīrti's commentary on this presupposes Pāṇini's theory of *kāraka*s, a theory of the semantic relations between noun and verb.[36] The underlying idea is that the various participants of an event described in a sentence occupy various participatory roles relative to the action denoted by the verb, roles which are generally marked by different grammatical cases.

Consider the following sample sentence:

In the palace the prince brings presents from the king to the queen on an elephant.

The event described here is one of bringing, as indicated by the verb, in which various entities participate: The prince is the agent (*kartr.* , generally marked by the nominative case in Sanskrit), the presents are the object (*karman*, in the accusative), the queen is the recipient (*sam*. *pradānam*, in the dative), the king is the point of departure (*apādāna*, in the ablative), the elephant is an instrument (*karaṇam*, in the instrumental), and the palace is the location or "support" (*adhikaraṇam*, in the locative case). The theory of *kāraka*s provides us with a general account of how the different thematic roles the participants in an action might occupy can be expressed in Sanskrit by the various *vibhakti*s or cases.

Candrakīrti observes in his commentary on MMK 2:6 that the *kāraka* required by the verb *gamyate* "is moved" is an agent (*kartr*) which is the mover (*gantr*).[37] If the property of moving thus requires a mover, given the reduplication

32. Compare Siderits and O'Brien (1976: 292–294).

33. *des na rkang pa gyo ba'i bya ba de 'gro bzhin pa'i lam zhes pa dang 'gro 'o zhes pa'i tshig gnyis ka'i don du yod pa dang | 'gro ba'i bya ba gcig las med pa gnyis 'gal bas tshig gcig don dang bcas na cig shos don gyis stong bar gsungs so.* (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa 1973: 110:14–17).

34. Nor do Nāgārjuna's arguments concerning motion refute an ontology of thin particulars which tried to account for our talk of "individuals" and "properties" in terms of some construction from these thin particulars, e.g. along the lines of trope theory (see also page 204). In fact an ontology that regarded only thin particulars each identical with its own *svabhāva* as ultimately real might be quite attractive for Nāgārjuna's Ābhidharmika opponent. Needless to say, a Mādhyamika would not accept such a theory. For some arguments why not, see Siderits (2003: 122–123).

35. *dvau gantārau prasajyete prasakte gamanadvaye*. MMK 2:6a.

36. *Aṣṭādhyāyi* I.4.24–54; see Ganeri (1999: 51–63).

37. "Since an action (*kriyā*) necessarily depends on a means of accomplishing it (*svasādhana*) [which is] either the object (*karman*) or the subject (*kartr.*) [of the action], the action of motion also involves an agent and therefore depends on an agent of motion." *yasmād avaśyaṃkriyā svasādhanam apekṣate karma kartāram*. *vā | gamikriyā caivam*. *kartary avasthitā 'to gantāram apekṣate*. PP 96:8–9 Here *sādhana* is taken to be synonymous with *kāraka*.

of motion discussed above, we are faced with two distinct agents (one for each motion) rather than just one.

We might argue at this place that on the face of it there seems to be no problem for a single agent’s being the means of bringing about two actions simultaneously, as for example in the case of someone simultaneously smoking and typing. This does not mean that there are in fact two persons sitting at the desk, a smoker and a typer, rather than a single one, a smoking typer. Multiplicity of actions does not always entail multiplicity of agents.[38]

To see where the problem lies here, we have to have a closer look at the various conceptions of the nature of the *kāraka*s or participants of an event in Indian grammatical theory.[39] In his commentary Candrakīrti refers to Bhartrhari’s account when he claims that a *kāraka* is to be understood not as a substance (*dravya*) but as a power or capacity (*śakti*).[40] The reason is that if the *kāraka* denoted a substance, the same object could not function in different ways in different contexts, as an agent in one and as an object in the next, or as an instrument in the third.[41] The *kāraka* therefore refers to the powers of an object to fill specific roles in different contexts. The number of powers is diversified by the actions; the actions are not seen as properties of a single agent. For each action, such as smoking and typing, we therefore assume a separate power which serves as its agent. The problem now arises if we assume that the different powers are differentiated because of the different natures of the actions performed, such as typing and smoking. The two motions, however, are actions of the same nature and should therefore be regarded as being brought about by the same power as an agent.[42] Since the splitting of a single motion into two thus commits us to the unsuitable assumption of two different powers as agents of motions, the splitting must be seen to rest on a deficient analysis of the situation.

We therefore have to conclude that thin individuals cannot be analyzed in the same way as thick individuals if we want to escape the methodologically distasteful consequences of splitting up a single property and a single agent into two, thereby multiplying entities beyond necessity.

38. Ganeri (1999: 58, n. 12).

39. Bhattacharya (1977: 269–270); Bhattacharya (1980; 1980–1981; 1985; 1994–1995). See also Renou (1942) s. vv. *kāraka, śakti, sādhaka, sādhana*; Chakravarti (1930: 225).

40. Bhattacharya (1980: 89). See also Bhattacharya (1977: 269–270, n. 21). That *kāraka* is a *dravya* is also denied by Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* (Kielhorn [1880–1885: I, 442:23–26]8). Note that Bhāviveka in the *Prajñāpradīpa*, commenting on MMK 2:6, has the opponent assert that according to the grammarians (*sgra pa dag, śābdika*) the agent (*byed pa po, kartr.*) of the action of going is the goer. The opponent must conceive of the goer as some sort of substance, as Bhāvaviveka objects to this by pointing out that the goer is a mere collection of conditioned factors (*’du byed, saṃskāra*). See Ames (1995: 308).

41. Bhattacharya (1980: 89).

42. Bhattacharya (1980–1981: 38).

6.2. The Beginning of Motion

In verses 12–14 of the second chapter Nāgārjuna is concerned with the location of the point where motion begins (*gamanasya ārambha*). His argument can be best illustrated in the diagram in Figure 6.1.

For the sake of simplicity we consider both space and time to be discrete. There is a box which occupies different spatial points in succession: it starts off at point s_2 at times t_1 and t_2 until it reaches point s_4 at t_4. The diagram thus depicts the motion of a box from the left to the right. If we ask where the motion of the box begins, the answer is obvious: the box commences its move to the right at point s_2. To begin a motion at some point, an object must first be stationary at this point (so that there are at least two successive moments of time in which the box remains at the same point of space), and at the immediately following moment it must be located at an adjacent point of space. At t_2 the box is located at point s_2, at t_3 at point s_3. So point s_2 satisfies the condition for being the place where motion begins.

Given that there seems to be nothing inherently problematic about this, why does Nāgārjuna claim that the place where motion begins “is nowhere perceived” (*adrśyamāna sarvathā*)? Nāgārjuna divides the space where motion takes place into three jointly exhaustive and mutually exclusive parts: the part already moved over (*gata*), the part presently traversed (*gamyamāna*), and the part to be moved over in the future (*agata*). To make things a bit more precise,

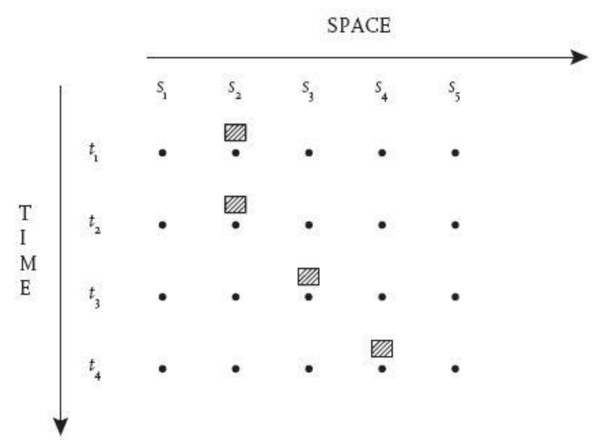


FIGURE 6.1

we can say that a place *i* is presently traversed by some moving object if the object is at a spatially adjacent place i_{-1} at the preceding moment t_{-1}, is at place *i* at *t* (which is the present moment), and at i_{+1} at t_{+1}. Similarly *i* is a place already moved over if *t* is some moment in the past, and a place to be moved over if *t* is in the future.

Now assume that the place where motion begins (let us call this *b*) is one of the places already moved over. In this case the moving object would have to have come from some adjacent place b_{-1} at a moment before *t* (where *t* is in the past), reached *b* at *t*, and moved to b_{+1} at t_{+1}. But it is obvious that this cannot be the case, since if *b* is the place where motion *begins,* the moving object cannot have gotten there from another place at the immediately preceding moment, because then *b* would just be one of the places moved over. Since a place already moved over must have been occupied by an object coming from the immediate vicinity at the immediately preceding moment, *b* cannot be one of these places.

If *b* was a place already moved over, the moving object would have come from the immediately preceding point of space, so there would have to be motion from b_{-1} to *b,* that is, motion *before* the beginning of motion. But b_{-1} cannot be taken is to be either a place already moved over, nor a presently traversed space, nor one yet to be moved over,[43] since all of these are to be found *after* the beginning of motion. Therefore *b* cannot be a place already moved over. Analogous arguments show that *b* also cannot be a presently traversed place or a place to be moved over in the future. It is evident that the same argument can be run concerning the place where motion *stops*; for the reason just given, it cannot be located in any of the three parts of the space where motion takes place.[44]

A simple numerical model illustrates this point: if we define a set of numbers such that for every number in it, that number's direct predecessor and direct successor must also be in the set, it is clear that this set cannot have a smallest (or largest) element. Suppose *x* was this smallest element; then *x*'s predecessor would also have to be in the set, but this is smaller than *x*, so *x* cannot be the smallest.

A different interpretation of Nāgārjuna's argument for the unfindability of the beginning of motion is given by Siderits and O'Brien.[45] Their interpretation is based on the presupposition that Nāgārjuna assumes the infinite divisibility of time as a background to his argument in verses 12 to 13. Suppose some temporal interval consisted of some object first at rest, then later starting to move.

Now take the moment of time *t* dividing the rest from motion. No matter how short *t* is, it can always be divided further, subsuming its initial sub-moments under "rest," and its later sub-moments under "motion." Adding together "rest" and "motion" will then cover the entire duration of the temporal interval, without any place for *t*. On this "knife-edge" view of *t* there is no moment where motion can begin, since *t* is just the dividing-line between rest and motion. It is not a temporal duration where anything can happen.

We might want to note that matters don't improve if we assume that time consists of discrete indivisible atoms. If we regarded *t* as an atomic moment between the last moment of rest t_{-1} and the first moment of motion t_{+1}, we are again faced with the problem of where to locate *t* in the exhaustive division of the temporal duration into past, present, and future motion. Since the beginning of motion cannot be in the past or future, our best bet is the present motion. But then since *t* is atomic, it cannot be the moment of present motion, since nothing moves during *t*: there can be no changes during an atomic moment of time.[46]

A third argument for the impossibility of locating the beginning of motion in the present motion is suggested by Candrakīrti's commentary on verse 12. Candrakīrti claims that the beginning of motion "is also not in the present motion, since that does not exist and because it [absurdly] eventuates two actions and two agents."[47] This statement obviously is a reference to the property duplication argument mentioned in verses 5–6 and 11. In analogy with our interpretation of this argument given above, we could here read Candrakīrti as trying to establish the impossibility of conceiving of the beginning of motion and its property of spatial location as independently existent objects. This point can then be generalized to apply to different examples of change and their respective locations.[48]

Unfortunately Nāgārjuna's verses do not allow us to decide which (if any) of the three arguments he had in mind. The enterprise of rational reconstruction can here only suggest plausible alternative arguments which the Mādhyamika might want to put forward. We cannot tell what the *argumentum ipsissimum* of Nāgārjuna might have been.

43. "Neither the presently traversed [space] nor [the space] already moved over are before the beginning of movement. Where would motion begin? How could movement [begin] in the [space] yet to be moved over?" *prāg asti gamanārambhād gamyamānam. na vā gatam / yatrārabhyeta gamanam. agate gamanaṃkutah.* . MMK 2:13.

44. "One does not stop after the presently traversed [space], after the [space] moved over, also not after the [space] to be traversed." *na tiṣṭhati gamyamānān na gatān nāgatād api*. MMK 2:17a.

45. (1976: 295–296).

46. Compare Galloway (1987: 81–82), who regards this argument as implicit in Candrakīrti's commentary on verse 1.

47. *nāpi gamyamāne tadabhāvāt kriyādvayaprasan˙ gāt kartr. dvayaprasan˙ gāc ca*. PP 100:8.

48. See Mabbett (1984: 414–415) for a defense of this interpretation.

We shall therefore continue the discussion by assuming that it has been established by one of these arguments that the beginning of motion is not to be found anywhere within the three parts of the space where motion takes place. Nāgārjuna now points out that this fact entails a problem for the discrimination of these three parts of space.[49] That portion of the way that has been moved over in the past is just the collection of all the spatial points each of which is *gata* — that is, for each of these points the moving object must have been located at this point at some past time t, and it must have been at a preceding point at t_{-1} and at a succeeding point at t_{+1}. But in order to know how many points to include in the collection, we have to know where the motion begins. Otherwise we would not be able to distinguish those spatial points that have not been moved over from those that have. The same problem arises when we try to ascertain which collection of points forms the part of space yet to be moved over. Here we have to determine which point is the end of motion in order to distinguish the part that is yet to be moved over from that which is not.

It is now clear that in verses 12–14 Nāgārjuna is arguing for two conclusions. First, given the conceptual resources of the triple division of the space where motion takes place into the space that has been moved over (i.e., a collection of spatial points each of which is *gata*), the presently traversed space (the point which is *gamyamāna*) and the space yet to be moved over (the points which are *agata*), it is not possible to define the spatial point where motion begins. This is so because in order to be in one of the three divisions, a point must have had the moving object move to it at the preceding moment, whereas to be the beginning of motion, a point cannot be such that something has just moved there, since it would then just be one of the many points across which motion takes place.

But this passage is not just about the definition of concepts. Since the triple division of the space where motion takes place is seen to be exhaustive, and since the above argument shows that none of the points in the triple division can be the beginning of motion, this reasoning implies that the beginning of motion cannot be anywhere within the space where motion takes place.[50] But this conclusion seems peculiar, since the beginning of motion is where motion takes place, not where it does not.

Second it is not possible to define two of the three divisions, namely the space that has been moved over and the one that is yet to be moved over, without reference to the point where motion begins and its dual, the point where motion stops. These two are essential cognitive resources for our understanding of motion. They must provide the dividing line between the space that has already been moved over and the one that has not, as well as that between that which is yet to be moved over and that where no motion is going to take place in the future.

We are therefore faced with a paradox. The triple division of space where motion takes place presupposes the beginning of motion. The beginning of motion in turn presupposes the triple division of space in which this beginning is located. But the beginning is nowhere to be found within the space triply divided, nor would it make sense to say that it exists outside of that space. The beginning of motion therefore must both exist (since it is conceptually necessary given the triple division of space) and cannot exist (since we can demonstrate that it cannot exist at any location within this division).[51]

The paradox can be resolved by our rejecting the assumption that the beginning of motion is findable. We thereby deny that it can be picked out by a set of properties it has independent of us, who conceive of the space where movement takes place, for example by saying that some point b qualifies as the beginning of motion if the moving object occupies it at time t but did not occupy the directly preceding spatial point at the immediately preceding moment, or by trying to squeeze b into the infinitesimal temporal moment between rest and motion. Since on such an understanding b turns out to be unfindable, we must come up with another conception of b. The idea here is to deny that any point qualifies as the beginning of motion independently of us, but that it is rather our *decision* to regard it as such a point that makes it the beginning of motion. This does not mean that we could pick absolutely any point and take it to be the beginning of motion, but as long as certain boundary conditions are observed (e.g., that the beginning of motion must be temporally and spatially before the place presently traversed), we can pick an arbitrary point and declare it to be the beginning of motion. What this means is that we regard that part of an event which begins with the presence of the moving object at a given point and stretches up to its being located at the space presently traversed as a single event, regardless of whether the moving object occupied an adjacent point at

49. "How are the [space] moved over, the presently traversed and the one yet to be moved over differentiated when the beginning of motion is indeed nowhere perceived?" *gataṃkim. gamyamānaṃkim. agataṃkim. vikalpyate / adr. śyamāna ārambhe gamanasyaiva sarvathā*. MMK 2:14.

50. It is not the case that Nāgārjuna just "falsely assumes that what is characteristic of individuals must be characteristic of the group containing those individuals," as is argued by Cheng (1980: 237). The argument should rather be understood as a proof by cases: if the place where motion begins is to be found anywhere, then it should be either in the portion of space traversed in the past, in the one presently traversed, or in the one not yet traversed. As each of these can be eliminated, the place where motion begins is nowhere to be found.

51. Compare Siderits and O'Brien (1976: 295–296).

the immediately preceding moment. By deciding to regard some moment as the beginning of motion, we split up the flow of events according to our cognitive needs and regard everything between this and the similarly imposed end of motion as part of a single event of motion.

In this way the paradox disappears. We can still have the triple division of the space where motion takes place and have the beginning (and end) as boundaries of this. These two points are no longer unfindable, since according to the present interpretation they are just where we draw the line between one event and another; they do not have to fulfill any additional conditions like the ones given above. As Nāgārjuna argued earlier on, the triple division of space is conceptually dependent on the notion of the beginning of motion. This, however, does not mean that the beginning of motion has to have any existence apart from the cognizing subject; in fact it is precisely this assumption that leads to the problems described by Nāgārjuna in verses 12 to 14. The beginning of motion (as well as the beginning of events in general) is not something found out there in a ready-made world, but a boundary drawn by the mind in accordance with one's particular interests and needs. On the basis of such an imposed boundary, we can then establish the triple division of space and time into where and when an event had already taken place, where and when it is presently taking place, and where and when it will take place.

6.3. The Interdependence of Mover and Motion

Nāgārjuna observes that the concepts mover (*gantr.*) and movement (*gamanam, gati*) are existentially dependent on one another. The concept of a moving object requires that of a movement this object carries out, the concept of movement must be the movement of something, that is, of the moving object.[52] This mutual dependence implies for Nāgārjuna that mover and movement can be regarded neither as identical nor as distinct objects.[53] To regard mover and motion as identical would imply that agent and action are considered to be one object (*ekībhāva*). This would mean that no agent could ever perform two distinct actions, since to do so he would have to be identical with two distinct things. The agent must therefore vary with the action, for example by being regarded not as a substance (*dravya*) but as a power (*śakti*) to carry out a certain action, as is done by Candrakīrti in his commentary on verse 6. As these powers come into and go out of existence, there arises the problem that there would be no continuous existence of a single agent performing a sequence of actions over time. Since this point generalizes to individuals and their properties as a whole, a theory that regarded these two as identical would have difficulties in explaining how we could ever regard such a sequence of distinct individuals and properties as a single unified temporally extended object.[54] A more specifically Buddhist difficulty would arise in connection with the concept of karma. If for every action there is a distinct agent, what reason is there for the karmic consequence of an action to apply to one agent rather than another? Since *ex hypothesi* none of the later agents are identical with the original one, there seems to be no justification for the karmic result to be reaped by one rather than another.[55]

Mover and motion also cannot be regarded as distinct. It is important to note that here, as well as in other contexts, Nāgārjuna uses the word "distinct" to mean "independently existent." If mover and motion existed independently, like a piece of cloth and a pot, as Candrakīrti puts it,[56] it would be possible for a stationary mover to exist, or for a movement to exist that was not the movement of any object. But since the two are existentially dependent on one another, neither of these situations, is in fact possible.

While the identification of mover and motion led to problems with the continuity of an individual over time, as we have just seen, regarding them as existentially independent generates a different problem. Even if we adopt the more sensible position of interpreting independence here as meaning that motion could be instantiated in a different object from the one in which it is in fact instantiated, and that the moving object could instantiate a different motion from the one it in fact instantiates, we end up with having to postulate a thin particular, a substratum which remains once all the properties have been abstracted away. For if *any* property could just leave the individual and go instantiating somewhere else, how are we to characterize the individual? Since any property can exist in principle without it, it must be something which could in principle exist without any of its properties.[57]

52. MMK 2:7.

53. MMK 2:18–21.

54. This is a familiar problem for theories that equate objects with sets of properties. As two sets are identical iff they have the same members, an object could never lose a property and yet remain the same object. Compare Armstrong (1978: 37–38).

55. See Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1973: 372). Kalupahana (1991: 128) interprets the identity of agent and action as the position of the Sarvāstivādins, who assume "identity (*sa eva*) on the basis on an eternal substance (*svabhāva*), thereby rendering the attribute (*lakṣaṇa*) an ephimeral [sic] or impermanent come-and-go entity."

56. PP 105:5.

57. See Armstrong (1997: 123–126).

The difficulty resulting from treating mover and motion as independently existent objects is also what is behind Nāgārjuna's assertion in the final verses of chapter 2, where he says that neither an existent, nor a non-existent, nor a both existent and non-existent mover can carry out a triple movement.[58] It is easiest to fit this verse into the argumentative context of chapter 2 by regarding the "triple movement" as not referring to movement in the past, present, and future,[59] but by following Candrakīrti's commentary.[60] According to this interpretation "existent mover" here means one in which the activity of moving (*gamikrīyā*) inheres, a non-existent mover is one in which it does not inhere, while a mover that is both is an entity in which it both inheres and does not inhere. Saying that the movement, which is to be understood as the space gone over (*gamyata*)[61] is "triple" equally means that either the activity of motion inheres in it, fails to inhere in it, or both.

On this interpretation we are left with nine distinct possibilities: that a mover in which the activity of motion inheres moves at a place in which this activity inheres also, that a mover in which the activity of motion inheres moves at a place in which this activity *does not* inhere, and so forth for the remaining possibilities. The philosophical idea behind this is straightforward. We should not assert that a mover in which the activity of motion inheres moves at a place in which this activity inheres also, if this assertion is supposed to mean that the activity of motion inhering in the mover is *independent* of its inhering in the mover. This is so because one depends on the other: motion can inhere in a mover only if it moves at some place, a place can be the locus of motion only if something moves at it. Furthermore, it cannot be the case that a mover in which the activity of motion inheres moves at a place in which this activity does not inhere, since it would then not be a space gone over. It is obvious that the remaining examples are to be treated in a similar way. The "contradictory" third alternative of both inherence and non-inherence seems to be given by Nāgārjuna merely for the sake of completeness, as supposing that some property both inheres and fails to inhere in some object is inconsistent.[62] The bottom line[63] of the above arguments concerning the interdependence of mover and motion is that while the concepts of mover and motion (and, more generally, agent and action and individual and property) have to be regarded as non-identical, neither of them can be regarded as self-sufficient or existing from its own side, since the existence of each requires that of the other. It is therefore somewhat misleading to take Nāgārjuna as arguing that mover and motion are not real.[64] While it is certainly correct to say that Nāgārjuna thinks that mover and motion are illusory to the extent to which the way they appear (namely as independently existent entities) is not the way they really are, their lack of reality is quite different from that of other non-existent objects, such as hares' horns and present kings of France, which do not exist even at the level of conventional reality (*samvṛtisat*).

6.4. The Second Chapter of the MMK in Its Argumentative Context

The second chapter of the MMK must be understood as playing a double role in Nāgārjuna's philosophical enterprise. On the one hand it is part of the discussion of a variety of different entities (such as agent and action, suffering, time, nirvāṇa and so forth), attempting to show that none of them exists substantially, that is, by *svabhāva*. In this context the examination of motion deserves a particularly prominent place because of its centrality in the Buddhist worldview. Cyclic existence or saṃsāra is after all nothing but the moving about (*saṃsr.*) in the various realms of rebirth. When Nāgārjuna argues that mover, motion, and so forth are empty of *svabhāva,* he uses the terms both in their everyday and in their soteriological sense, where the mover (*gati*) is the subject to be reborn and motion is the move from one life to the next.

It is in the context of this discussion that Nāgārjuna's arguments about the beginning of motion and the identity and difference of mover and motion have to be understood. If we accept Nāgārjuna's conclusion that the beginning (and end) of motion are nothing to be found "out there" in the world, but rather

58. *sadbhūto gamanam. gantā triprakāram. na gacchati / nāsadbūto 'pi gamanam. triprakāraṃsa gacchati // gamanaṃsadasadbhūtah. triprakāram. na gacchati*. MMK 2:24–25a.

59. Siderits and Katsura (2006: 145–146). See also Garfield (1995: 133), who also translates the Tibetan of MMK 25a (*yin dang ma yin gyur pa yang / 'gro rnam gsum du 'gro mi byed*) as "Neither an entity nor a nonentity moves in any of the three ways," rather than as "An object which both exists and does not exist does not carry out a movement in any of the three ways."

60. PP 107:9–14. Candrakīrti explicitly refers to MMK 8 for the interpretation of 2:24–25, which indeed gives a more detailed version of the argument Nāgārjuna has in mind here. Note that Candrakīrti and Buddhapālita differ on their interpretation of "triple" (*triprakāram*) (Pandeya 1988–1989: I:62). See also Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1973: 110).

61. *tatra gamyata iti gamanamihocyate*. PP 107:9.

62. As Nāgārjuna asserts in MMK 8:7. See p. 132.

63. MMK 2:21.

64. As claimed by Murti (1955: 183), see also pp. 137 and 307. Note that Jacques May translates Candrakīrti concluding his commentary of MMK 2:21 in PP 105:11 with the words *nāsti gantr. gamanayoh. siddhir ity abhiprāyah.* rather misleadingly as "L'idée est que le mouvement et son agent sont dépourvus de réalité" (1959: 71).

are a boundary established by the mind, this notion also entails that the beginning and end of a particular motion in saṃsāra, that is, a particular birth and a particular death, have no objective existence either but are merely conventional ways of cutting up the flow of cyclic existence into conceptually convenient bits. Seen the other way round, the concepts of past, present, and future lives arise only once we have decided to mark particular places in the continuity of consciousness as "birth" and "death." Read in this soteriological way, Nāgārjuna's arguments in this section of chapter 2 of the MMK aim to establish that such central concepts as birth and death, past, present, and future lives are no objective features of reality but merely conventionally real boundaries drawn by the human mind. This concept is made more explicit by Nāgārjuna in chapter 11 of the MMK, where he notes:

Where the earlier, the later, and the simultaneous do not appear, how [is there] a proliferation [of the concepts] "birth," "ageing," and "death"? [65]

Given the cyclical nature of saṃsāra, what is earlier and what is later is very much dependent on where we identify the starting point. The hands of a clock will reach "3" before "5" if we start at "2," but they will reach "5" before "3" if we start at "4." Since Nāgārjuna has argued that the starting point is not something "out there" but a boundary drawn by us in order to accord with our specific cognitive concerns, it becomes evident that we cannot ascribe any objectively existing referents to such concepts as "earlier" or "later," "birth" or "death," and "past life" and "future life."[66]

The discussion of the identity and difference of mover and motion addresses another crucial issue which will be taken up again by Nāgārjuna,[67] namely the question of the status of the subject transmigrating through a succession of rebirths. Clearly the mover (the person in cyclic existence) cannot be identical with each different rebirth, since it would then be identical with a number of things that are taken to be distinct at the conventional level. But it can also not be distinct from them, because anything resembling an *ātman*-like transmigrating substance is ruled out in the Buddhist view of persons. There is therefore something fundamentally mistaken with the view that the transmigrating person and his rebirths are two entities which could be related by identity and difference.

The relevance of the arguments in chapter 2 for refuting the idea of a transmigrating person is also stressed by Tsong kha pa:[68]

Then, when the notion of substance with regard to a person has been refuted, some think "Since there exists an agent who comes from the previous life to this one, and then goes to the next life, and who performs virtuous and non-virtuous actions, this does not make sense." To refute this [Nāgārjuna presents] the two [chapters] "Examination of Motion" [MMK 2] and "Examination of the Agent" [MMK 8].

While it thus appears that the arguments in the second (12–14, 17) and third (7, 18–21) group of verses of the second chapter are concerned with the investigation of the existence of *svabhāva* in various entities connected with motion in both the everyday and the soteriological sense, the first group (1–6, 8–11, 15–16, 22–25) is intended to play a more general role. It is not just that the concepts of mover and motion have to be understood in more than one sense, but rather that they serve as placeholders for which a variety of other concepts denoting an individual and a property could be substituted. Nāgārjuna's aim in these verses is therefore primarily to establish an ontological conclusion about the relation between individuals and their properties. By considering predications involving thin individuals (such as "the mover moves" or "the fire burns"), Nāgārjuna establishes that the standard analysis of predication into individuals and properties, which conceives of them as mutually independent entities combined in a state of affairs, is not satisfactory as a general analysis. Statements referring to thin individuals cannot be analyzed in this way. Furthermore, Nāgārjuna wants to argue that this problem generalizes to analyses involving thick individuals as well. Once we have accepted that talk of individuals and properties in the case of such statements as "the mover moves" is nothing more than the projection of forms of language which are mistakenly given ontological weight, we will be much more reluctant to take this analysis ontologically seriously in other contexts. We should rather conceive of this analysis as a reflection of what is cognitively convenient for us rather than as a structure of the world mirrored in our language.

65. *yatra na prabhavanty ete pūrvāparasahakramāh. / prapan¯cayanti tām. jātim. taj jarāmaraṇam. ca kim.* . MMK 11:6.

66. Jay Garfield observes that "to see particular entities as having determinate, nonconventional beginnings of existence and determinate, nonconventional termini and, hence, that there are distinct times at which there is a clear fact of the matter about whether or not they exist, independent of conventions for their individuation, is to see those entities as having necessary and sufficient characteristics for their identity, that is, as having essences [i.e., *svabhāva*]. [. . .] Once we see the world from the standpoint of emptiness of inherent existence, the history of any conventionally designated entity is but an arbitrary stage carved out of a vast continuum of interdependent phenomena" (1995: 199).

67. In chapter 27 of the MMK.

68. *de ltar gang zag la rang bzhin bkag pa na 'jig rten pha rol nas 'dir 'ong ba dang 'di nas pha rol tu 'gro ba po dang las dge mi dge'i byed pa po yod pas de mi thad do snyam pa 'gog pa la 'gro 'ong dang byed pa po brtag pa gnyis so.* Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1973: 34:15–17).

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter II

गतागतपरीक्षा द्वितीयं प्रकरणम्। gatāgataparīkṣaṇaṃ nāma dvitīyaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀去來品第二(二十五偈) **zhōng lùn guān qù lái pǐn dì èr (èr shí wǔ jié;jì)**

|འགྲོ་བ་དང་འོང་བ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་གཉིས་པའོ|| | ’gro ba daṅ ’oṅ ba brtag pa źes bya ba (7)ste rab tu byed pa gñis pa’o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER II - Examination of What Has and What Has Not Transpired

JONES (Skt):
2. Motion

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of the Moved and the Not-moved

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
2. Analysis of Coming and Going

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[2] Examination of 'Gone' and 'Not Gone' (25 Verse)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Motion and Rest

STRENG (Skt):
Section 2 - An Analysis of "Going to" (Change or Movement) In 25 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
2. the gone and the ungone (motion)

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 2. Contemplation of Going and Coming 25 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Coming and Going

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER II - Analysis of Going and Coming

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter II: Examination of Motion

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER II - Examination of Motion

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of the Moved and the Not-moved

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 2: AN EXAMINATION OF COMING AND GOING

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/0 Question: We see with our worldly eyes the three periods of time operating. There is the gone, the not-yet-gone and the moment-of-going. Because these operate we know that all dharmas exist.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter IV]

One may interject that, although, by denying origination as an attribute of the true way of things, it is established that neither perishing nor any of the other attributes hold for the true way of things, still, in order to prove that neither coming nor going hold of the true way of things, what additional arguments can you offer for denying to and fro movement as this is commonly understood?

Denial of past, future and present movement

We reply that, if there were something called movement (*gamana*), it would have to be conceived of as relating either to a path of motion already traversed (*gata*), or not yet traversed (*agata*), or just being traversed (*gamyamana*). Nagarjuna says that in none of these ways does movement make sense.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Two Examination of The Moved and the Not-moved (Gatagata-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter II Examination of Motion

The target of Nāgārjuna's arguments in this chapter is any view of motion according to which motion is an entity, or a property with an existence independent of that of moving things, or according to which motion is part of the nature of moving things. These are versions of what it would be to think of motion as nonempty. It might be quite natural for a reificationist to reply to the arguments in Chapter I by proposing that such a view must be the case. For in Chapter I Nāgārjuna does presuppose, in developing the view that conventionally things do arise dependent upon conditions, that there is motion, or change. For if there were not, there would be no arising. And as we have seen, this would indeed be an absurd consequence for Nāgārjuna. So, one might think, even if the links between conditions and their consequences are empty, the change represented by the arising of these consequences must be real.

Nāgārjuna argues that from such a view a number of absurd consequences would follow: Things not now in motion, but which were in motion in the past or which will be in the future, would have to undergo substantial change, effectively becoming different things when they change state from motion to rest or vice versa; a regress would ensue from the need for the entity motion itself to be in motion; motion would occur in the absence of moving things; the moment at which a thing begins or ceases motion would be indescribable. Nāgārjuna concludes that a reification of motion is incoherent. Motion is therefore empty.

Kārikā II.1

गतं न गम्यते तावदगतं नैव गम्यते।
गतागतविनिर्मुक्तं गम्यमानं न गम्यते॥१॥

LVP 92,7-8 - LVP 112,5-6
gataṃ na gamyate tāvad agataṃ naiva gamyate |
gatāgatavinirmuktaṃ gamyamānaṃ na gamyate ||1||

已去無有去 未去亦無去
離已去未去 去時亦無去

T1564: vol 30, pg 3c5
yǐ qù wú yǒu qù wèi qù yì wú qù
lí yǐ qù wèi qù qù shí yì wú qù

|རེ་ཞིག་སོང་ལ་མི་འགྲོ་སྟེ།།མ་སོང་བ་ལའང་འགྲོ་བ་མིན།
|སོང་དང་མ་སོང་མ་གཏོགས་པར།།བགོམ་པ་ཤེས་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།།

Tg tsa 2b2 - Tg tsa 3a6-7
(2)re źig soṅ la mi ’gro ste | | ma soṅ ba la’aṅ ’gro ba min | | soṅ daṅ ma soṅ ma gtogs par | | bgom pa śes par mi ’gyur ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - Indeed, that which has transpired does not come to pass nor does that which has not transpired. Separated from these (gatagata), the present passing away cannot be known. - Note: S. Yamaguchi enlightens us that the final "na gamyate" refers to the fact that a certain condition is unknowable or inconceivable.

JONES (Skt):
[1] What has already been moved is not now being moved. What has not yet been moved is also not now being moved. But apart from what has already been moved and has not yet been moved, any current motion is not being moved.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
What has been moved, in the first instance, is not being move. What has not been moved is also not being moved. Separated from what has been moved and has not been moved, present moving is not known.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What has already gone is not what is going as much as what has not yet gone is not what is going.
Separated from what has already gone and that which has not yet gone, the present process of going does not go.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. As a memory of action in the past 'Gone' is absolutely different from a real act to go at the present moment,
Similarly a supposition of action in future 'Not Gone' is also absolutely different from a real act to go at the present moment.
And leaving from a memory in the past 'Gone' and leaving from an image in future 'Not Gone',
Even a present recognition of 'Is Going' is also absolutely different from a real Act dimensionally, which is actually going on just at the present moment.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 There is no motion, first, in what has been traversed, nor in what has not yet been traversed, nor in what, as something distinct from what has and has not been traversed, is just being traversed.

STRENG (Skt):
1. Nargarjuna: That which is already gone to (gatam – goer after the going - iii) is not that which is "being gone to" (gamyate); more so, "that which is not yet gone to" (agatam – goer before the going - i) is certainly not that "being gone to." (gamyate) Also, the "present going to" (gamyamana – actual goer - ii) without "that which is already gone to" and "that which is not yet gone to" is not "being gone to".

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
II.1a As far as the place moved over does not move, the place not moved over does not move either.

ROBINSON (Skt):
The gone is not arrived at, and the ungone is not arrived at; the just-being- gone is not arrived at separate from the gone and the ungone.

BOCKING (Ch):
2v1 In the already-gone there is no going
And in the not-yet-gone there is no going
Apart from the already-gone and the not-yet-gone
The moment of going also has no going.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Then there is no going in what has gone; there is no going also in what has not [yet] gone. Motion is unknowable apart from what has gone and not [yet] gone.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Where there has been going, there is none;
Where it has yet to occur, there is no going either.
Aside from what has been traversed and what has not,
No place where walking occurs can be identified. [II.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. What has been moved is not moving.
What has not been moved is not moving.
Apart from what has been moved and what has not been moved,
Movement cannot be conceived.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Now, where one has gone one does not go.
Where one has not yet gone one does not go.
Apart from where one has gone and where one has not gone,
That over which one goes cannot be conceived.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
What has moved is not moving now. What has not moved is also not moving now. Yet apart from these, present motion is inconceivable.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
On the path that has been traveled, there is no moving,
On the path that has not been traveled, there is no moving either,
And in some other place besides the path that has been traveled and the path that has not,
Motions are not perceptible in any way at all. (1)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/1 In the already-gone there is no going, since it is already gone. If there existed an 'action of going separate from 'going' this would not be right. The not-yet-gone similarly has no going, since there is not yet any dharma of going. 'The moment of going' means half gone and half not-yet-gone, because it is not separate from the already gone and the not-yet gone. Question:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

(fn 1 An alternate translation might be: What has moved does not move, or is not in motion; what has not moved does not move; and what, as something distinct from what has and has not moved, is just moving, does not move. Nagarjuna's analysis gains some of its strength from the fact that his Sanskrit terms are both spatial and temporal, inextricably.)

Where, on the path of movement (*adhvajata*), the activity 'motion' (*gamikriya*) has ceased is said to have been traversed. That sector which is just being entered by a present activity of motion is said to be where movement is (*gamyate*). What has been traversed — where the activity 'motion' has ceased - because it is associated with a present activity of motion is spoken of as being 'in motion'. As this statement is clearly illogical it is not tenable to say what has been traversed is in motion (fn 2 Or, that past motion moves.). The word 'first' indicates the sequence of refutation.

And now the statement 'There is no motion in what has not yet been traversed.' The sector of the path of movement which has not yet been traversed is where the activity 'motion' has not yet arisen, it is the future (*anagata*). But to be in motion is present, and because future and present are irreconcilable it is equally untenable to say what has not yet been traversed is in motion. If a sector has not been traversed how can there be motion there? Where there is motion how can one say it has not been traversed?

Nor is there movement in the sector just being traversed, for 'There is no motion in what, as something distinct from what has and has not been traversed, is just being traversed.' The thought here is that the space which the mover has passed through is for him traversed and the space he has not yet passed through is for him not yet traversed. But we never observe another, third sector of the path of movement unrelated to what has and has not been traversed called 'in traverse' (*gamyamana*) (fn 3 Or, just being traversed.). In this sense, therefore, there is no motion in what is just being traversed. Being in motion cannot be expressed intelligibly (*na prajnapyate*). The conclusion is that there is no 'being in traverse'. Hence there is no passage there of an activity 'motion'; that is, there is no motion. There is no movement in what is being traversed either.

Again, one might think that the place where one walking actually places his feet would be just being traversed. But this won't do, because feet are an aggregate of minute particles. A place which is earlier for a minute particle located in the tip of the toe falls for it within the sector of the traversed, while for a minute particle located in the tip of the heel that place is later and falls within the sector of what has not been traversed. But there is no foot apart from minute particles and so there is no space just being traversed apart from what has and has not been traversed. An

analysis, similar to this one of the foot, should be carried out of the spatial relationships of ahead and behind for the minute particles as well. As for what is just being traversed being half traversed, this was analysed earlier in connection with 'being brought forth'. It is thus established that there is no motion in the sector just being traversed.

Denial of present movement

Someone might object that there is motion in what is just being traversed, as:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The positive statement: "What has moved is being moved" (gatam gamyate) does, indeed, carry the implication of a permanent substantial entity, an entity with which movement was associated in the past and which is also presently moving. Nagarjuna's negative statement is, therefore, a denial of such an entity. Yet, this denial may be interpreted as involving the opposite view, namely, that an entity that was previously not associated with movement is at present moving, that is, the entity that is presently moving is completely different from the previous entity.

If the two positive assertions: (i) "What has moved is being moved" and (ii) "What has not moved is being moved," are accepted, then we have a present moving which is with and without prior movement. This is in a way self-contradictory. It is like saying that "a first cause is both caused and uncaused," or that "a mover is both moved and unmoved." Nagarjuna would appear as a transcendentalist if he had assumed the "present moving" (gamyamana) which has the characteristic of both "moved and not-moved." The substantialist perspective was thus contributory to three views, all of which were not acceptable.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. That is, if motion exists, there must be sometime at which it exists. Nāgārjuna in this opening verse considers the past and the future. This makes good sense. For motion requires a change of position, and a change of position must occur over time. But the present has no duration. So if motion were to exist, it would have to exist either in the past or in the future. But a thing that has moved only in the past' is not now moving. Nor is a thing yet to be moved. One might, of course, suggest that there is a simple tense fallacy here - that things that were moving in the past were *then* in motion, that things that will move in the future will *then* be in motion. But this would be problematic. For that would mean that all motion would be in the past or in the future, and this could be said at any time. So there would be no time at which it would be true of any thing that it is in motion. (fn: 34. The parallels to Zeno's paradoxes of motion, particularly that of the arrow, should be evident.) But this intuition is behind the opponent's reply in the next verse:

Kārikā II.2

चेष्टा यत्र गतिस्तत्र गम्यमाने च सा यतः।
न गते नागते चेष्टा गम्यमाने गतिस्ततः॥२॥

ceṣṭā yatra gatis tatra gamyamāne ca sā yataḥ |
na gate nāgate ceṣṭā gamyamāne gatis tataḥ ||2||

動處則有去 此中有去時
非已去未去 是故去時去

dòng chǔ zé yǒu qù cǐ zhōng yǒu qù shí
fēi yǐ qù wèi qù shì gù qù shí qù

།གང་ན་གཡོ་བ་དེ་ན་འགྲོ། །དེ་ཡང་གང་གི་བགོམ་པ་ལ།
།གཡོ་བ་སོང་མིན་མ་སོང་མིན། །དེ་ཕྱིར་བགོམ་ལ་འགྲོ་བ་ཡོད།

| gaṅ na g-yo ba de na 'gro | | de yaṅ gaṅ gi bgom pa la |
| g-yo ba soṅ min ma soṅ min | | de phyir bgom la 'gro ba yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 (The opponent contends) Where there is movement, there is passage. There is movement also in the present passing away but not in that which has transpired nor in that which has not transpired. Thus passage must reside in the present passing away.

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection:*2] Where there is movement, there is motion - since movement is in what is the currently being moved, not in what has already been moved or not yet moved, motion is only in what is currently moving.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
[opponent] Where there is movement, there is motion. For which reason movement is in the present moving, and not either in the moved or in the not moved, for that reason motion is available in the present moving.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where there is moving there is going and it is in the present process of going.
Moving is not in what has already gone nor in what has not yet gone, but in going.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. A motion of hands and feet at some place is just going forward at the place,
And in such a situation, the real facts of going on are there in the motion of going on.
Motions of hands and feet are sometimes not to go, and sometimes not to come.
Going just at the place is also belongs to going on.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 Where there is bodily effort there is motion, and as there is bodily effort in space just being traversed, but no bodily effort in what has or has not been traversed, it follows that there is motion in space just being traversed.

STRENG (Skt):
2. An opponent objects: Where there is activity (cesta - visible activity) there is a "process of going" (gatis – real going process), and that activity (visible activity) is in the "present going to" (gamyamane - ii). Then "process of going" (gatis - real going process) is inherent in the "present going to" (gamyamane - ii) since the activity (visible activity) is not in "that which is already gone to" (iii) nor in "that which is not yet gone to." (i)

BOCKING (Ch):
2v2 In the place of movement there is going
In this is the moment of going
It is neither already-gone nor not-yet-gone
Therefore the moment of going goes.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Where there is moving, there there is going. Furthermore, because moving is within motion -- and is neither gone nor not [yet] gone, therefore, there is going within motion.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Where there is movement, there is going,
And movement is found where walking takes place,
Not where going has been, nor where it has yet to occur.
Hence, going is found where walking takes place. [II.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. Where there is change, there is motion.
Since there is change in the moving,
And not in the moved or not-moved,
Motion is in that which is moving.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. Where there is motion, there is going.
Since there is motion in that which is being gone over,
But neither where one has gone nor where one has not gone,
It follows that *going* is in that which is being gone over.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[opponent] Where there is movement there is motion. For this reason, movement is in what is presently moving.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/2 Insofar as there is a situation in which there is an action done, going ought to exist in this. We see with our eyes that in the moment-of-going there is a situation of (karmic) activity. In the already-gone, the activity has already ceased, and in the not-yet-gone activity does not yet exist. Therefore we know that there is going in the moment-of-going.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Here bodily effort can be taken to be the lifting up and stretching out of the foot in walking. When one is walking there is motion in the very place where there is the bodily effort of lifting and stretching out the foot. This bodily effort is not possible either in space (*desa*) which has been traversed nor in space which has not been traversed but only in space which is just being traversed. There is, therefore, motion in space just being traversed. Where motion is directly perceived there space is just being traversed, that is, is being entered into in virtue of the activity 'motion'; so there emphatically is motion just where space is being moved through. In these arguments the one verb root 'move' means first 'to comprehend', and second 'to reach another point in space' (fn 4 Candrakīrti might have added a third meaning, namely, 'to attain' or 'to achieve'. The entire chapter could be taken in either of these two alternate senses. The primary reference, however, is to motion in space and the chapter has been so translated.).

But even on these suppositions there is no motion in what is just being traversed, Nagarjuna says.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If a Cartesian perspective were to generate metaphysical views such as those presented by the Sarvastivadins, one way of eliminating such metaphysics is by adopting the "Humean" perspective that emphasizes the "immediate present," without any reference to the past or the future. However, such an unrelated or independent static present may once again lead to a substantialist reductionism. The only way to get rid of such "essentialist" perspectives, both of the rationalists and of some of the empiricists, is by adopting a more "phenomenological" explanation where, instead of a "present," one speaks of "presencing." If so, present movement (gamyamana) could simply mean "motion" (gati, cesta) which is not found either in the past or the future. Having rejected the substantialist implications of the Sarvastivada in the previous verse, Nagarjuna is here speculating on the meaning of the alternative views of the Sautrantikas, who wrestled with the problems of atomic discreteness as well as the experienced continuity, only to reject them in the verse that follows.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. This verse is important not only because it announces the obvious reply that motion exists in presently moving things, but because it introduces the connection between change in general and motion. Though this interpretative point is controversial, and several scholars have given widely different interpretations, (fn: 35. The Yen. Oeshe Yeshes Thap-Khas, for instance, argues that the chapter should be interpreted as about change in general; the Yen. Oen Lobzang Gyatso, on the other hand, argues that though the arguments could indeed be applied to change in general, the chapter is specifically about motion through space. The Yen. Lobzang Norbu Shastri argues that it is in fact specifically only about walking, and that any further generalization is illicit (all personal communication). I side with the Yen. Geshe Yeshes Thap-Khas on this point since Nāgārjuna offers perfectly general arguments against change in properties. And it would seem especially elegant for Nāgārjuna, who is attacking the tendency to reify, to begin with the two properties most subject to reification in Buddhist philosophy, in virtue of their universal applicability to phenomena and centrality to the Buddhist metaphysical framework - dependent arising and change. While the canonical commentaries I have consulted do not extend the argument in this direction, they do not preclude such an extension.) it is highly plausible that Nāgārjuna is calling attention to the fact that the attack on motion as an inherently existent phenomenon is a general attack on seeing change or impermanence as inherently existent. This suggests that even the properties that according to Buddhist philosophy characterize all things - being dependently arisen and being impermanent - are not themselves inherently existent. Nāgārjuna replies:

Kārikā II.3

गम्यमानस्य गमनं कथं नामोपपत्स्यते।
गम्यमाने द्विगमनं यदा नैवोपपद्यते॥३॥

gamyamānasya gamanaṃ kathaṃ nāmopapatsyate |
gamyamānaṃ vigamanaṃ yadā naivopapadyate ||3||

云何於去時 而當有去法
若離於去法 去時不可得

yún hé yū;yú;wū qù shí ér dāng yǒu qù fǎ
ruò lí yū;yú;wū qù fǎ qù shí bù kě dé;děi;de

|བགོམ་ལ་འགྲོ་བ་ཡིན་པར་ནི||ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ན་འཐད་པར་འགྱུར|
|གང་ཚེ་འགྲོ་བ་མེད་པ་ཡི||བགོམ་པ་འཐད་པ་མེད་ཕྱིར་རོ||

| bgom la ’gro ba (3)yin par ni | | ji lta bur na ’thad par ’gyur |
| gaṅ tshe ’gro ba med pa yi | | bgom pa ’thad pa med phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 (Nagarjuna asserts) Indeed, how is it possible for the present passing away to have a coming to pass? For, it is not possible for the present passing away to be without a coming to pass.

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply:*3] How is the movement within “what is currently moving” acceptable when the non-movement of “what is currently moving” is not?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
[Nagarajuna] How appropriate would be the movement of the present moving? For the non-movement in the present moving is certainly not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How would this going of the present process of going take place?
Indeed, whenever there is no going, the present process of going does not take place.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. The Action to go belongs to the state of going,
Therefore how is it necessary for us to utilize the name of going?
The states of going on have to be included into the two kinds, that is, going as concept, and the other is as a physical motion of going,
And then it is not necessary for both the two images of the going itself and the physical motion of going, to manifest themselves at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 How can movement be intelligibly attributed to what is in traverse, as a dual movement in what is in traverse is not intelligible?

STRENG (Skt):
3. Nargarjuna answers: How will the "act of going" (gamanam - visible activity & displacement) of "present going to" (gamyamana - ii) be produced, Since both kinds of the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement) as applied to an active process and to the activity of going through space simply are not produced (i.e. originating) in the "present going to" (ii)?

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
II.3 How suitable is it to attribute motion to the space presently traversed, as far as attributing non-motion to it is not suitable?

BOCKING (Ch):
2v3 Why do you say that in the moment-of-going
There must exist a dharma of going?
When without the dharma of going
There cannot be a moment-of-going?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How can going be possible within motion? Because motion that is not going is impossible.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Going where walking takes place,
How could that make sense,
When, without going, there cannot reasonably be
Anyplace where walking takes place? [II.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. How would it be acceptable
For motion to be in the mover?
When it is not moving, it is not acceptable
To call it a mover.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. How could it be tenable
For going to be in that which is being gone over?
When there is no going, it is not tenable
To say that there is going there.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[Nagarjuna] How correct is your statement when there is no movement in the present? A non-moving movement makes no sense. Consider that...

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/3 'In the moment-of-going there is a dharma of going'; This is not so, and why? No moment-of-going can be found apart from a dharma of going. If there could be a moment-of-going which existed without a dharma of going, there would be going within such a moment-of-going, just like fruit in a dish. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

You, good sir, are using the expression 'in traverse'(fn 5 'In traverse' includes both (a) what is traversing and (b) the space being traversed.) only because of its association with motive activity, and you say there is motion there. But there is only one motive activity in virtue of which you may, if you will, use the expression 'in traverse' with respect to a path of movement. But to say 'it moves' is an additional connection with motive activity and does not make sense. 'How can movement be intelligibly attributed to what is in traverse?' Nagarjuna explains why not: 'As a dual movement in what is in traverse is not intelligible.' His meaning is that 'in traverse' and 'moving' are synonyms. 'Dual movement' means a movement found in two things. As 'in traverse' is fully absorbed by the one motive activity (*garni-kriya*) and as there is no second motive activity, and as to use the expression 'there is motion' in the absence of motion is obviously contrary to reason, so, to say 'what is in traverse is in motion' is not a statement with a completed sense. Such is Nagarjuna's meaning. It is possible to say only 'what is in traverse' but, as there is no second motive activity, not that 'it is in motion'.

On the other hand you may want to connect the motive activity with the motion itself. In such case there is no connection of the motive activity with what is in traverse. Nagarjuna says such a statement lacks a completed meaning.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As pointed out earlier, the statement "Man moves," can have two possible metaphysical "deep structures." The same could be said of the assertion, "The present moving moves." After observing these two metaphysical implications of the statement: "movement of the presnt moving," (gamyamanasya gamanam), Nagarjuna seems to take up the first alternative for examination and maintains that a present movement, conceived in such a manner, is indeed a non-movement (gamyamanam hy agamanam).

The Tibetan versions (text as well as commentaries) seem to preserve this original reading as do all the Chinese translations (see Inada, p), including Kumarajiva's. As such, the available reading in the Sanskrit version as gamyamane dvi-gamanam could prove to be a scribal error. This assumption is further strengthened by the fact that II.44 that follows provides a criticism of the first metaphysical assumption, while II.5 take the second metaphysical assumption for criticism.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. The point here is that if motion is thought of both as inherently existent and as a property of the mover, then it should, as inherently existent, continue to exist. For something that is inherently existent depends for nothing on its existence, and so it cannot be deprived of the conditions of its manifestation.. That is because inherent existence is existence with an essence, as an independent entity whose identity can be intrinsically specified. (See Chapter XV for more detail.) But movers come to rest. It would seem then that it would have to be appropriate to call something a mover, even when it is at rest, since inherently existing motion could not cease.

Kārikā II.4

गम्यमानस्य गमनं यस्य तस्य प्रसज्यते।
ऋते गतेर्गम्यमानं गम्यमानं हि गम्यते॥४॥

gamyamānasya gamanaṃ yasya tasya prasajyate |
ṛte gater gamyamānaṃ gamyamānaṃ hi gamyate ||4||

若言去時去 是人則有咎
離去有去時 去時獨去故

ruò yán qù shí qù shì rén zé yǒu jiù
lí qù yǒu qù shí qù shí dú qù gù

།གང་གི་བགོམ་པ་ལ་འགྲོ་བ།།དེ་ཡི་བགོམ་ལ་འགྲོ་མེད་པར།
།ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར་ཏེ་གང་གི་ཕྱིར།།བགོམ་ལ་འགྲོ་བ་ཡིན་ཕྱིར་རོ།།

| gaṅ gi bgom pa la ’gro ba | | de yi bgom la ’gro med par |
| thal bar ’gyur te gaṅ gi phyir | | bgom la ’gro ba yin phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - The assertion that the present passing away has a coming to pass results in a fallacy that the former can be without the latter. However, the present passing away does come to pass.

JONES (Skt):
[4] For whoever asserts that there is movement of "what is currently moving," it follows that the current moving is itself without motion. But having motion means "currently moving."

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
For him who asserts the movement of the present moving, it follows that there could be present moving without motion. [However,] the present moving, indeed, means being moved [i.e., the present moving, indeed, takes place].

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
His whose present process of going is a consequence of going, has already gone without the present process of going.
But, indeed, the present process of going is going.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. A real act to go actually, is included into the state of going on,
And a state of going on and a Real Act to go have adhered with each other tightly together.
A state to be going on, moves following a motion of going on.
Because the state of going on actually goes forward by itself exactly.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 For one who holds that there is movement of what is in traverse, for him it must follow that what is in traverse is devoid of movement; that is, for such a one 'what is in traverse moves'.

STRENG (Skt):
4. Having the "act of going" (gamanam - visible activity & displacement) of "present going to" (gamyamanasya - ii) has necessarily resulted in a lack of "the present going to" (ii) of the "process of going" (gati - real going process), For the "present going to" (gamyamana - ii) is the "being gone to" (gamyate).

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
II.4 For whom motion is attributed to the space presently traversed, there should be such a space without motion—but "presently traversed space" means "movement takes place there."

BOCKING (Ch):
2v4 If someone asserts that. there is going in a moment-of-going,
This person is in error.
The moment-of-going exists without any separate 'going'
Since the moment of going 'goes' in itself.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
For whomever there is going within motion, for him it will follow that there [could be] no going within motion, because there is going within motion. (Or, following the structure and wording of v. 10: "To claim that there is going within motion implies that there could be no going within motion, because it is asserted there is going within motion.")

DOCTOR (Tb):
For whomever there is going where walking takes place,
It then follows
That there is no going where walking takes place
Because "going is found where walking takes place."[II.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. For whomever there is motion in the mover
There could be non-motion
Evident in the mover.
But having motion follows from being a mover.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. For whomever there is going where one goes,
The absurd consequence would follow that
There could be a path over which one is going without going;
But wherever one goes there is going.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The phrase "present moving" implies actual movement.
But in saying there is movement this instant, it follows that there can be movement without motion.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/4 If someone says that in the already-gone and the not-yet-gone there is no going, but that a going really exists in the moment of- going, this person is in error. If the moment-of-going existed independently of the dharma of going, then they would not be interdependent. Why is this? If you assert that there is going in the moment-of-going, this implies two operations, but this is not so in reality. Therefore you cannot say that there is a moment-of-going separate from going. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The one arguing the view that what is in traverse has motion, must think that, as what is in traverse is a mere name devoid of motive activity, motive activity is adventitious to it. According to this view it must follow that what is in traverse is devoid of motion; that is, movement would be without motion! For such a one what is in traverse moves. The abbreviation 'that is' means 'hence'. As what is in traverse lacks motion entirely, for one of such view it follows that it moves, because the activity of motion is fully appropriated by the 'it moves'. The undesirable consequence follows, therefore, that what is at present in traverse lacks motion.

Again you may want to connect motion with both what is in traverse and with movement. Even so,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

In asserting the statement: "The movement of the present moving," one is compelled to assume that present moving is independent of motion and that the latter is something attributed (adheyabhutam) to the former. In that case, the present moving should be without motion. However, Nagarjuna seems to be ready to assume that "the present moving indeed takes place" (gamyamanam hi gamyate) without allowing for such metaphysical implicatons.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. In this verse Nāgārjuna begins his attack on the idea that motion is a property with an existence independent of movers. If, he asserts, one were to posit motion as such a property that simply happened to inhere in movers, it would follow from its independence that movers might not have it, but instead its contrary, namely, nonmotion. But that is not tenable. So it follows that motion can't be thought of as an independent property. This line of argument is continued in the next two verses:

Kārikā II.5

गम्यमानस्य गमने प्रसक्तं गमनद्वयम्।
येन तद्गम्यमानं च यच्चात्र गमनं पुनः॥५॥

gamyamānasya gamane prasaktaṃ gamanadvayam |
yena tad gamyamānaṃ ca yac cātra gamanaṃ punaḥ ||5||

若去時有去 則有二種去
一謂為去時 二謂去時去

ruò qù shí yǒu qù zé yǒu èr zhǒng qù
yī wèi wéi qù shí èr wèi qù shí qù

།བགོམ་ལ་འགྲོ་བ་ཡོད་ན་ནི།།འགྲོ་བ་གཉིས་སུ་ཐལ་འགྱུར་ཏེ།
།གང་གིས་དེ་བགོམ་གྱུར་བ་དང༌།།དེ་ལ་འགྲོ་བ་གང་ཡིན་པའོ།།

| bgom la ’gro ba yod na ni | | (4)’gro ba gñis su thal ’gyur te |
| gaṅ gis de bgom ’gyur ba daṅ | | de la ’gro ba gaṅ yin pa’o |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - There are two aspects of coming to pass inherent in the passage of the present passing away. That is, one (which gives substance) to the present passing away and the other which is the coming to pass itself. - Note: Yamaguchi renders prasakta as fallacy; thus his translation from the Japanese would read: "There is a fallacy of asserting two kinds of coming to pass..." This is not without merits for it clarifies the position that Nagarjuna takes.

JONES (Skt):
[5] Thus, a twofold motion is entailed in the idea of the “movement of motion” - the movement by which there comes to be the “current moving,” and the moving itself.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A two-fold movement is implied in the movement of the present moving: that by which there comes to be present moving and, again, the movement itself.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Two goings are implied in the going of the process of going; that by which there is a present process of going and again, the going therein.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Being included by the Real Act to go, and being in the Real Act to go,
The two factors of the Real Act to go, that is, a state of going on and the Real Act to go itself,
With what kind of method have they been combined into one confirmed situation?.
Because in that case relying upon such a method, the Real Act to go has been realized again.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 If movement is of what is in traverse it will follow that there must be two movements: one in virtue of which there is present traversing and the other in which there is motion.

STRENG (Skt):
5. Recognizing the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement) of "present going to" (ii) results in two kinds of "acts of going" (gamanadvaya - visible activity & displacement): One by which there is "present going to" (gamyamana - ii), the other which is the "act of going" (gamana - visible activity & displacement).

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
II. 5 If there is motion in the presently traversed space this eventuates two motions: that by which it is a presently traversed space, and also the motion itself.

BOCKING (Ch):
2v5 If the moment-of-going has going
Then there are two kinds of going.
One is called the moment-of-going
The other is the going-of-the-moment-of-going.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there were going within motion, it would follow that going would be twofold: that by which one becomes someone in motion [in a place] and [that by which one] goes in that [place].

DOCTOR (Tb):
If going took place where walking takes place,
It would follow that there are two acts of going:
One due to which there is a place with walking
And another that is the going that happens there. [II.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. If motion is in the mover,
There would have to be a twofold motion:
One in virtue of which it is a mover,
And one in virtue of which it moves.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. If going were where one goes,
There would be a twofold going:
One by he who goes there,
And one in the going that is there.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Two kinds of movement are implied by “present moving”: (1) a mover and (2) inherent motion.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/5 If you assert that the moment-of-going has going, then this is an error which implies there are two goings. One is the moment-of-going which depends on going; the other is the going within the moment-of-going.

Question: What is wrong in there being two goings?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The one movement (*gamana*) is the sector of the traverse (*adhva*) which, by association with movement, is said to be present in traverse; the second movement, which is based on what at present is in traverse, is that in virtue of which traversing actually moves. These two movements necessarily follow if there is movement *of* what is in traverse.

Both movement and mover are unintelligible

If you say: 'Let there be two movements, what is the harm', there would be this unacceptable consequence:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This verse takes up the second metaphysical implication mentioned in the analysis of II 3, namely, "the movement of the present moving" involves two forms of movement (dvi-gamanam). The first is the movement through designation (vyapadesa) and the other is the movement in itself (adhikaranabhuta). This seems to be the distinction between the phenomenal designation and the "thing-in-itself." Further metaphysical implications of this understanding are presented in the next verse.

Kārikā II.6

द्वौ गन्तारौ प्रसज्येते प्रसक्ते गमनद्वये।
गन्तारं हि तिरस्कृत्य गमनं नोपपद्यते॥६॥

dvau gantārau prasajyete prasakte gamanadvaye |
gantāraṃ hi tiraskṛtya gamanaṃ nopapadyate ||6||

若有二去法 則有二去者
以離於去者 去法不可得

ruò yǒu èr qù fǎ zé yǒu èr qù zhě
yǐ lí yū;yú;wū qù zhě qù fǎ bù kě dé;děi;de

།འགྲོ་བ་གཉིས་སུ་ཐལ་འགྱུར་ན།།འགྲོ་བ་པོ་ཡང་གཉིས་སུ་འགྱུར།
།གང་ཕྱིར་འགྲོ་པོ་མེད་པར་ནི།།འགྲོ་བ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་ཕྱིར།

| ’gro ba gñis su thal ’gyur na | | ’gro ba po yaṅ gñis su ’gyur |
| gaṅ phyir ’gro po med par ni | | ’gro ba ’thad par mi ’gyur phyir |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - If the two aspects of coming to pass (are admitted), then there follow two kinds of passing (i.e., transpiring) entities. For, a passing away which is devoid of a passing entity does not take place.

JONES (Skt):
[6] If this duality of “movement” and “motion” is accepted, then it would follow that there is a duality of movers - for apart from a mover, motion does not occur.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If two movements are allowed, it would follow that there would be two movers. For, separated from a mover, a movement is not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where there are two goings implied, two goers result.
A goer separated from going does not happen.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. The two factors of a person to go and an Action to go itself, are so combined confirmedly,
And so the two parts of the confirmedly combined into one have been produced so hard.
Therefore, what might be produced, may become the object of so hard criticism,
And so there may be no sufficient possibility for such a production shall be realized actually.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6. Given two movements it must follow that there are two movers. Movement in default of a mover is not intelligible.

STRENG (Skt):
6. Two "goers" (gantarau) would fallaciously follow as a consequence of two "acts of going," (visible activity & displacement) Since certainly the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement) is not produced without a "goer".

BOCKING (Ch):
2v6 If there are two dharmas of going
Then there are two goers
Because, unless there were a goer
You could not have a dharma of going.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If going were twofold, the goer also would be twofold, because going is impossible without a goer.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When it follows that there are two acts of going,
It follows that there are two agents of going,
Because without something that goes,
It makes no sense for there to be going. [II.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If there were a twofold motion,
The subject of that motion would be twofold.
For without a subject of motion,
There cannot be motion.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. Since it would follow that there would be a twofold going,
The goer would be twofold.
For without a goer,
It is not tenable that anything goes.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If so, there must be two movers since movement without a mover makes no sense.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/6 If there are two dharmas of going, then there must be two goers, and why? Because the goer exists by virtue of the dharma of going. One man, two goings and two goers? This is not right. Therefore the moment-of-going does not have going as well.

Question: Although it may be true that a goer does not have (a separate) going, yet there definitely are goers in the three times.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

6ab *Given two movements it must follow that there are two movers.*

Nagarjuna says why it follows that there must be two movers:

6cd *Movement in default of a mover is not intelligible.*

As an activity necessarily requires certain factors for its realization, either an agent or an object, the activity of motion must reside in an agent and so requires a mover (*ganta*). But in the very Devadatta (the 'Mr Smith' of Sanskrit) who is walking there is no second agent. As there are not two agents there cannot be two movements, and so it is logically impossible to say that what is just in traverse is moving.

One might suggest that even while Devadatta is standing, may he not talk, may he not look; may not the one agent be seen to engage in several activities? In this sense there will be two movements in the one mover.

This will not do. The agent is not an object, but a specific energy (*sakti*). From the difference of activity the difference of specific energy which engenders activity is established as well. There is after all no agent of speaking by reason of the activity of standing. If you say but the object (Devadatta) is the same, there is no objection. The object, however, is not the agent, but rather the specific energy is, and specific energies differ. Nor is someone in one locus ever observed to be the agent of two similar activities. So there cannot be two movements of one mover.

You may object that even if this is so none the less movement is directly perceived in Devadatta the mover because we say 'Devadatta is going". Hence movement does exist, because the mover, on which movement is based, exists as a fact.

We reply that this would be so if there were a mover as the base of movement. But there is not. Nagarjuna says how this is so.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The assumption of two movements, as explained in the previous verse, will imply two movers (dvau gantarau). Here, then, is a basic assertion of Nagarjuna with regard to language, namely, that one cannot speak of, say, movement, in a vacuum, but only in relation to something that is moving (gantr). This is the nonsubstantialist approach in Buddhism which refuses to recognize a sharp dichotomy between substance (svabhava) and attribute (laksana), a dichotomy that has become an inalienable part of the essentialist traditions in Indian philosophy that are in pursuit of a truly real or ultimate entity.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. Here Nāgārjuna develops a reductio on a position according to which motion is a property of the mover only at the time that the mover is in motion. This might seem to be a much more plausible view than the earlier discussed view of motion as an essential property. But Nāgārjuna argues that this can't work either. For it involves a multiplication of movements and agents of motion that is unacceptable to the proponent of such a theory. For if the motion is a property of the mover at all, both the mover and the motion must be moving. And this amounts to two separate motions. One motion - that in virtue of which the mover is a mover in the first place - is the motion posited by the theory. But if that motion were stationary, the mover would either also not be moving or it would "outrun" its motion and leave it behind. So there must also be a motion of the motion. Each of these two motions requires a subject. They can't be the same subject because then the mover and the motion would be identical, which would be absurd. So in explaining the . motion of a single individual, the opponent is stuck with two movers. This argument clearly can be understood as the start

of an infinite regress. It is not at all clear whether Nāgārjuna so intended it, as the context in which the argument is formulated is one in which the consequence that two movers emerge in the analysis of the motion of a single mover is enough to refute the opponent. (fn: 36. The commentaries I have consulted are silent on this issue, and there is no consensus among the Tibetan. scholars with whom I have worked regarding this issue.) But it is important to see that once this multiplication of explanatory motions and agents begins, it cannot be stopped, and so this argument constitutes a perfectly general attack on a view according to which motion is an entity associated with movers. It is also worth noting that the argument generalizes in other ways: It can be formulated as an argument against a parallel analysis of change as an independent property and, in general, as an argument against properties as entities that inhere in subjects - a twofold redness is required for a red shirt to be red because of the possession of redness. So this is, in fact, a "third man" argument.

Kārikā II.7

गन्तारं चेत्तिरस्कृत्य गमनं नोपपद्यते।
गमनेऽसति गन्ताथ कुत एव भविष्यति॥७॥

若離於去者 去法不可得
以無去法故 何得有去者

།གལ་ཏེ་འགྲོ་པོ་མེད་གྱུར་ན།།འགྲོ་བ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ།
།འགྲོ་བ་མེད་ན་འགྲོ་བ་པོ།།ཡོད་པ་ཉིད་དུ་ག་ལ་འགྱུར།།

gantāraṃ cet tiraskṛtya gamanaṃ nopapadyate |
gamane ’sati gantātha kuta eva bhaviṣyati ||7||

ruò lí yū;yú;wū qù zhě qù fǎ bù kě dé;děi;de
yǐ wú qù fǎ gù hé dé;děi;de yǒu qù zhě

| gal te ’gro po med gyur na | | ’gro ba (5)’thad par mi ’gyur te |
| ’gro ba med na ’gro ba po | | yod pa ñid du ga la ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - If now the coming to pass which is devoid of a passed entity does not take place, then, in turn, where will the passing entity be without the coming to pass?

JONES (Skt):
[7] If a "mover" is set apart from "motion," then motion does not occur. And if motion does not occur, how could there be a mover?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is thought that a movement separated from a mover is not appropriate, then, when no movement exists, how could there be a mover?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Going and a goer do not occur as separate thoughts.
Where going does not exist, where then will there be a goer?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. When someone has been criticized because of having made mistakes,
The action, which has been done, usually would not become clear.
Furthermore, usually the person, who has committed it, is not clear,
In such situations where does the criminal exist even in future?

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 If movement is not intelligible in default of a mover, then, if there is no movement how can there be a mover?

STRENG (Skt):
7. If there is no going (gamana) (i.e. gamana equals "act of going") without a "goer" (gantara), How will the "goer" (ganta / self-existing subject) come into being when there is no "going" (gamana) (i.e. gamana equals "act of going")?

BOCKING (Ch):
2v7 If, apart from a goer
No dharma of going can be found,
Where there is no dharma of going
How can there be any goer?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there were no goer, going would be impossible. If there were no going, where could a goer be existent?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there is nothing that goes,
Going makes no sense.
In the absence o[any going,
How could there be one who goes? [II.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. If without a mover
It would not be correct to say that there is motion,
Then if there were no motion,
How could there be a mover?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. If without a goer,
It is not tenable that there is going,
Then if there were no going,
How could there be a goer?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If there is no motion without a mover, how could there be a mover without motion?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/7 If you isolate the goer, no (separate) dharma of going can be found. Now how can you assert, when there are no dharmas of going, that goers definitely exist in the three periods of time?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

It was stated [MMK II.6] that a movement not based in a mover was unreal. So if the mover is denied, there is no movement related to him; and then, in the absence of movement, how can there be a mover who lacks a *raison d'etre* (*nirhetuka*)? Hence there is no movement.

You may object that movement does exist because we commonly say that the mover is endowed with movement (*gama-navat*). Here the thought is that the mover is joined with movement and because he is so joined, he moves. If there were no movement we would not commonly say of Devadatta who moves, that 'he moves'. If there were no staff we would not speak of 'the bearer of a staff.' (fn 6 A reference to the wandering mendicant whose insignia was a staff.)

We reply that there would be movement if the expression 'he moves' were acceptable. For,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This represents a simple refutation of the essentialist view involving substance and attribute. If there were to be no movement separated from the mover, then in the absence of the movement there could be no mover. The emphasis here is on the term tiraskrtya (separated). When there is no such separation and where the movement is dependent upon (prati tya) the mover and vice versa, Nagarjuna sees no difficulty.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. Nāgārjuna is here emphasizing the codependence of motion and the mover. If there are no movers, there is no motion. If there is no motion, there are no movers. This has import at both the conventional level and with respect to any discussion of the inherent existence of either the mover or motion. At the conventional level, it means that any analysis of either motion or the mover that leaves the other out, or that does not involve codependence, will fail. Neither can be established as an independent basis for the analysis of the other. But it also means that neither, therefore, can be thought to inherently exist since to exist inherently would be to exist independently.

Kārikā II.8

गन्ता न गच्छति तावदगन्ता नैव गच्छति।
अन्यो गन्तुरगन्तुश्च कस्तृतीयो हि गच्छति॥८॥

gantā na gacchati tāvad agantā naiva gacchati |
anyo gantur agantuś ca kas tṛtīyo ’tha gacchati ||8||

去者則不去 不去者不去
離去不去者 無第三去者

qù zhě zé bù qù bù qù zhě bù qù
lí qù bù qù zhě wú dì sān qù zhě

།རེ་ཞིག་འགྲོ་པོ་མི་འགྲོ་སྟེ། །འགྲོ་བ་པོ་མིན་འགྲོ་བ་མིན།
།འགྲོ་པོ་འགྲོ་པོ་མིན་ལས་གཞན། །གསུམ་པ་གང་ཞིག་འགྲོ་བར་འགྱུར།

| re źig ’gro po mi ’gro ste | | ’gro ba po min ’gro ba min |
| ’gro po ’gro po min las gźan | | gsum pa gaṅ źig ’gro bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - Indeed, a passing entity does not come to pass and neither does a non-passing entity. Apart from these, how could there be a third (type of) entity coming to pass? - Note: A non-passing entity refers to an entity which is not involved in the coming to pass process.

JONES (Skt):
[8] The mover does not move, just as a non-mover does not move and other than a mover or non-mover, what third possibility is there?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
As much as a mover does not move, a non-mover too does not move. Other than a mover and a non-mover, what third party moves?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
So long as a nongoer does not go, a goer also does not go.
Other than a goer and a nongoer, who is the third that goes?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. An Action to go does never go ahead,
And similarly an Action not to go does never go ahead at all.
A different person other than who goes, does never go,
And then what kind of the third person, actually goes?

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 The mover does not move, nor does the non-mover move. What third thing, neither mover nor non-mover, moves?

STRENG (Skt):
8. The "goer" does not go (move); consequently a "non-goer" certainly does not go (move). What third possibility goes (moves) other than the "goer" and "non-goer"?

ROBINSON (Skt):
A goer does not go, and a non-goer does not go; what third one other than goer and non-goer goes?

BOCKING (Ch):
2v8 A goer does not go
And a non-goer does not go.
Apart from goer and non-goer,
There is no third goer.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When a goer does not go, a non-goer cannot go; what third one other than a goer and a non-goer could go?

DOCTOR (Tb):
One who goes does not go,
Nor does one who does not go.
Other than goers and nongoers,
What third party could be going? [II.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. Inasmuch as a real mover does not move,
And a non-mover does not move,
Apart from a mover and a non-mover,
What third thing could move?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Now, inasmuch as a goer does not go,
And a non-goer does not go,
Apart from a goer and a non-goer
What third thing could go?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
A mover does not move, nor does a non-mover move. Apart from a mover and a non-mover, what third party moves?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/8 There is no goer. Why is this? If there were goers, then there would be two categories, either goers or non-goers. Apart from these two, there can be no third (category of) goer.

Question: What is wrong in saying that a goer goes?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The thought is, that, to say 'he moves' there must be a mover. In the first alternative the mover does not move. In what sense he does not move Nagarjuna will expound in the three following verses. But neither does the non-mover (*aganta*) move; for what is called a non-mover is devoid of movement. Rut the word 'moves' takes its meaning from its connection with the activity of motion. If such is a non-mover how will he move? On the other hand, if he moves, he will not be a non-mover. If you think something quite apart from these two moves, it is not so. What third thing unconnected with a mover or a non-mover could be thought of as 'moving'. Hence there is no movement.

You may object that it is not a non-mover which moves, nor one other than mover and non-mover, but rather it is the mover itself. But this too is false (*asat*). Why? Because,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna's analysis now moves from the present movement to the present mover. The possible metaphysical implications he perceived in the statement "present moving moves," are not very different from those that may be involved in the assertion that a "present mover moves" (ganta gacchati). Yet, the question raised is in a slightly different context from that embodied in II. 1 which refers to the past, that is, the moved or the one who has moved (gata), whereas the present verse relates to a present mover (ganta). It shows that metaphysical interpretations can arise not only regarding the past and the future but also in relation to the present.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. Here the terms "mover" and "nonmover" must be understood in the context of the previous arguments. Nāgārjuna is clearly talking about entities that are essentially in motion or in nonmotion. He has argued that we cannot think of a thing in motion as a thing whose nature is to move. And clearly a thing whose nature is not to move cannot be in motion. So if motion is thought of as a property that is either part of the nature of a thing or incompatible with a thing's nature, we are left with the conclusion that there is no motion. And so we have a philosophical problem: How is ordinary motion (and change) possible? Nāgārjuna emphasizes this in the following verses:

Kārikā II.9

गन्ता तावद्गच्छतीति कथमेवोपपत्स्यते।
गमनेन विना गन्ता यदा नैवोपपद्यते॥९॥

gantā tāvad gacchatīti katham evopapatsyate |
gamanena vinā gantā yadā naivopapadyate ||9||

若言去者去 云何有此義
若離於去法 去者不可得

ruò yán qù zhě qù yún hé yǒu cǐ yì
ruò lí yū;yú;wū qù fǎ qù zhě bù kě dé;děi;de

།གང་ཚེ་འགྲོ་བ་མེད་པར་ནི།།འགྲོ་བ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་ན།
།རེ་ཞིག་འགྲོ་པོ་འགྲོའོ་ཞེས།།ཇི་ལྟར་འཐད་པ་ཉིད་དུ་འགྱུར།།

| gaṅ tshe ’gro ba med par ni | | ’gro po ’thad par mi ’gyur na |
| (6)re źig ’gro po ’gro’o źes | | ji ltar ’thad pa ñid du ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - Indeed, how is it (possible) for a passing entity to come to pass when, separated from a coming to pass, a passing entity does not take place?

JONES (Skt):
[9] Indeed, how can the idea “insofar as there is mover, it moves” be appropriate when there is no mover without motion?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Indeed, how appropriate will be the view that a mover moves? For, a mover without movement is certainly not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How does it just happen that the “goer as much as goes”?
When is there a goer where there is no going that takes place?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. A fact that a motion to go moves even a bit,
Can never occur even in future at all.
If we are relying upon only our Action to do without any personal decision to work,
Then any kinds of phenomena do not manifest themselves at all for ever.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 How will it be intelligible that ‘the mover moves’, as the mover himself is not intelligible without movement?

STRENG (Skt):
9. It is said: "The 'goer' goes" (moves) How is that possible, When without the "act of going" (gamana - visible movement) no "goer" is produced?

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
II.9 How suitable is it to say “a mover moves,” as far as a mover without motion is certainly not suitable?

BOCKING (Ch):
2v9 If you talk about a goer going,
What does this mean
Where without a dharma of going,
There can be no goer?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When a goer is impossible without going, then how is it possible to say: “a goer goes”?

DOCTOR (Tb):
When, in the absence of going,
A goer does not make sense,
The statement “going is engaged in by the one who goes”—
How could that possibly make sense? [II.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. When without motion,
It is unacceptable to call something a mover,
How will it be acceptable
To say that a mover moves?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. Now, when without going,
It is untenable to call something a goer,
How could it be tenable
To say that a goer goes?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How can it be that a mover moves? A mover without movement doesn’t make sense.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/9 If you say that a goer definitely exists, and he employs a dharma of going, this is not correct, and why? Because no goer can be found separately from a dharma of going. If a dharma of going definitely existed, separate from a goer, then the goer could employ the dharma of going, but this is not what happens.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In the statement 'the mover moves' there is only one activity of motion in virtue of which we say 'he moves'. What we call the mover is not a second activity of motion. A mover without movement is not moving, so if the mover is not possible it will not make sense to say 'the mover moves'. One may say 'moves' if one wishes to, but 'the mover' is not possible and so the entire sentence does not make sense.

Perhaps the mover is by nature mobile, being joined with motion. Here as well Nagarjuna says that, because there is no second activity of motion, the expression 'the mover moves' is not acceptable.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This again is a positive assertion of Nagarjuna, who would be willing to speak of a movement in a mover, without having to assume that there are two entities involved here, namely, a mover and a movement. For him, the mover and movement are dependent or contingent; one cannot speak of the one without implying the other. The statement, "A mover without movement is certainly not appropriate," is the ultimate refutation of a substantialist assumption that there can be a real entity about whom or which certain attributes can be predicated, the entity and the attributes being completely different.

Kārikā II.10

पक्षो गन्ता गच्छतीति यस्य तस्य प्रसज्यते।
गमनेन विना गन्ता गन्तुर्गमनमिच्छतः॥१०॥

pakṣo gantā gacchatīti yasya tasya prasajyate |
gamanena vinā gantā gantur gamanam icchataḥ ||10||

若去者有去 則有二種去
一謂去者去 二謂去法去

ruò qù zhě yǒu qù zé yǒu èr zhǒng qù
yī wèi qù zhě qù èr wèi qù fǎ qù

|གང་གི་ཕྱོགས་ལ་འགྲོ་བ་པོ||འགྲོ་བ་དེ་ལ་འགྲོ་མེད་པའི|
|འགྲོ་པོ་ཡིན་པར་ཐལ་འགྱུར་ཏེ||འགྲོ་པོ་འགྲོ་བར་འདོད་ཕྱིར་རོ||

| gaṅ gi phyogs la ’gro ba po | | ’gro ba de la ’gro med pa’i |
| ’gro po yin par thal ’gyur te | | ’gro po ’gro bar ’dod phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - If it is asserted that a passing entity comes to pass then a fallacy would result in that the entity could be separated from the coming to pass. (And yet) a passing entity requires the (condition of) passing away.

JONES (Skt):
[10] For one who entertains the proposition “the mover moves” and looks for the motion of a mover, it follows that there is a mover without motion.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
For him who entertains the view: “A mover moves,” and who looks for the movement of a mover, it follows that there is a mover without movement.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
His whose position implies “the goer goes” seeks
going and a goer where the going is without a goer.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. The opinion that one of the two between the person to go and the Action to go, goes,
Has too much one-sided attitude in decision of selecting that or this.
In the action to go, there is no person, who acts.
Therefore it might be hopeful that the person, who acts, likes the action to do so much.

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 For one holding the view that the mover moves, for him, thinking that movement belongs to the mover, it must follow that the mover is without movement.

STRENG (Skt):
10. Those who hold the view that the "goer" "goes" (moves) must falsely conclude That there is a "goer" without the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement) since the "act of going" (visible activity & displacement) is obtained (icchata) by a "goer."

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
II.10 For the one who holds the position that a mover moves and who is looking for the motion of the mover, there is a mover without motion.

BOCKING (Ch):
2v10 If a goer has going,
Then there are two sorts of going.
One is the going of the goer,
The other is the going of the dharma of going.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
To claim that a goer goes implies that there could be a goer who does not go, because it is asserted that a goer goes.

DOCTOR (Tb):
For those who hold that going is engaged in by one who goes
It would then follow that there is
One who goes in the absence of going,
For it is asserted that going is performed by one who goes. [II.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. For him from whose perspective a mover moves,
There would be the consequence that
Without motion there could be a mover.
Because a mover moves.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. For him according to whose position a goer goes,
The absurd consequence would follow that
There could be a goer who does not go;
Because it is maintained that that a goer goes.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
To believe that a mover moves, is to believe that there can be a mover without movement.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/10 If you say that a goer employs a dharma of going, then this involves two errors, for there is one goer but two goings. One; by means of the dharma of going, the goer is established (as a goer), the other; by means of the goer the dharma of going is established. The goer, already established, employs the dharma of going. This is not correct. Therefore, when you previously asserted that in the three periods of time there definitely exist goers, and they who employ dharmas of going, this is not right. Again;

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

For one holding the view that it is the mover who is joined with the activity of motion, for him, thinking that movement belongs to the mover because of the expression 'the moving mover', the statement 'the mover moves without movement' would have to follow, as there is no second activity of motion. Hence it makes no sense to say 'the mover moves'. In the phrase 'a mover without movement', the word 'mover' has the meaning 'to move'.

Perhaps one thinks that in the sentence 'the mover moves' motion is joined with both parts. This too is futile.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

A mover without movement is an entity without an attribute. For the essentialist tradition, an entity is an entity "in itself" without any attributes, of which attributes are predicated. An "entity-in-itself" thus becomes indefinable and indescribable. Nagarjuna has no interest in such speculations. No predication is meaningful without the predicated. These are mutually dependent (prati tya) and not independent (a-prati tya).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. These verses recapitulate the argument in II: 4 and II: 7. If we simply regard motion and mover as independent phenomena, we are forced to the absurd consequence that either could be present without the other.

Kārikā II.11

गमने द्वे प्रसज्येते गन्ता यद्युत गच्छति।
गन्तेति चोच्यते येन गन्ता सन् यच्च गच्छति॥११॥

gamane dve prasajyete gantā yady uta gacchati |
ganteti cājyate yena gantā san yac ca gacchati ||11||

若謂去者去 是人則有咎
離去有去者 說去者有去

ruò wèi qù zhě qù shì rén zé yǒu jiù
lí qù yǒu qù zhě shuì qù zhě yǒu qù

|གལ་ཏེ་འགྲོ་པོ་འགྲོ་འགྱུར་ན||འགྲོ་བ་གཉིས་སུ་ཐལ་འགྱུར་ཏེ|
|གང་གིས་འགྲོ་པོར་མངོན་པ་དང་||འགྲོ་པོར་གྱུར་ནས་གང་འགྲོ་བའོ||

| gal te ’gro po ’gro gyur na | | ’gro ba gñis su thal ’gyur te |
| gaṅ gis ’gro por mṅon (7)pa daṅ | | ’gro por gyur nas gaṅ ’gro ba’o |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - If again it is asserted that the passing entity comes to pass then (another) fallacy would result in two types of coming to pass. One type would exhibit the fact of a passing entity and the other the coming to pass in virtue of being a passing entity.

JONES (Skt):
[11] In fact, if the mover moves two motion follow: that by which the mover is called “a mover,” and that by which a mover then moves.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If a mover were to move, then it would follow that there will be two movements: one in virtue of which he is spoken of as a mover, and the other in terms of which an existing mover is said to move.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If a goer goes, that results in two goings, one called “goer” and the other an existing goer who goes.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. In the real act to go, the two factors of a real act to go and a physical motion to go are enormously combined with each other.
And in that case a person, who goes, is also emphasized actually.
In such a situation a person, who likes to get the position of the job enormously,
Will get the job relying upon the adequate method to go on.

SPRUNG (Skt):
11 If it is the mover who moves there will necessarily be two movements: the one in virtue of which we say ‘mover’ and, the mover being given, the other in virtue of which we say ‘he moves’.

STRENG (Skt):
11. If the "goer" "goes" (moves), then two acts of going (visible activity and displacement) erroneously follow; One is that by which the "going on" (ganta) is designated, and the second is the real "goer" (ganta / self-existing subject) who "goes"(moves).

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
II.11 Also, if the mover moves, two motions would be implied: that in virtue of which it is manifested as a mover, and, it being a mover, that [motion] with respect to which it moves.

BOCKING (Ch):
2v11 If someone says that a goer goes,
This person is in error.
(He makes) the goer separate from going,
And asserts that the goer has going.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the goer goes, it would follow that going would be twofold: that which reveals* the goer and that which goes once [he] has become a goer.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If going is engaged in by the one who goes,
It follows that there are two acts of going:
One that characterizes the one who goes,
And another going in that capacity, [II.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. If a mover were to move,
There would be a twofold motion:
One in virtue of which he is a mover,
And one in virtue of which the mover moves.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. If a goer were going,
There would be the absurd consequence of a twofold going:
One in virtue of which he is manifest as a goer,
And one in virtue of which, having become a goer, he goes.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If a mover moved, then there would be two movements--the mover and the moved. [A (1) mover (2) moved.]

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/11 If someone teaches that a goer can employ a dharma of going, this person makes the error (of saying that) the goer exists separately from the dharma of going. Why is this? To teach that a goer can employ a dharma of going, implies that the goer existed first and the dharma of going later on, but this is not correct. Therefore, there are no goers in the three periods of time. Further, if (both) going and goer definitely existed, they would have to have a beginning, but if you search for such a beginning in the three periods of time you cannot find it. Why is this?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The movement in virtue of being joined with which one says 'mover' is referred to as the one movement; the mover existing, there is the movement in virtue of which he 'moves', that is, the activity of motion he carries out (*karoti*). These are the two movements which necessarily follow. The necessary consequence (*prasanga*) that there must be two movers should be pointed out, as this fallacy (*dusana*) was previously. Hence it will not do to say 'the mover moves'.

You may object that, even though this be so, none the less, because we do in fact say 'Devadatta goes' movement does exist. It is not so. The only thing based in Devadatta is the enquiry how a mover who exists can move, or again how a non-mover can move or something quite separate from both. As none of these alternatives is intelligible the point is quite irrelevant.

Denial of the commencement of movement

You may object that there is movement because its commencement (*arambha*) is a fact (*sadbhavat*). The thought here is that

Devadatta, by ceasing to be at rest, commences to move. But one does not commence something which does not exist like a woollen garment made from tortoise hair (a common equivalent of the 'married bachelor').

We reply that there would be movement if its commencement existed. For,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is the converse of II. 5. The statement: "A mover moves" would imply two movements: the first is a mover by designation (vyapadesa) and the second, the really existent (sad) mover or "the mover-in-itself." Whether Nagarjuna is prepared to maintain that all designations are so wild in their implications or whether such is the case with only some of them needs to be carefully examined, as in the case of concepts of causal dependence.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. This last verse recapitulates the important argument in II: 6 in preparation for the attack on the possibility of the beginning and end of motion. The next few verses are reminiscent both of Zeno of Elea and Sextus Empiricus:

Kārikā II.12

गते नारभ्यते गन्तुं गतं नारभ्यतेऽगते।
नारभ्यते गम्यमाने गन्तुमारभ्यते कुह॥१२॥

gate nārabhyate gantuṃ gantuṃ nārabhyate ’gate |
nārabhyate gamyamāne gantum ārabhyate kuha ||12||

已去中無發 未去中無發
去時中無發 何處當有發

yǐ qù zhōng wú fā wèi qù zhōng wú fā
qù shí zhōng wú fā hé chǔ dāng yǒu fā

།སོང་ལ་འགྲོ་བའི་རྩོམ་མེད་དེ། །མ་སོང་བ་ལའང་འགྲོ་རྩོམ་མེད།
།བགོམ་ལ་རྩོམ་པ་ཡོད་མིན་ན། །གང་དུ་འགྲོ་བ་རྩོམ་པར་བྱེད།།

| soṅ la ’gro ba’i rtsom med de | | ma soṅ ba la’aṅ ’gro rtsom med |
| bgom la rtsom pa yod min na | | gaṅ du ’gro ba rtsom par byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):

Verse 12 - There is no commencing of passing away in that which has transpired nor in that which has not transpired. Neither is there a commencing in the present passing away. Wherein, then, does it commence (to pass away)?

JONES (Skt):

[12] Motion does not begin in what has already been moved, nor does it begin in what is not moving, nor does it begin in what is currently moving - where then does it begin to move?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):

Movement is not begun in the moved, nor is it begun in the not moved. Neither is it initiated in the present moving. Wherein then movement initiated?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):

To go does not begin in what has already gone, the goer does not begin in what has not yet gone.
To go does not begin in the present process of going. Where does it begin?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):

12. It is impossible that a real act to go might be born in a memory of having gone at all,
And it is also impossible that a real act to go might be born in a supposition in future.
And it is also impossible that a real act to go might actually realize itself in recognition of going on,
Therefore in any case it is perfectly impossible for us to fix the time of starting a Real Act to go actually.

SPRUNG (Skt):

12 Motion (*gantum*) does not commence in what has been traversed, motion does not commence in what has not yet been traversed, motion does not commence in what is in traverse. Where does it commence?

STRENG (Skt):

12. The "state of going to" (gatum) is not begun in "that which is already gone to" (gatam - iii), nor in "that which is not yet gone to" (agatam - i); Nor is the "state of going to" begun in "present going to" (gamyamana - ii). Where then is it begun?

BOCKING (Ch):

2v12 In the already-gone there is no beginning
In the not-yet-gone there is no beginning
And in the moment-of-going there is no beginning.
So where could this beginning be?

BATCHELOR (Tb):

If a beginning of going does not exist in what has gone, [if] a beginning of going does not exist also in what has not [yet] gone [and if] there does not exist a beginning within motion, wherein is a beginning of going made?

DOCTOR (Tb):

Going does not begin where it has been,
Nor does it begin where it has yet to occur.
Going does not begin where walking takes place,
So where does going begin? [II.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):

12. Motion does not begin in what has moved,
Nor does it begin in what has not moved,
Nor does it begin in what is moving.
In what, then, does motion begin?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):

12. Going does not begin where one has already gone;
Nor does going begin where one has not yet gone;
Nor does it begin where one is going.
Where, then, does going begin?

HAGEN (paraphrase):

Movement does not begin in what has moved, in what has not moved, or in what is moving. Where does it begin?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/12 Why are there no beginnings in the three times?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If there were commencement of movement it would have to be in the sector of the path of motion traversed, or not yet traversed, or just in traverse. Movement does not commence in the sector traversed as it is so called because it is devoid of the activity of motion. If movement commences there it would for that reason not be already traversed because past and present are contraries (*virodhat*). Movement cannot commence in what has not yet been traversed because future and present are contraries. Nor in what is in traverse because that does not exist, because it would follow that there were two motions, and because it would follow that there were two movers. Thus Nagarjuna says that nowhere can the commencement of movement be observed: 'Where does motion commence?' In what further way movement is not possible Nagarjuna expounds thus:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna now moves on to the question regarding the origin of movement, a question that has left a trail of metaphysical speculations from the very early period of philosophical thinking. Metaphysical speculations regarding time, leading to a theory of existence analysed in terms of discrete momentary events into the past, present and future, coupled with the problem of explaining the origin of each moment, a senario created by the Abhidharma interpreters, provided Nagarjuna with the opportunity to utilize a method comparable to Zeno's paradoxes in order to expose the meaninglessness of such metaphysics.

Kārikā II.13

न पूर्वं गमनारम्भाद्गम्यमानं न वा गतम्।
यत्रारभ्येत गमनमगते गमनं कुतः ॥१३॥

na pūrvaṃ gamanārambhād gamyamānaṃ na vā gatam |
yatrārabhyeta gamanam agate gamanaṃ kutaḥ ||13||

未發無去時 亦無有已去
是二應有發 未去何有發

wèi fā wú qù shí yì wú yǒu yǐ qù
shì èr yīng yǒu fā wèi qù hé yǒu fā

།འགྲོ་བ་རྩོམ་པའི་སྔ་རོལ་ན།།གང་དུ་འགྲོ་བ་རྩོམ་འགྱུར་བའི།
།བགོམ་པ་མེད་ཅིང་སོང་བ་མེད།།མ་སོང་འགྲོ་བ་ག་ལ་ཡོད།།

| ’gro ba rtsom pa’i sṅa rol na | | gaṅ du ’gro ba rtsom ’gyur ba |
| bgom pa med ciṅ soṅ ba med | | ma soṅ (3a1)’gro ba ga la yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):

Verse 13 - There is no present passing away prior to the commencement of coming to pass and also in that which has transpired. How could there be a commencement of coming to pass in that which has not transpired?

JONES (Skt):

[13] Prior to the beginning of motion, there is neither the “current moving” nor the “prior moving” in which motion might begin - how could there be motion in what is not yet moved?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):

Prior to the commencement of movement, there is neither the present moving or the moved from which movement is initiated. How could there be movement in the not moved?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):

Prior to the beginning of going, there is neither a present process of going nor what has already gone.
Where is there a beginning of going in what has not yet gone? Where is the going?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):

13. If the start of real act to go hasn't become going on,
It is impossible for the state of going to appear at all, and it is also impossible for the act of having gone to stop.
In such a situation it is necessary for the Real Act to go should be done actually,
And it is completely impossible for the real act not to be done at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):

13 Prior to the commencement of movement there can be no present nor past traversing where movement could begin. And how could it begin in what has not yet been traversed?

STRENG (Skt):

13. "Present going to" (ii) does not exist previous to the beginning of the "act of going," (visible activity and displacement) nor does "that which is already gone to" (iii) exist where the "act of going" (visible activity and displacement) should begin. How can the "act of going" (visible activity and displacement) begin in "that which is not yet gone to" (i) ?

BOCKING (Ch):

2v13 Until it has begun, there is no moment-of-going,
And likewise, there is no already-gone.
These two ought to have beginnings
how can there be a beginning of the not-yet-gone?

BATCHELOR (Tb):

Before a beginning of going, there is not any motion or anything which has gone wherein going could begin. How can going exist in what has not [yet] gone?

DOCTOR (Tb):

Before going has been initiated,
There is no place where walking occurs or has taken place
Upon which going could begin.
And how could there be going where there is none yet? [II.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):

13. Prior to the beginning of motion,
There is no beginning of motion in
The going or in the gone.
How could there be motion in the not-gone?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):

13. Prior to the beginning of going,
There is a beginning of going neither
Where one is going nor where one has gone.
How could there be going where one has not yet gone?

HAGEN (paraphrase):

Before movement begins there is neither movement nor the moved. And how could there be movement in what is not moving?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The thought is that so long as Devadatta is unmoving in one place he does not begin to move. Before he commences movement there is no sector of a path of movement (adhva- jata) which is being traversed nor a sector already traversed where movement could commence. As what is in traverse and what has been traversed do not exist, movement cannot begin in them. You might suggest that, even though prior to the commencement of movement there is no present nor past movement, none the less there is the sector not yet traversed and it is there that movement would begin.

We reply: How could it begin in what has not yet been traversed? The not yet traversed is the sector where the activity of motion has not yet arisen, has not yet begun. That movement should commence there is incoherent (*asambaddha*) Nagarjuna says: 'How can there be movement in what is not yet traversed?'

If you suggest that, although movement does not begin in what has been, what has not been and what is being traversed, these distinctions themselves exist, because, if there were no movement, they would have no meaning.

We reply that there would be movement if these distinctions existed. You are supposing that if an activity of motion has commenced, where that activity of motion has ceased has been traversed, where it is present is in traverse and where it has not arisen is not yet traversed. As, however, there is no commencement of movement, so

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Agate gamanam kutah ("How could there be movement in the not moved?") seems to be the refutation of the idea of an "unmoved mover" at a microcosmic or phenomenal level. The interpreters of the Abhidharma were probably aware of the Buddha's reluctance to discuss the absolute origin of the universe. Yet their way of handling the Abhidharma analysis, especially their understanding of change as momentary destruction (ksanabhanga), left them sometimes with four discrete moments (i.e. origin, stash, decay, and destruction recognized by the Sarvastivadins), sometimes with three (i.e., origin, stasis, and destruction, as in the case of the Theravadins) and sometimes with two (i.e., origin and destruction, as it was the case with the Sautraantikas). In all these instances, each preceding moment had to account for the succeeding moment that is different.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

13. These two verses are alternative formulations of the same argument: If there is motion, it must begin sometime. But that moment is inconceivable. For motion doesn't begin in a stationary thing. And once a thing is in motion, it is too late. It can't always have begun in the past or be yet to begin, and there simply isn't time to go anywhere in the present.

Kārikā II.14

गतं किं गम्यमानं किमगतं किं विकल्प्यते।
अदृश्यमान आरम्भे गमनस्यैव सर्वथा॥१४॥

gataṃ kiṃ gamyamānaṃ kim agataṃ kiṃ vikalpyate |
adṛśyamāna ārambhe gamanasyaiva sarvathā ||14||

無去無未去 亦復無去時
一切無有發 何故而分別

wú qù wú wèi qù yì fù wú qù shí
yī qiè wú yǒu fā hé gù ér fēn bié

།འགྲོ་རྩོམ་རྣམ་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ།།སྣང་བ་མེད་པ་ཉིད་ཡིན་ན།
།སོང་བ་ཅི་ཞིག་བགོམ་པ་ཅི།།མ་སོང་ཅི་ཞིག་རྣམ་པར་བརྟག།

| ’gro rtsom rnam pa thams cad du | | snaṅ ba med pa ñid yin na |
| soṅ ba ci źig bgom pa ci | | ma soṅ ci źig rnam par brtag |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 14 - As any form of the commencement of coming to pass cannot be seen, how could that which has transpired, the present passing away, and that which has not transpired be conceivable?

JONES (Skt):
[14] And when the beginning of motion is not seen, how can we posit “the moved,” “the currently moving,” and “the not yet moved”?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When the commencement of movement is not being perceived in any way, what is it that is discriminated as the moved, the present moving, or the not moved?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Who has already gone, the present process of going, who is not yet gone is presumed.
The beginning of going is not in any way seen.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
14. How is it possible for having gone to be the same as going on actually?
How is it possible for having gone to be the same as not having gone, or how is it for having gone to be replaced with others?
The idea that there might be something, which can not be seen, may exists as the first step,
But the all cases actually belong to the Real Action to go totally.

SPRUNG (Skt):
14 What past, present and future movements are being presumed, as the beginning of movement is not observed in any of these ways?

STRENG (Skt):
14. It is mentally fabricated what is "that which is already gone to" (gatam - iii), "present going to" (gamyamana - ii) and "that which is not yet gone to" (agatam - i); Therefore, the beginning of the "act of going" (visible activity and displacement) is not seen in any way.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
II.14 How are the [space] moved over, the presently traversed and the one yet to be moved over differentiated when the beginning of motion is indeed nowhere perceived?

BOCKING (Ch):
2v14 No (already) gone and no not-yet-gone
And moreover, no moment of going;
If all these have no beginnings,
Why then do we distinguish them?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If a beginning of going is simply not apparent in any way, examine: what has gone? what is motion? what has not [yet] gone?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Since we never witness a beginning of going
How can we conceive of the traversed,
Of what is being traversed,
And what has yet to be traversed? [II.14]

GARFIELD (Tb):
14. Since the beginning of motion
Cannot be conceived in any way,
What gone thing, what going thing,
And what non-going thing can be posited?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
14. Since the beginning of going
Cannot be perceived in any way,
What over which one has gone, what over which one is going,
And what over which one has yet to go, can be conceived?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Since the beginning of movement is not perceived, what can be thought of as past, present, or static movement?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/14 If a person has not yet started out, then there is no moment of- going, and likewise there is no already-gone. If there were beginnings then they would have to be located in two places, namely, the moment-of-going or the already-gone. These two are both wrong since, at the time when a person has not yet gone, there has not yet been any beginning. So how can there be a beginning in the not-yet-gone? If there is no beginning, there is no going. If there is no going, there is no goer; so how can there be an already-gone, a not-yet-gone and a moment of- going?

Question: Even if there is no going and no goer, surely there is (the antithesis) resting, and those who are at rest?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If no beginning of movement is observed what delusive (*mithya*) tripartite path of movement is being presumed (*vikalpyate*)? I low can movement be the basis for such terminology? This is absurd (*ayuktam*).

Denial of rest

You may object that movement is a fact because its opposite (pratipaksa) is a fact. That of which there is an opposite exists, as in the case of light and darkness, this side and other side, doubt and certainty. And there is an opposite of movement, namely rest (sthanam).

We reply that there would be movement if there were its opposite, rest. But how could rest, so conceived, be supposed to apply to a mover, a non-mover or what is other than these two? Nagarjuna says that this does not make sense in any way.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Unless the metaphysics referred to above is kept in mind, it would be easy to assume that this verse represents a refutation of any form of discrimination of events as past, present, or future. On the contrary, what is being emphasized here is that the commencement of movement, as explained in the previous verses, is not perceived at all anywhere (sarvatha). As such, a question is raised regarding the validity of discriminations or thoughts regarding the past, present, and future, which are based upon that particular conception of the commencement of movement (gamanasya arambha). Nagarjuna is not claiming that there is only one way in which commencement of movement can be explained; he is merely refuting the metaphysical explanation of movement and its commencement.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

14. After having emphasized this point, Nāgārjuna points out that all that has been said about motion (and hence implicitly about change) applies, mutatis mutandis, to rest (and hence implicitly to stasis). Things that are in motion cannot be simultaneously at rest. But to say that a stationary thing is at rest, where rest is conceived as a property or entity having independent existence, would involve us in the same paradoxes encountered above: The stasis itself would have to be either in motion or at rest. If in motion, then the static thing would have to be in motion, which is contradictory. But if at rest, then it must be at rest in virtue of possessing stasis, and we are off on the same regress:

Kārikā II.15

गन्ता न तिष्ठति तावदगन्ता नैव तिष्ठति।
अन्यो गन्तुरगन्तुश्च कस्तृतीयोऽथ तिष्ठति॥१५॥

gantā na tiṣṭhati tāvad agantā naiva tiṣṭhati |
anyo gantur agantuś ca kas tṛtīyo ’tha tiṣṭhati ||15||

去者則不住 不去者不住
離去不去者 何有第三住

qù zhě zé bù zhù bù qù zhě bù zhù
lí qù bù qù zhě hé yǒu dì sān zhù

།རེ་ཞིག་འགྲོ་པོ་མི་སྡོད་དེ།།འགྲོ་བ་པོ་མིན་སྡོད་པ་མིན།
།འགྲོ་པོ་འགྲོ་པོ་མིན་ལས་གཞན།།གསུམ་པ་གང་ཞིག་སྡོད་པར་འགྱུར།།

| re źig ’gro po mi sdod de | | ’gro ba po min sdod pa min |
| ’gro po ’gro po min las gźan | | gsum pa gaṅ źig (2)sdod par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 15 - Indeed, the passing entity nor the non-passing entity does not abide. How could there be a third entity, besides these, that abides?

JONES (Skt):
[15] A mover is not stationary, just as a non-mover is not stationary. And other than a mover or a non-mover, what third possibility is stationary?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
As much as a mover is not stationary, so is a non-mover not stationary. Other than a mover and a non-mover, what third party is stationary?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The goer does not stay as much as the nongoer does not stay. Other than the goer and the nongoer, who is the third that stays?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
15. The motion to go is not stagnant,
And in the same situations the motion not to go, is not stagnant.
And all kinds of other Action, which do not belong to either to go, or not to go, do not belong to Action to go,
Then what kind of third one is stagnant in that case?

SPRUNG (Skt):
15 A mover does not come to rest; a non-mover does not come to rest; what third body, other than mover and non-mover, then comes to rest?

STRENG (Skt):
15. A "goer" does not remain unmoved (na tistati); then certainly the "non-goer" does not remain unmoved. What third possibility other than "goer" and "non-goer" can thus remain unmoved?

ROBINSON (Skt):
A goer does not stand still, and a non-goer does not stand still; what third one other than goer and non-goer stands still?

BOCKING (Ch):
2v15 A goer is not at rest
A non-goer is not at rest
Apart from the goer and non-goer
What third one is there to be at rest?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When a goer does not stay, a non-goer cannot stay; what third one other than a goer and a non-goer could stay?

DOCTOR (Tb):
The one who goes does not stand still,
Nor does one who does not go.
Aside from those that do and do not go,
What third party could stand still? [II.15]

GARFIELD (Tb):
15. Just as a moving thing is not stationary,
A non-moving thing is not stationary.
Apart from the moving and the non-moving,
What third thing is stationary?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
15. The goer does not stand.
The non-goer does not stand.
Apart from the goer and the non-goer,
What third thing stands?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Neither mover nor non-mover abide. Other than a mover and a non-mover, what third party abides?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/15 If there is resting, and those who rest, these ought to be either goers who are resting, or non-goers who are resting, or, apart from these two, some third who is resting, but these are not correct. A goer is not at rest, since a goer has not yet stopped. Going means the opposite of resting. A non-goer likewise is not at rest, and why? It is because of the cessation of the dharma of going that resting exists, so where there is no going, there is no resting. Apart from the goer and non-goer there is no further third one who is at rest. If there were a third type who was at rest, he would have to be found amongst either the goers or the non-goers. Therefore, you cannot say that a goer is at rest.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In what way a mover does not come to rest (*tisthati*) (fn 7 Or 'is at rest'; this is as much an act as movement is.) is explained in the next *kārikā*. The non-mover does not come to rest either because he is by nature at rest. What would be the purpose of his coming to rest a second time? In virtue of one 'coming to rest', he is a non-mover; in virtue of a second he is 'at rest'. This involves the necessary consequence of two acts of resting and of two bodies resting. There is no third body quite separate from a mover and a non-mover, a fallacy pointed out earlier.

You may object that it is not the non-mover who rests, nor a body other than mover and non-mover, but rather it is the mover himself who rests.

It is not so, for,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

To say that a mover is stationary (ganta tisthati) is self-contradictory. To maintain that a non-mover is stationary (aganta tisthati) is tautological. Looking for something or someone (svabhava , pudgala) to which/whom the characteristics of motion and stasis can be attributed, one merely ends up conceiving of a "hare's horn" (sasa-visana) or "crow's teeth" (kaka-danta). Such is the essentialist enterprise. This certainly does not mean the rejection of the empirical notion of relativity or dependence of motion on stasis and vice versa, as in the case of short and long. It is indeed a simple refutation of the view that there are independent entities to which the characteristics of motion and stasis can be attributed.

Kārikā II.16

गन्ता तावत्तिष्ठतीति कथमेवोपपत्स्यते।
गमनेन विना गन्ता यदा नैवोपपद्यते॥१६॥

gantā tāvat tiṣṭhatīti katham evopapatsyate |
gamanena vinā gantā yadā naivopapadyate ||16||

去者若當住 云何有此義
若當離於去 去者不可得

qù zhě ruò dāng zhù yún hé yǒu cǐ yì
ruò dāng lí yū;yú;wū qù qù zhě bù kě dé;děi;de

།གང་ཚེ་འགྲོ་བ་མེད་པར་ནི།།འགྲོ་པོ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་ན།
།རེ་ཞིག་འགྲོ་པོ་སྡོད་དོ་ཞེས།།ཇི་ལྟར་འཐད་པ་ཉིད་དུ་འགྱུར།།

| gaṅ tshe 'gro ba med par ni | | 'gro po 'thad par mi 'gyur na |
| re źig 'gro po sdod do źes | | ji ltar 'thad pa ñid du 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 16 - Indeed, how is it (possible) for a passing entity to abide when, separated from a coming to pass, a passing entity does not take place?

JONES (Skt):
[16] How will the idea "insofar as there is a mover, it is stationary" occur when a mover without motion does not occur?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How appropriate would it be [to say]: "A mover, at the moment, is stationary"? For a mover without movement is not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How can [the statement] "a goer who stays" obtain?
A goer without going just never happens.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
16. A fact that a motion to go has tendency to be stagnant even a little,
Does never manifest itself even in future at all.
Without a motion to go, relying upon only the Real Action to go,
The Real Action can never occur at all even at any time.

SPRUNG (Skt):
16 How will it be reasonable to say 'the mover comes to rest' as a mover without movement is not intelligible?

STRENG (Skt):
16. It is said that a "goer" continues to be a "goer". But how can that be possible, Since a "goer"(ganta / self-existing subject) lacking the "act of going" (gamanam - visible activity and displacement) is simply not produced?

BOCKING (Ch):
2v16 If a goer is at rest,
What meaning does this have
When, as you say, without going
You cannot have a goer?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When a goer is not possible without going, how then is it possible [to say]: "a goer stays."

DOCTOR (Tb):
In the absence of going,
There cannot reasonably be anyone who goes.
How, then, could it reasonably be said
That it is the one who goes who stands still? [II.16]

GARFIELD (Tb):
16. If without motion
It is not appropriate to posit a mover,
How could it be appropriate to say
That a moving thing is stationary?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
16. When without going
It is not tenable that something is a goer,
How could it be tenable
That a goer stands?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How can we say a mover is presently not moving? A mover without movement doesn't make sense.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/16 You say that a goer is at rest but this is not correct, and why? No goer can be had apart from a dharma of going. If the goer resides in the characteristic of going, then why do you suppose that he is at rest, since going and resting are opposed to each other?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If it is said that the mover comes to rest, then there can be no movement as the opposite of rest; in the absence of movement the term mover does not obtain; hence to say the mover is at rest or comes to rest is unintelligible.

You may object that movement is a fact because its cessation (*nivrtti*) is a fact. The thought is that the ceasing of motion is the commencement of rest. But if there were no movement it could not cease.

We reply that there would be movement if its cessation were a fact, but it is not. For,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The argument in the previous verse is made very clear by the present. Empirically, a "mover" without motion is inconceivable, just as a pure entity (svabhava) without function or characteristics is empirically meaningless. As such, the statement: "A mover, at the moment, is stationary," can be made assuming that the entity that previously possessed the characteristic of motion (gamana) has now abandoned it in order to assume a different characteristic, namely, stasis. The Sarvastivada theory of prapti and aprapti was formulated to explain such "possession" and "non-possession" after they assumed the metaphysical notion of a substance or "pure being" (svabhava) (see Poussin, AK ii.36).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

16. And, in the same fashion, all that applies to the initiation of motion applies mutatis mutandis, to its cessation:

Kārikā II.17

न तिष्ठति गम्यमानान्न गतान्नागतादपि।
गमनं संप्रवृत्तिश्च निवृत्तिश्च गतेः समा॥१७॥

na tiṣṭhati gamyamānān na gatān nāgatād api |
gamanaṃ saṃpravṛttiś ca nivṛttiś ca gateḥ samā ||17||

去末去無住 去時亦無住
所有行止法 皆同於去義

qù wèi qù wú zhù qù shí yì wú zhù
suǒ yǒu xíng zhǐ fǎ jiē tóng;tòng yū;yú;wū qù yì

|བགོམ་ལས་ལྡོག་པར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ||སོང་དང་མ་སོང་ལས་ཀྱང་མིན|
|འགྲོ་བ་དང་ནི་འཇུག་པ་དང||ལྡོག་པ་ཡང་ནི་འགྲོ་དང་མཚུངས||

| bgom lam ldog par mi ’gyur te | | soṅ daṅ ma soṅ las kyaṅ min |
| ’gro ba daṅ ni ’jug pa daṅ | | ldog pa yaṅ ni ’gro daṅ (3)mtshuṅs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 17 - There is no abiding (nature) in the present passing away, in that which has transpired and in that which has not transpired. (Otherwise) the coming to pass, arising, and cessation would be identical with (the concept of) passage.

JONES (Skt):
[17] One does not stop from moving, nor from having moved, nor from not having moved. The “beginning of motion” and the “ending of motion” are to be analyzed the same way as motion.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
One does not come to be stationary because one is either moving, or has moved, or has not moved. Movement, commencement and cessation (of movement) are all comparable to motion.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
He does not stay because [the goer] is either presently going, has already gone, or has not yet gone.
Going is the same as origination, and already having gone is the same as cessation.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
17. Leaving a state of going on, the stagnation does never exist,
And leaving from having gone, or leaving from not having gone, the stagnation does never exist also.
When a Real Action to go has manifested itself,
Then in the case of stopping Action, or in the case of going to act, situations are perfectly balanced.

SPRUNG (Skt):
17 One does not come to rest either from present, past or future movement. Movement, commencement and cessation are the same as for motion.

STRENG (Skt):
17. The "goer" does not continue to be a goer as a result of "present going to" (ii) or "that which is already gone to" (iii) or "that which is not yet gone to,"(i) For then the act of going (gamana - visible activity and displacement) would be origination while the "process of going" (gati - real going process) would be the same as cessation.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
II.17a One does not stop after the presently traversed [space], after the [space] moved over, also not after the [space] to be traversed.

BOCKING (Ch):
2v17 lathe gone, and not-yet-gone there is no resting
And in the moment-of-going there is no resting
All the dharmas of moving and ceasing which exist,
Are included in the idea of going.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
There is no reversal of motion*, nor also of what has gone [and] what has not [yet] gone. [Reversal of] going, engagement [to stay] and reversal [of staying] are similar to going.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Stopping does not occur where walking takes place,
Where going has been, or where it has yet to occur.
With going, beginning, and stopping,
The case is the same as with going. [II.17]

GARFIELD (Tb):
17. One does not halt from moving,
Nor from having moved or not having moved.
Motion and coming to rest
And starting to move are similar.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
17. One does not halt where one is going;
Nor where one has gone; nor where one has not yet gone.
Going and starting
And halting are similar.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
There is no coming to rest because of past, present, or static motion. Movement, its initiation and its end, are all of a piece.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/17 If you say that one who goes is at rest, then this person should be at rest either in the moment-of-going, or in the already-gone, or in the not-yet-gone. In none of these situations is he at rest. Therefore, when you say 'a goer is at rest' this is not correct. It amounts to a denial both of the dharma of going and the dharma of being at rest. It is the same with moving and stopping. 'Moving' is like the grain of corn developing by a continuous process into sprout, stalk and leaf, and so on. 'Stopping' is when, because the grain of corn dies, the sprout, the stalk and the leaf die. There is continuity of characteristics so we call it movement; there is cessation so we call it stopping, It is like the process of ignorance, causing predispositions and so on up to old age and death, being called 'movement', and when the predispositions and so forth cease because of the cessation of ignorance this being called 'stopping'.

Question: Although you have refuted going and goers and resting and those at rest in various ways, nevertheless we can see with our eyes that there is going, and being at rest.

Reply: What you see with the physical eyes cannot be trusted. If there really are going and goers, are these established in terms of one dharma, or in terms of two dharmas? Two at once would be wrong. Why is this?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

17ab *One does not come to rest either from present, past or future movement.*

The mover does not cease moving on the sector already traversed because there is no motion there; nor from the sector not yet traversed as there is no motion there either; nor does he cease on the sector in traverse, because such is never experienced and because there is no activity of motion there. Hence there is no cessation of motion.

You may object that if motion (*gati*) is non-existent because its opposite state rest (*sthiti*), does not exist, still, for the sake of establishing movement we will establish rest, and that being established, movement will be established. So let rest be real because its opposite state is a fact: movement is the opposite state to rest. It exists and so rest exists as well because its opposite state is a fact.

But this too is untenable, for,

17cd *Movement, commencement and cessation are the same as for motion.*

Here the term movement, used to establish rest, is the same as motion; that is, it suffers from the same fallacy as motion. (fn 8 By an appeal to movement one cannot establish the commencement and cessation of rest.) This is what the verse means. As in the verse 'The mover does not come to rest' (MMK II.15 & 12) and the others the fallacy of adducing rest as the ground for establishing motion was pointed out, so in the same way here the fallacy of adducing movement for the sake of establishing rest can be shown by rewording the two verses thus: 'The one at rest does not move' and so on. Movement does not exist; and as it does not exist, neither does its opposite state, rest. In this sense movement is to be rejected as was motion.

One might argue that rest is a fact because the commencement of rest is a fact. The thought is that rest commences in virtue of motion coming to an end. How could this not be so?

We reply that the commencement of rest is to be thought of in the same way as was the commencement of motion. The commencement of movement was denied earlier in the verse, 'Motion does not commence in what has been traversed . . .'(MMK II.12) and so on. Similarly in this case one could say, 'Rest does not commence in what has already come to rest; rest does not commence in what is not yet at rest; rest does not commence in what is resting; where will it commence?' By re-wording the three verses (MMK II.12-14) in this way the commencement of rest will be analogous to motion. And the cessation of rest as well is to be denied as was the cessation of motion. In the refutation of motion the fallacy was stated in this way. 'One does not come to rest from present, past or future motion' (MMK II.17). Similarly in the refutation of rest the fallacy will be the same as for motion. 'One does not start moving from being at rest, from having been at rest, from not yet being at rest.' Thus the fallacy as for motion. There is no state of rest. As it does not exist how can motion be established by those who argue for it on the ground of its opposite, rest?

Concluding denial of movement and mover

Further, if there were movement it would exist either quite apart from (*vyatirekena*) a mover or not so apart. Nagarjuna says that neither alternative, on being critically analysed, is possible:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The substance/attribute distinction openly endorsed by the metaphysicians cannot account for "stasis" in terms of motion, whether that motion relates to the past, present or future. According to their analysis, stasis is distinct from motion and therefore is independent. So are concepts of commencement and cessation.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

17. Nāgārjuna now develops further problems with any view regarding motion as an entity; it must be either identical to or different from the mover. Both options, he will argue, turn out to be incoherent:

Kārikā II.18

यदेव गमनं गन्ता स एवेति न युज्यते।
अन्य एव पुनर्गन्ता गतेरिति न युज्यते॥१८॥

yad eva gamanaṃ gantā sa eveti na yujyate |
anya eva punar gantā gater iti na yujyate ||18||

去法即去者 是事則不然
去法異去者 是事亦不然

qù fǎ jí qù zhě shì shì zé bù rán
qù fǎ yì qù zhě shì shì yì bù rán

|འགྲོ་བ་དེ་དང་འགྲོ་བ་པོ།|དེ་ཉིད་ཅེས་ཀྱང་བྱར་མི་རུང་།
|འགྲོ་བ་དང་ནི་འགྲོ་བ་པོ།|གཞན་ཉིད་ཅེས་ཀྱང་བྱར་མི་རུང་།།

| ’gro ba de daṅ ’gro ba po | | de ñid ces kyaṅ byar mi ruṅ |
| ’gro ba daṅ ni ’gro ba po | | gźan ñid ces kyaṅ byar mi ruṅ |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 18 - It is not justifiable to say that the coming to pass is the same as the passing entity; nor is it justifiable to say that the passing entity is different from or alien to passage.

JONES (Skt):
[18] To say “The motion and the mover are the same” is not correct. However, to say ‘The motion is other than the mover” is also not correct.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The view that movement is identical with the mover is not proper. The view that the mover is different from motion is also not proper.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The statement “the goer is the same as going” is not reasonable.
The statement “the goer is different from going” is not reasonable.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
18. When the Real Act to go motion to go balanced,
The real situation is just the balanced state, but such a kind of balanced state, is never attached.
In another words the balanced state is just also the motion to go.
And the expression, ✗relying upon the motion to goŧ, is not so reliable expression.

SPRUNG (Skt):
18 To say that movement itself is the very mover does not make sense; to say that the mover is wholly other than movement does not make sense.

STRENG (Skt):
[18]

BOCKING (Ch):
2v18 'The dharma of going is the same as the goer';
This assertion is wrong.
'The dharma of going is different from the goer';
This assertion, too, is wrong.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is inappropriate to say: “going and a goer are the same.” It is inappropriate to say: “going and a goer are different.”

DOCTOR (Tb):
The act of going and the one who goes
Cannot rightly be said to be the same.
The act of going and the one who goes
Cannot rightly be said to be different. [II.18]

GARFIELD (Tb):
18. That motion just is the mover itself
Is not correct.
Nor is it correct that
They are completely different.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
18. That going just is the goer
Makes no sense.
Nor does it make sense that
They are completely different.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
That movement is the mover makes no sense. That movement differs from the mover also makes no sense.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/18 If the dharma of going and the goer are said to be one, then this is not correct. If different, this too is incorrect.

Question: What error is there in their being either identical or different?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna explains in what way it does not make sense:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Having distinguished substance and attribute, the metaphysicians attempt to solve the resultant philosophical issues either by assuming identity (sa eva) on the basis of an eternal substance (svabhava), thereby rendering the attribute (laksana) an ephimeral or impermanent come-and-go entity, as the Sarvastivadins did, or by emphasizing difference (anya eva), thereby denying the substance and accepting fleeting and momentary flashes of attributes without any real connections, as the Sautrantikas did. For Nagarjuna, both are inappropriate views. The two verse that follow provide specific reasons for the rejection of these two views.

Kārikā II.19

यदेव गमनं गन्ता स एव हि भवेद्यदि।
एकीभावः प्रसज्येत कर्तुः कर्मण एव च॥१९॥

yad eva gamanaṃ gantā sa eva hi bhaved yadi |
ekībhāvaḥ prasajyeta kartuḥ karmaṇa eva ca ||19||

若謂於去法 即為是去者
作者及作業 是事則為一

ruò wèi yū;yú;wū qù fǎ jí wéi shì qù zhě
zuò zhě jí zuò yè shì shì zé wéi yī

།གལ་ཏེ་འགྲོ་བ་གང་ཡིན་པ།།དེ་ཉིད་འགྲོ་པོ་ཡིན་གྱུར་ན།
།བྱེད་པ་པོ་དང་ལས་ཉིད་ཀྱང༌།།གཅིག་པ་ཉིད་དུ་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te ’gro ba gaṅ yin pa | | de ñid ’gro po yin gyur na |
| byed pa po daṅ las ñid kyaṅ | | gcig pa ñid du thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 19 - If the coming to pass is identical with the passing entity, then (analogically) it would be the same as falling into the error of imputing a single character to the doer and his deed.

JONES (Skt):
[19] If the motion were the mover, than the oneness of the one who acts and the act itself would follow.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If movement were to be identical with the mover, it would follow that there is identity of agent and action.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the goer would be the same as going, then it would follow that
the doer and the deed become one [are identical].

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
19. When a Real Action to go is just the same as a motion to go,
The Real Fact exists really just as the same as the example, which really exists, then,
The Real Thing, which is going to become into one,
And so the efforts to produce something, and the real Act to produce something, might be the same actually.

SPRUNG (Skt):
19 If movement itself were the very mover it would follow that doer and deed were one thing.

STRENG (Skt):
19. And if the "act of going" (visible movement) and the "goer" are identical, The fallacy logically follows that the "person acting" (kartus) and the action (karma) are identical.

BOCKING (Ch):
2v19 If you hold that the dharma of going
Is the same thing as the goer,
Then a doer, and his deed
Would also be one thing.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If whatever is going were a goer, it would follow that the actor and the act would be the same too.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If that which is the going
Were also the one who goes,
It would follow that agent and act
Would be one and the same. [II.19]

GARFIELD (Tb):
19. It would follow from
The identity of mover and motion
That agent and action
Are identical.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
19. If the goer were identical with going
The absurd consequence would follow
That agent and action
Are identical.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If movement were the mover, then the two would be one and the same.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If the activity of motion itself were not quite apart from, that is wholly other (*anya*) than the mover, then agent and activity would be identical; and the distinction 'this is the activity, this the agent' would not be possible. Hut the activity of cutting and the cutter are not one and the same. Hence to say that movement itself is the very mover does not make sense.

How mover and movement are not wholly other (*nanyatva*) either, Nagarjuna expounds in this way:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Identity (ekibhava) with regard to agent and action is here presented as a necessary implication of considering the mover and motion to be the same. The non-absolutism in Nagarjuna's way of thinking would leave the agent meaningless independent of action and vice versa. Nagarjuna will have no difficulty in speaking of either an agent or an action in an analytical way without reaching the extremist position of recognizing distinct entities. For him, analysis (vigraha) was meaningful and practical so long as the limits of such analysis are observed.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

19. The identity of agent and action is absurd on its face. For then whenever an agent were to perform another act, s/he would become a distinct agent. There would be no basis for identifying individuals over time.

Kārikā II.20

अन्य एव पुनर्गन्ता गतेर्यदि विकल्प्यते।
गमनं स्यादृते गन्तुर्गन्ता स्याद्गमनादृते॥२०॥

若謂於去法 有異於去者
離去者有去 離去有去者

།གལ་ཏེ་འགྲོ་དང་འགྲོ་བ་པོ།།གཞན་པ་ཉིད་དུ་རྣམ་བརྟག་ན།
།འགྲོ་པོ་མེད་པའི་འགྲོ་བ་དང་།།འགྲོ་བ་མེད་པའི་འགྲོ་པོར་འགྱུར།།

anya eva punar gantā gater yadi vikalpyate |
gamanaṃ syād ṛte gantur gantā syād gamanād ṛte ||20||

ruò wèi yū;yú;wū qù fǎ yǒu yì yū;yú;wū qù zhě
lí qù zhě yǒu qù lí qù yǒu qù zhě

| gal (4)te ’gro daṅ ’gro ba po | | gźan pa ñid du rnam brtag na |
| ’gro po med pa’i ’gro ba daṅ | | ’gro ba med pa’i ’gro por ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 20 - Again, if it is discriminatively thought that the passing entity is different from passage, then perhaps the passing entity could exist without a coming to pass and vice versa.

JONES (Skt):
[20] But if a distinction is made between the mover and the motion, then there would be motion without a mover, and a mover without motion.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the discrimination is made that the mover is different from motion, then there would be movement without a mover, and mover without movement.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If it is assumed the goer differs from what has gone, then there
would be going without a goer and there would be a goer without going.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
20. In another method it is just coming back to a motion to go.
And in that case consideration might be changed from Action itself.
In that case the Real Action to go might move to motion to go, And the motion to go might move leaving from the Real Action to go.

SPRUNG (Skt):
20 If, on the other hand, the mover is thought to be wholly other than movement, there would be movement without anything moving and something moving without movement.

STRENG (Skt):
20. Alternatively, if the "goer" is different from the "process of going" (gati - - real going process), The "act of going" (gamana - visible activity and displacement) would exist without the "goer" and the "goer" would exist without the "act of going." (visible activity & displacement)

BOCKING (Ch):
2v20 If you hold that the dharma of going
Is different from the goer,
Then there is going separate from a goer
And a goer separate from his going.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If going and a goer were conceived as different, there could be going without a goer and a goer without going.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Yet if the going and goer
Are thought to be different,
There could be going without something that goes
And someone who goes in the absence of going. [II.20]

GARFIELD (Tb):
20. It would follow from
A real distinction between motion and mover
That there could be a mover without motion
And motion without a mover.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
20. If going and the goer were thought of as completely different,
The absurd consequence would follow
That there could be going without a goer
And a goer without going.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If movement differs from the mover, then there could be a mover without movement, and movement without a mover.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/20 These two are both wrong, and why? If the. dharma of going were the same as the goer, then this would confuse and negate the principle of causality. The goer exists by virtue of his going. Going exists on account of the goer. Moreover 'going' means a dharma, whereas 'goer' means a person. A person abides whilst a dharma is fleeting. If these were identical, then they would have to be either both permanent or both impermanent. These are the kinds of errors we find in (the concept of) oneness. If they were different, they would contrast with each other. The goer would have to exist even when the dharma of going was not yet in existence, and the dharma of going would have to exist while the goer was not yet in existence. Since they would not be mutually dependent one dharma could cease and the other dharma be present. These are the kinds of errors that we find in the (concept of) difference.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If mover and movement were wholly other, then there could be a mover unrelated to movement, and movement would be understood as unrelated to a mover which existed separately, even as a cloth is separate from a pot. But movement is not understood as existing separately from a mover. So it has been established that it does not make sense to say the mover is wholly other than the motion.

This being so,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This verse specifically lays down the limits to which Nagarjuna was prepared to go with his analytical method. That is, the analysis should not be carried out to such an extent that leaves "motion" without a "mover" or a mover without "motion." Empirical explanation does not allow for such "pure entities" completely independent of each other.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

20. This is more complicated. It is important to recall that the target positions here are positions that reify motion as a distinct *entity*, however abstract. If motion were an entity, and were distinct from all movers, then it should be possible to separate motion from movers. (fn 37. The principle here is the familiar Humean maxim of metaphysical analysis: Whatever is really distinct is in principle separable.) Then we should see motion when nothing is moving and movers that are not in motion. Noticing that this is a problem for Nāgārjuna's opponent provides us with a hint as to the positive account of conventional motion that we should take from this chapter to be discussed below: Motion can only be understood in relation to movers - as a relation between their positions at different times. Movers can only be understood as movers in relation to motion so understood. But to understand motion and movers this way is not to reify them as entities - and so to escape the dilemma of their: identity or difference. Nāgārjuna emphasizes this moral in the next verse, where we must read "established" as meaning *established as existent entities.*

Kārikā II.21

एकीभावेन वा सिद्धिर्नानाभावेन वा ययोः।
न विद्यते, तयोः सिद्धिः कथं नु खलु विद्यते॥२१॥

ekībhāvena vā siddhir nānābhāvena vā yayoḥ |
na vidyate tayoḥ siddhiḥ kathaṃ nu khalu vidyate ||21||

去去者是二 若一異法成
二門俱不成 云何當有成

qù qù zhě shì èr ruò yī yì fǎ chéng
èr mén jù;jū bù chéng yún hé dāng yǒu chéng

།གང་དག་དངོས་པོ་གཅིག་པ་དང་།།དངོས་པོ་གཞན་པ་ཉིད་དུ་ནི།
།གྲུབ་པར་གྱུར་པ་ཡོད་མིན་ན།།དེ་གཉིས་གྲུབ་པ་ཇི་ལྟར་ཡོད།།

| gaṅ dag dṅos po gcig pa daṅ | | dṅos po gźan pa ñid du ni |
| grub par gyur pa yod min na | | de gñis grub pa ji ltar yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 21 - As they (i.e., coming to pass and a passing entity) cannot possibly be established in terms of a single character nor of a different character, how could they be established at all?

JONES (Skt):
[21] When motion and mover cannot be established through oneness or difference, how can they be established at all?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whose establishment is not evident either through identity or through difference, how is their establishment evident at all?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Of what is either identity or difference established?
Now that their establishment is not evident, how then does it occur?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
21. Relying upon becoming into one totally, or accomplishing the aim,
Or relying upon miscellaneous methods, or relying upon including the method above too,
But it is impossible for us to recognize the two targets together at once,
And so, how is it possible for us to hit the two targets together at once.

SPRUNG (Skt):
21 How can a pair of things exist at all if they cannot be proved to exist either as identical or as different?

STRENG (Skt):
21. Neither the identity nor the essential difference is established (siddhi) regarding the two conceptions "goer" and "act of going" (visible activity and displacement). If these two alternatives are not established, in what way is this problem to be understood?

BOCKING (Ch):
2v21 These two, going and goer
Whether established as identical or different dharmas,
Cannot be established in either of these two ways
So how can you say that they are established?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If things are not established as the same and as different, how can they be established?

DOCTOR (Tb):
When two things cannot be
Established as identical,
Yet not as different things either,
How can they be established at all? [II.21]

GARFIELD (Tb):
21. When neither in identity
Nor in difference
Can they be established,
How can these two be established at all?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
21. When neither in identity
Nor in difference
Can they exist,
How can these two exist at all?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When neither identity nor difference can be established, how is anything established at all?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/21 If you have a goer and a dharma of going, you must establish them either in terms of one dharmas, or in terms of different dharmas. Both of these are untenable, and we have already stated that there is no third dharma. If you maintain that they are established (as entities) then you will have to assert that in terms of causality there is no going, and there are no goers. Now we will discuss this:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

According to the argument given mover and movement do not exist either as identical or as different. In what other way could their existence be established? That is why Nagarjuna says, 'How can a pair of things exist at all.' He means to say that mover and movement cannot be proved to exist (*nasti siddhih*).

You may object that it is common convention to say, 'Devadatta, the mover, moves', as it is common convention to say, 'the speaker speaks sentences', or 'the agent carries out an activity'. In the same sense the mover carries out the motion by which he realizes himself as mover. The fallacy urged does not hold.

But this too is false. For,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here again, Nagarjuna is mining the concepts of substance and attribute. For him, these are not established either through identity or through difference. The question then is: "How is their establishment evident at all?" The rejection of the substance/attribute distinction as admitted by the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas does not mean the rejection of all conceptualizations or discriminations (vikalpa). It is this particular form of conceptualization that is being questioned, not any form of conceptualization.

Kārikā II.22

गत्या ययोच्यते गन्ता गतिं तां स न गच्छति।
यस्मान्न गतिपूर्वोऽस्ति कश्चित्किंचिद्धि गच्छति॥२२॥

gatyā yayājyate gantā gatiṃ tāṃ sa na gacchati |
yasmān na gatipūrvo ’sti kaścid kiṃcid dhi gacchati ||22||

因去知去者 不能用是去
先無有去法 故無去者去

yīn qù zhī qù zhě bù néng yòng shì qù
xiān wú yǒu qù fǎ gù wú qù zhě qù

།འགྲོ་བ་གང་གིས་འགྲོ་པོར་མངོན།།འགྲོ་བ་དེ་ནི་དེ་འགྲོ་མིན།
།གང་ཕྱིར་འགྲོ་བའི་སྔ་རོལ་མེད།།གང་ཞིག་གང་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| ’gro pa gaṅ gis (5)’gro por mṅon | | ’gro ba de ni de ’gro min |
| gaṅ phyir ’gro ba’i sṅa rol med | | gaṅ źig gaṅ du ’gro bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 22 - The passing entity which is known or described by passage does not initiate the latter because it cannot exist prior to the latter. Yet, any entity somehow does come to pass.

JONES (Skt):
[22] The mover does not make the motion by which the mover is called “the mover” since he does not exist as “a mover” prior to the motion. So who or what is it that moves?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever motion in terms of which a mover is spoken of, he does not move by that motion. Because he does not exist prior to motion, who or what is it that moves?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Whatever goer is said to have gone, he does not go by that going
because he does not exist prior to going. So is there anyone who goes?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
22. Relying upon a concrete motion to go, it is possible for us to set away the Real Action to go,
The subject of going and the object of going do not go ahead actually.
Therefore before the motion to go doesn't exist really,
Some kind of receptacle with subjective layers and objective layers, goes on ahead.

SPRUNG (Skt):
22 The mover does not carry out that motion in virtue of which he is called the mover. Because he does not exist prior to the motion. It is a someone who moves toward a something.

STRENG (Skt):
22. The "goer" is defined by that which is in the "process of going" (real going process); he does not go to that destination which is determined by the "process of going" (real going process) because there is no prior "process of going." (gati - real going process) Indeed someone goes somewhere.

BOCKING (Ch):
2v22 We snow a goer by virtue of his going,
But he cannot employ this going,
Because no dharma of going previously existed.
Therefore, it is not a case of a goer going.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
That very going by which a goer is made evident does not [enable a goer to] go. Because there is no [goer] before going, who would be going where?

DOCTOR (Tb):
“The one who goes does not engage in the going
That characterizes him as someone who goes,
Because there is no one who goes before going.
Someone goes somewhere. [II.22]

GARFIELD (Tb):
22. The motion by means of which a mover is manifest
Cannot be the motion by means of which he moves.
He does not exist before that motion,
So what and where is the thing that moves?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
22. The going in virtue of which a goer is manifest
Cannot be the going in virtue of which he goes
Because he does not exist before that going.
So who goes and where does he go?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The motion by which a mover is a mover is not the motion by which the mover moves. Since the mover does not exist prior to the motion, what or who is it that moves?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/22 Whatever may be the dharma of going by which we recognize a goer, that goer cannot employ such a dharma of going. Why is this? At the time when the dharma of going is as yet inexistent, there is no goer; neither is there a moment-of-going, an already-gone or a not-yet-gone, as if there were first a person, and a city or town which he is to reach, and there is the place from which he is to start. A dharma of going and a goer is not correct. The goer is established by virtue of the dharma of going, and the dharma of going by virtue of the goer. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

22ab *The mover does not carry out that motion in virtue of which he is called the mover.*

Devadatta, an existing mover, does not carry out that very motion in virtue of which he realizes himself as mover. He does not attain it if you like; the idea is that he does not carry it out as agent.

22c *Because he does not exist prior to the motion.*

'Prior to the motion' means the agent prior to the motion. If the mover existed prior to the motion he would be able to effect it. Why? Because

22d *It is a someone who moves toward a something.*

It is commonly observed that someone - 'Devadatta' - moves toward a village or a city spatially removed from himself. But there is no realized (*siddharupa*) 'mover' independent of motion prior to the motion in virtue of which he is 'the one moving' who could carry out that very motion.

You may think, as against this, that the mover does not carry out that very motion in virtue of which he realizes himself as mover, but rather another motion.

But this cannot be either:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

It is possible for one to speak of a mover depending upon motion. However, when that mover is distinguished from motion, then we are left with a pure entity or person (svabhava , pudgala) to which or whom the motion is attributed and, in that case, the entity or person should precede movement. Such an entity or person is not evident in experience. Hence the statement: "He does not move by that motion."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

22. In this verse and in the next, Nāgārjuna is simply emphasizing the interdependence of motion and the mover. In II: 22 he notes the absurdity of the supposition that the mover and the motion are known independently. If they could be, then the mover would have to have one motion in virtue of which he was a mover and a second independent motion in virtue of which he now moves. But since prior to being in motion, no mover exists, it cannot be that the mover exists as a mover independently of the motion. This then demands an answer to the question, What moves? In II: 23 Nāgārjuna answers this in a very straightforward way: The mover who is a mover in virtue of his motion (and that motion is a motion in virtue of being carried out by a mover) is what moves. Hence, the mover is dependent for his identity as a mover on the motion; the motion is dependent for its identity on the mover. Neither has an intrinsic identity, and both are empty of inherent existence:

Kārikā II.23

गत्या ययोच्यते गन्ता ततोऽन्यां स न गच्छति।
गती द्वे नोपपद्येते यस्मादेके प्रगच्छति॥२३॥

gatyā yayājyate gantā tato ’nyāṃ sa na gacchati |
gatī dve nopapadyete yasmād eke tu gantari ||23||

因去知去者 不能用異去
於一去者中 不得二去故

yīn qù zhī qù zhě bù néng yòng yì qù
yū;yú;wū yī qù zhě zhōng bù dé èr qù gù

།འགྲོ་བ་གང་གིས་འགྲོ་པོར་མངོན། །དེ་ལས་གཞན་པ་དེ་འགྲོ་མིན།
།གང་ཕྱིར་འགྲོ་པོ་གཅིག་པུ་ལ། །འགྲོ་བ་གཉིས་སུ་མི་འཐད་དོ།

| ’gro ba gaṅ gi ’gro por mṅon | | de las gźan pa de ’gro min |
| gaṅ phyir ’gro po gcig pu la | | ’gro ba gñis su mi ’thad do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 23 - The passing entity which is known or described by passage does not intiate a different kind of passage because in a single coming to pass there cannot possibly be two kinds of passage.

JONES (Skt):
[23] But that mover does not make a move other than the move by which he becomes called “a mover” since when one mover moves, two moves do not occur.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever motion in terms of which a mover is spoken of, he does not carry out a motion that is completely different from it. A two-fold motion is not appropriate, since it is only one person that moves.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Whatever goer is said to have gone, he does not go by this [being a goer] or that [having gone].
Two goings do not occur because there is only one setting out.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
23. Relying upon a concrete motion to go, some expansion actually goes, is development.
And actually speaking, anything other than that does not go really.
A concrete going does never appear being divided into two.
Therefore relying upon such a situation, it is possible for us to keep authority relying upon only going on.

SPRUNG (Skt):
23 The mover does not carry out a motion other than the one in virtue of which he is called a mover, because, as there is only one mover, two motions are unintelligible.

STRENG (Skt):
23. The "goer" does not go to that destination other than that "process of going" (real going process)- by which he is defined as "goer", Because when one goes somewhere (i.e. else) two "processes of going" (real going processes) cannot be produced.

BOCKING (Ch):
2v23 It is because of (his) going that we recognize a goer
He cannot employ a separate going
Since, within one goer
There cannot be two goings.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
[A going] which is other than the going by which a goer is made evident does not [enable a goer to] go. Because it is impossible for going to be twofold within a single goer.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The one who goes does not engage in going other than
The going that characterizes him as someone who goes,
The reason being that for a single agent of going,
It does not make sense for there to be two acts. [II.23]

GARFIELD (Tb):
23. A mover does not carry out a different motion
From that by means of which he is manifest as a mover.
Moreover, in one mover
A twofold motion is unacceptable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
23. The going in virtue of which a goer is manifest
Cannot be different from the going in virtue of which he goes,
Since in one goer
A twofold going is untenable.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The motion by which a mover is a mover does not differ from the motion by which the mover moves. Since only one mover moves, two motions are not discerned.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/23 By whatever dharma of going we recognize a goer, the goer cannot employ any separate dharma of going, and why? Because there cannot-be two dharmas of going within one goer. Again :

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

A mover who is already in existence does not carry out a motion other than the one in virtue of which he realizes himself as mover, because it would follow that there were two motions: one, that in virtue of which he is realized as a mover, the second, that other motion which he - already a mover carries out. These would be the two entailed motions. But in the one mover there are not two motions; this would go against reason (*ayuktam*). On the same grounds the statements 'the speaker speaks sentences', 'the agent carries out an activity' are to be rejected.

This being so,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The distinction between the "mover" and "motion" also does not mean that the "mover" carries out a motion that is different from himself. If such a distinction is recognized, then, as explained earlier, there would be two movements, the movement as a result of which one comes to be called "mover" and the movement itself. No such dual motion is found, nor are there two movers corresponding to the twofold motion. The fact is that it is only one person that moves.

Kārikā II.24

सद्भूतो गमनं गन्ता त्रिप्रकारं न गच्छति।
नासद्भूतोऽपि गमनं त्रिप्रकारं स गच्छति॥२४॥

sadbhūto gamanaṃ gantā triprakāraṃ na gacchati |
nāsadbhūto ’pi gamanaṃ triprakāraṃ sa gacchati ||24||

決定有去者 不能用三去
不決定去者 亦不用三去

jué dìng yǒu qù zhě bù néng yòng sān qù
bù jué dìng qù zhě yì bù yòng sān qù

།འགྲོ་པོ་ཡིན་པར་གྱུར་པ་ནི།།འགྲོ་རྣམ་གསུམ་དུ་འགྲོ་མི་བྱེད།
།མ་ཡིན་པར་ནི་གྱུར་དེ་ཡང་།།འགྲོ་རྣམ་གསུམ་དུ་འགྲོ་མི་བྱེད།།

| ’gro po yin par gyur pa (6)ni | | ’gro rnam gsum du ’gro mi byed |
| ma yin par ni gyur de yaṅ | | ’gro rnam gsum du ’gro mi byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 24 - The real state of a passing entity does not initiate three kinds of coming to pass nor does its unreal state. - Note: The three kinds of coming to pass refer to those involved in (1) real state (sadbhuta), (2) unreal state (asadbhuta), and (3) both real and unreal state (sadasadbhuta.)

JONES (Skt):
[24] A truly existing mover does not move by thought, word, or deed, nor does a nonexistent mover.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
(not translated)

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
A true goer going does not go in three ways.
Neither does one who does not exist as going go in three ways.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
24. The Real Existence, the Real Action to go, and the Real Motion to go,
Those three kinds of Real Existences are Real, but those each three does never go on separately.
The not-real existences can never be the Real Act to go,
And the three kinds of Real Existence go on as the Reality.

SPRUNG (Skt):
24 An existing mover does not carry out movement in any of the three ways; a non-existing mover (that is, one not actually moving) does not carry out movement in any of the three ways.

STRENG (Skt):
24. A real "goer" does not motivate three kinds of "acts of going:" real, non-real, and real-and-non-real; Nor does a non-real "goer" motivate three kinds of motion.

ROBINSON (Skt):
A real goer does not go the threefold going; an unreal goer does not go the threefold going; nothing real-and-unreal goes the threefold going.

BOCKING (Ch):
2v24 A goer who has a definitely fixed existence
Cannot employ the three goings.
And a goer who does not have a definitely fixed existence
Likewise cannot employ the three goings.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
One who is a goer does not go in the three aspects of going. Also one who is not [a goer] does not go in the three aspects of going.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Someone who goes does not engage
In any of the three kinds of going.
Someone who does not go does not engage
In any of the three kinds of going. [II.24]

GARFIELD (Tb):
24. A really existent mover
Doesn't move in any of the three ways.
A non-existent mover
Doesn't move in any of the three ways.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
24. That which is a goer
Does not go in any of the three ways.
That which is not a goer
Does not go in any of the three ways.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Neither an existent nor a non-existent mover can display movement in any of the three ways.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

24. The three ways in question are past, present, and future. Something that is inherently a mover has been shown to be incapable of motion in any of these periods. This is simply a way of emphasizing the moral of the entire chapter: Movers cannot be thought of as being movers intrinsically. Moreover, nonexistent movers - movers that are not even conventionally movers - certainly don't move. It must therefore be that neither do movers move intrinsically nor that there is no motion. There must be a sense in which motion and movers exist, but do not do so intrinsically. The final verse must hence be read with "entity," "nonentity," and "existent" as asserted in the ultimate sense:

Kārikā II.25

गमनं सदसद्भूतस्त्रिप्रकारं न गच्छति।
तस्माद्गतिश्च गन्ता च गन्तव्यं च न विद्यते॥२५॥

gamanaṃ sadasadbhūtaḥ triprakāraṃ na gacchati |
tasmād gatiś ca gantā ca gantavyaṃ ca na vidyate ||25||

去法定不定 去者不用三
是故去去者 所去處皆無

qù fǎ dìng bù dìng qù zhě bù yòng sān
shì gù qù qù zhě suǒ qù chǔ jiē wú

།ཡིན་དང་མ་ཡིན་གྱུར་པ་ཡང་།།འགྲོ་རྣམ་གསུམ་དུ་འགྲོ་མི་བྱེད།
།དེ་ཕྱིར་འགྲོ་དང་འགྲོ་པོ་དང་།།བགྲོད་པར་བྱ་བའང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| yin daṅ ma yin gyur pa yaṅ | | ’gro rnam gsum du ’gro mi byed |
| de phyir ’gro daṅ ’gro po daṅ | | bgrod par bya ba’aṅ yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 25 - Both the real and the unreal states (of the passing entity) do not initiate three kinds of coming to pass; therefore there are no passage, passing entity, and that which is to be transpired.

JONES (Skt):
[25] Nor does an existing-and-nonexisting mover exist. Thus, a motion, a mover, and the place of the motion are not found.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
An existent mover does not carry out the movement in any of the three ways. Neither does a non-existent mover carry out the movement in any of the three ways. Nor does a person carry out a movement, both existent or non-existent, in any of the three ways. Therefore, neither motion nor the mover, nor the space to be moved is evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
An existent or nonexistent going does not go in three ways.
Therefore, the going, the goer, and the gone do not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
25. A Real Action to go, the Real World itself, and the Unreal World,
Those three kinds of layers do never go ahead at all.
Therefore the going to go, the persons to have worked,
And the processes, which have been realized, are completely impossible for everyone to see at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
25 A mover who both exists and does not exist does not carry out movement in any of the three ways. Therefore there is no motion, no one moving and no space traversed.

STRENG (Skt):
25. Also, a real-non-real "goer" does not motivate three kinds of motion. Therefore, the "process of going" (gati - real going process), the "goer" (ganta /self-existing subject) and "a destination to be gone to" (gantavyam) do not exist (inherently).

ROBINSON (Skt):
Therefore going, goer, and what-is-gone-to do not occur.

BOCKING (Ch):
2v25 Whether the dharma of going is fixed or not fixed
The goer cannot employ the three (goings).
For this reason, neither going, nor the goer,
Nor the place of going exist.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
One who is and is not [a goer] also does not go in the three aspects of going. Therefore, going and a goer and also that which is gone over do not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Someone who does and does not go does not engage
In any of the three kinds of going either.
There is, therefore, no going,
No one who goes, and nothing traversed. [II.25]

GARFIELD (Tb):
25. Neither an entity nor a non-entity
Moves in any of the three ways.
So motion, mover and
And route are non-existent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
25. One that both is and is not a goer
Does not go in any of the three ways.
Therefore, going, goer
And that which is to be gone over are non-existent.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Neither an existent nor a non-existent movement is displayed by a mover [who is] of any of the three ways. Thus neither motion, mover, nor the space traversed are evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

2/25 'Definitely fixed means having real existence from the beginning and not arising on account of a dharma of going. 'Dharma of going' means the movement of the body. 'These three' means not-yet-gone, already-gone and moment-of-going. If the goer has a definite, fixed existence, then such a goer ought to exist separately from the dharma of going, though he should not be at rest. This is why it is said that a definitely fixed existent goer cannot employ the three goings. As for 'if the goer is not definitely fixed'; 'Not definitely fixed' means really nonexistent from the beginning. Since it is by virtue of the dharma of going, that we identify someone as a goer, where there is no dharma of going, he cannot employ three goings. It is by virtue of a dharma of going that a goer exists. If there is no dharma of going, then there is no goer, so how can you maintain that a goer not definitely fixed can employ the three goings? What applies to the goer also applies to the dharma of going. If there were a definitely fixed dharma of going existing before there was a goer, then the dharma of going would not be existing because of the goer, and for this reason, the goer could not employ the three dharmas of going. If the dharma of going were definitely non-existent, what would the goer employ?

(5c10) If we thoroughly investigate and contemplate in this way upon, the dharmas of going, the goer and the place of going, we are able to regard these goings as all mutually dependent; the goer existing by virtue of the dharma of going, and the dharma of going existing by virtue of the goer. Because of these two dharmas, there exists the situation in which going can take place. It cannot be said to be definitely existent, and it cannot be said to be definitely non-existent. In this way we may have definite knowledge that these three goings are false and insubstantial. They are empty and have no existence, being merely unreal designations, like illusions or apparitions.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

25ab *A mover who both exists and does not exist does not carry out movement in any of the three ways.*

In these verses movement means 'being in motion' (*gamyate*), and an existent (*sadbhuta*) mover is one connected with an activity of motion. A non-existent (*asadbhuta*) mover is one who is devoid of the activity of motion. A mover who is both existent and non-existent embraces both possibilities. It should be realized that movement too is three-fold according to its relation to the activity of motion. In this context a real mover does not carry out movement in any of its three modes - as real, unreal or both. This will be explained in the chapter 'The Agent Subject and his Doing'. Similarly an unreal mover does not carry out movement in any of the three ways. That a mover both real and unreal does not, Nagarjuna will demonstrate in the same place. It follows, thus, that neither mover, movement nor space traversed (*gantavyam*), on being critically examined, exist.

25cd *Therefore there is no motion, no one moving and no space traversed.*

As is said in the *Aksayamati Nirdesa Sutra*, '"Coming", venerable Saradvatiputra, is a word meaning union; "going", venerable Saradvatiputra, is a word meaning separation. Where there is no word for either union or separation, that is the language (*padam*) of the wise ones, because theirs is a language beyond ordinary words (*apadayogena*). The movement of the wise ones is neither coming nor going.' (fn 9 The further meanings of the verb gam must come to mind here: (a) attainment; (b) comprehension.)

If the seed itself passes over into the sprout, the sprout would be seed and not sprout which entails the fallacy of eternalism. If the sprout arises from something other than the seed that would entail the fallacy of causelessness. But nothing can arise uncaused, for example the horns of a donkey.

That is why the illustrious one said, 'Given a seed there will be a sprout; but the seed is not one with the sprout. It is not other than nor identical with it. In the same way the nature of things is neither perishable nor imperishable.

'The seal becomes visible in the imprint but does not in fact pass over into it. It is neither in the imprint nor divorced from it. Even so compound things are neither perishable nor eternal.'

And 'A man catches sight of a pretty female face in a mirror or a dish of oil. The foolish man, conceiving a desire for her, starts in pursuit of his love. But as the face does not pass into and exist in the reflection, he will never attain it. As he generates his passion in error, even so, you should know, are all the elements of existence.'

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The conclusion is very specifically stated in these two verses. It is not any kind of mover or movement that is rejected as being impossible. It is the really or substantially or independently existent (sad) mover or movement that is rejected. This is a criticism of (sasvata-vada). The opposite view, namely, a non-real, non-substantial and non-independent existence (asad) was the kind of impermanence advocated in annihilationism (ucchedavada) which, in the Buddhist context, is commensurate with momentary destruction (ksana-bhanga), rather than the impermanence (anitya) advocated by the Buddha on the basis of "dependent arising" (pratityasamutpada). The combination of the two metaphysical views of existence and non-existence does not lead to a happy synthesis. Change and impermanence understood in this metaphysical way do not contribute toward a reasonable and empirical explanation of the motion, the mover, or even the space moved.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

25. So far so good. But then is motion completely nonexistent? Is the entire universe static according to Madhyamika philosophy? If we simply read this chapter in isolation, that conclusion might indeed seem warranted. It would be hard to distinguish emptiness from complete nonexistence. We would be left with an illusory world of change and movement, behind which would lie a static ultimate reality. But such a reading would be problematic. For one thing, it would be absurd on its face. Things move and change. For another, it would contradict the doctrine of dependent origination and change that is the very basis of any Buddhist philosophical system, which Nāgārjuna has already endorsed in the opening chapter. How, then, are we to read this discussion more positively? Answering this question is hermeneutically critical not only for an understanding of this chapter, but for a reading of the entire text, which if not read with care, can appear unrelentingly nihilistic. The positive account we are after emerges when we read this second chapter in the context of the first chapter: All phenomena, including motion, are dependently arisen and, hence, empty of inherent existence. The conclusion that motion is empty is simply the conclusion that it is conventional and dependent, like the putatively moving entities themselves. Since there is no implicit contrastive, inherently existent, ultimate reality - say of the static, or of stasis - this conclusion does not lead us to ascribe a “second, class” or merely apparent existence to motion or to movers. Their nonexistence is simply their lack of existence as substantial entities. Existence - of a sort - is hence recovered exactly in the context of an absence of inherent existence.

But existence of what kind? Herein lies the clue to the positive construction of motion that emerges. The existence that emerges is a conventional and dependent existence. Motion does not exist as an entity on this account, but rather as a relation - as the relation between the positions of a body at distinct times and, hence, as dependent upon that body and those positions. (fn 38. See also Kalupahana (1986), p. 131.) Moreover, it emerges as a conventional entity in the following critical sense: Only to the extent that we make the decision to identify, as a single entity, things that differ from each other in position over time, but are in other respects quite similar and form causal chains of a particular sort, can we say that whatever is so identified moves. And this is a matter of choice. For we *could* decide to say that entities that differ in any respect are thereby distinct. If we did adopt that convention for individuation, an entity here now and one there then would ipso facto be distinct entities., And so no *single entity* could adopt different positions (or different properties) at different times, and so motion and change would be nonexistent. It is this dependence of motion on the moved, of the status of things as moved on their motion, and of both on conventions of individuation that, on this account, constitutes their emptiness. But this simply constitutes their conventional existence and provides an analysis of the means by which they so exist. The emptiness of motion is hence seen to be its existence *as conventional* and *as dependent*, not other than its conventional existence. In understanding its emptiness in this way, we bring motion, change, and movable and changeable entities back from the brink of extinction. (fn 39. Again, the affinities to Hume are intriguing: The Humean analysis of external physical objects and of personal identity appears at first to deny the reality of either. But what emerges from a more careful reading is that Hume shows that only the reified substantialist versions of objects and selves are nonexistent. The objects and selves with which we have actual perceptual and cognitive commerce, on his view, are perfectly existent, but only in virtue of being dependent upon conventions (“custom”) for their identity and existence. It is a clear analysis of their conventional character that allows us to coherently assert their existence.)

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Chapter III

चक्षुरादीन्द्रियपरीक्षा तृतीयं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀六情品第三(八偈)

།དབང་པོ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་གསུམ་པའོ།།

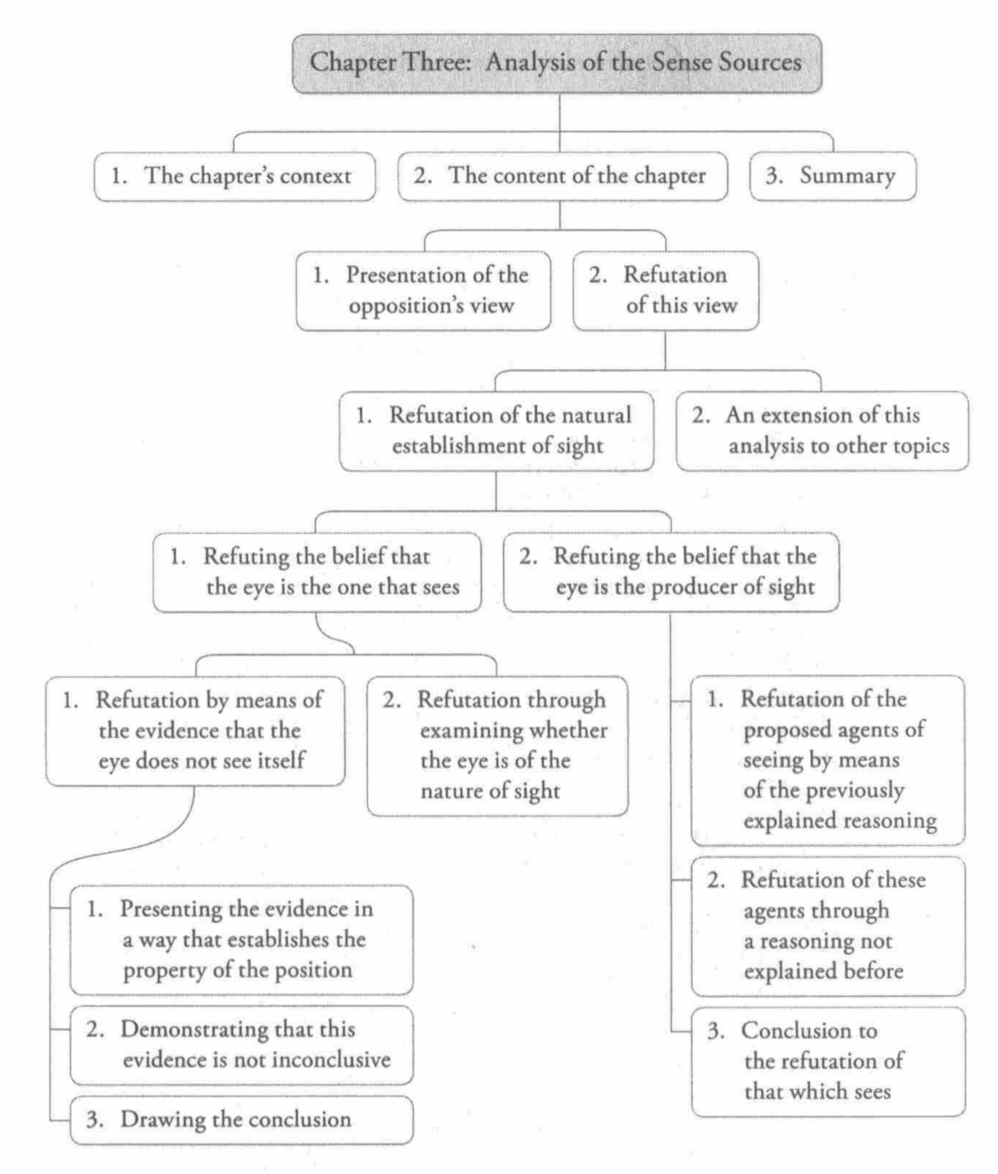
cakṣurādīndriyaparīkṣā nāma tṛtīyaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter III: Examination of the Senses

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter III

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We have now completed the brief explanation of the two selflessnesses **[114: 19]**. The second major portion of the text is the extensive explanation of the two selflessnesses. It comprises five sections: the distinct explanation of the selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of the person, the presentation of the emptiness of essence of mere phenomena, **[115]** the mode of engaging with the selflessness of things as they really are, the presentation of the emptiness of essence of time, and the presentation of the emptiness of essence of the continuum of life. We now begin the first of these sections—the extensive explanation of the selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of the person— which has two parts: the explanation of the selflessness of phenomena and the explanation of the selflessness of the person. The first of these has two sections: the explanation that the three kinds of phenomena are selfless and the refutation of the argument that they have a self. The first of these sections has three parts: the refutation of the phenomenal self of the faculties, the refutation of the phenomenal self of the aggregates, and the refutation of the phenomenal self of the elements.

This chapter is the first of these three parts.

EXPLANATION:

This section has two parts: advancing the opponent's argument and its refutation.

SUMMARY:

When the six objects are posited as that which is to be grasped, the six sense faculties are posited as the means by which they are grasped, and the six kinds of person are posited as the graspers, one should recognize that the mode of grasping of these phenomena is not as merely posited through the power of nominal convention, but that they are grasped as existing inherently. One should ascertain, as established by arguments, that there would be no grounds for positing agent, object, and instrument if they existed in the way that they are grasped. Thereafter, it will spontaneously become apparent that all of these eighteen phenomena, although they do not exist inherently, appear respectively as illusionlike agent, object, and instrument.

Then, it should be ascertained that all that is posited, such as the eye, seeing, etc., are completely tenable only as illusionlike objects. This rational analysis is an investigation into whether or not such things as the eye exist *inherently*, but not an investigation into whether or not they *merely* exist. Therefore, when they are not found through the analysis, their *essential* existence is refuted, but such things as the eye are not refuted at all. **[127]** As the commentary to *Catuhsataka* says,

Supposed one asked, "If such things as the eye were impossible, then how could these sensory faculties, like the visual faculties, be posited as the results of karma?" We would reply, "Do we refute the results of karma?" Suppose he then asked, "Since you have proven that such things as the eye are refuted, how can you not have refuted those results?" We would then reply, "This is because our analysis is focused on the investigation of essence. We refute the inherent existence of entities, but we do not refute such things as the eye as functioning, or as dependently originated, or as the effects of karma. Therefore, since they exist, that which is called the result, that is, such things as the eye, indeed exist. [*dBu ma* ya 201b]

This clearly explains the demarcation drawn between what is refuted and what is not refuted. Therefore their mode of existence is as presented here:

The seer depends on seeing. Seeing also depends on the seer. Apart from this No cause is seen for their existence.

Through this, the rest should be understood. Although the arguments presented in the earlier chapters can refute the true existence of the faculties, this chapter has been composed so that one might understand the specific arguments refuting the essence of such things as seeing. This should be understood in the context of other chapters as well. Through such analysis, one will develop boundless wisdom, particularly with respect to the analysis of the way things really are; and it will be apparent that all experience of the six kinds of object is like that of an illusory person experiencing an illusory object.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER III - Examination of the Eye-faculty, etc.

This chapter deals with the field or sphere of action of the six sense organs. However, the line of thought in the discussion necessarily entails the understanding of the logic involved in the previous chapter. There we have seen that, strictly speaking, the three concepts of gata, agata, and gamyamana cannot be maintained. In the present chapter Nagarjuna takes up only the first of the six sense organs, i.e., the seeing activity, and demonstrates its non-possibility insofar as seeing itself and others are concerned because of basic objectification or attaching an unwarranted self-nature (svabhava) to any activity.

Thus, it would follow that there is no seeing agent as such. In a similar fashion he assumes that he has demonstrated beyond doubt the non-possibility of imputing any "enduring" characteristic to the rest of the five sense organs, among which the mind is considered as the sixth sense organ.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

Part II (Dharma-nairatmya) As mentioned earlier, Chapters III and XV deal with almost all the major Abhidharma categories that are treated under general rubric "*dharma*." Of these various categories, the most important are aggregates (*skandha*), faculties/spheres (*indriya/ayatana), and elements (dhatu*). This is the order in which these are normally enumerated. However, Nagarjuna was interested in epistemology, and therefore it is natural for him to take up the faculties (*indriya*) for examination at the very outset.

3. *Faculties* (*indriya*). Chapter III, verse I, refers to the six faculties and their spheres. Yet, there is no denial of any one of them. This may be compared with Nagarjuna's statement in Chapter I, verse 1, that refers to the four causal theories, all of which were instantly denied. However, in verse 2, Nagarjuna criticizes a particular definition of "seeing" (*darsana*) and that definition involves "the perception of itself' (*svatmanam darsanam*). This undoubtedly is the Indian version of the Cartesian "cogito" which led to the belief in a permanent and eternal self during the period of the *Upanisads* 70 and continued to flourish in the speculations of the later Indian philosophical schools.71 It is the definition that produced the most metaphysical of ideas, such as the conception of the "inner

controller" (*antaryamin*) that turns out to be the permanent and eternal self or soul (*atman*). Any form of perception, for them, involved self-awareness as a necessary pre-condition, after which every other form of activity follows. In fact, later on Nagarjuna devotes an entire chapter (IX) to an examination of this notion of an antecedent self. Whether this view influenced the Yogacara conception of ''serf-perceiving consciousness'' (*svasamvedakavijnana*) remains to be seen. For Nagarjuna, however, such a definition was not satisfactory, since it implies the conception of a substantial entity.

Here again, after making a categorical denial of "seeing" as "seeing itself," Nagarjuna proceeds to draw the implication, as he did in his criticism of other-nature (*para-bhava*, I.3), that "if seeing cannot see itself, how can it see another?" Such a criticism on the part of Nagarjuna would still leave intact the Buddha's own explanation of perceptual experience in terms of the principle of dependence (*pratityasamutpada*). In fact, it is for this reason that later on Nagarjuna was able to speak of visual perception (*caksur-vijnana*) as a product of causal dependence (see XXVI.4).

The criticism of "seeing" (*darsana*) in III.4 is similar to the criticism of causal condition in I.5. Nagarguna assumes that the implication of the substantialist notion of "seeing" is that ''seeing must always see.'' Thus, if the Sarvastivadins were to recognize a "self-nature" (*svabhava*) in "seeing", then it could possibly not be "not seeing" even on some occasions, for the very nature of seeing is to see. Therefore, when Nagarjuna asserts that "there cannot be a non-seeing seeing" (*na apasyamanam darsanam*), he was merely stating the substantialist definition of the Sarvastivadins. Hence the second statement "seeing sees' (*darsanam pasyati*) becomes a mere tautology and, as such, is not appropriate. The rest of the chapter deals with a criticism of all forms of perception conceived in the above manner, indicating that "grasping" (*upadana*), etc. will remain inexplicable in such a context.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Seeing

If my eyes cannot see themselves,
How can they see something else?
Were there no trace of something seen,
How could I see at all?

Neither seeing nor unseeing see.

Seeing reveals a seer,
Who is neither detached
Nor undetached from seeing.
How could you see,
And what would you see
In the absence of a seer?

Just as a child is born
From father and mother,
So consciousness springs
From eyes and colorful shapes.

Without these eyes,
How could I know
Consciousness, impact,
Feeling and thirst?

Clinging, evolving,
Birth, aging and death?

Seers seeing sights explain
Hearers hearing sounds,
Smellers smelling smells,
Tasters tasting tastes,
Touchers touching textures,
Thinkers thinking thoughts.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

3. The Senses

In classical India, the mind is considered one of the senses, and its objects - ideas that the mind generates - thus are "sense-objects." Hence, ideas are treated the same way that material objects are, and emptiness applies equally to them.

In verse 2, Nagarjuna asserts that seeing cannot see itself and that what cannot see itself cannot see anything else. In the *Seventy Verses on Emptiness* 51, it is the eye that cannot see itself. The obvious objection, to use a modern example, is that scissors can cut something else even though they cannot cut themselves. The argument does not turn on whether the senses or acts of sensing are self-existent or not. Nagarjuna's only reply is to apply the analysis of motion and the mover from Chapter 2. He is not arguing that there are no senses, acts of sensing, or sense-objects, but only that none of these are self-existent - they, like "motion" and "the mover," are interdependent, and we cannot dissect any sense-awareness into three unconnected, self-existent components.

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

3

An Examination of the Sources of Consciousness

In the Sutra of the Great Mother Prajnaparamita, the Buddha taught:

The eye is empty of the eye.

THERE ARE THREE VERSIONS of the Great Mother Prajnaparamita Sutras: the extensive, middle, and concise editions. The extensive, or great, sutra has one hundred thousand verses and encompasses twelve volumes. The meaning of the passage quoted here from the longest version is that the eye with which we see is empty of inherent nature. It is empty of its own essence.

Just as the eye is empty of its own essence, so the ear is empty of its own essence, and the nose, tongue, body, and mind are all the same—all six inner sources of consciousness (ayatanas) are empty of their own essence; they are all empty of what they appear to be.

In Karmapa Rangjung Dorje's Mahamudra Aspiration Prayer, the second line of the ninth verse reads:

As for mind, there is no mind! Mind is empty of essence.

This expresses a very similar meaning: Mind has no inherent nature; it is empty of true existence.

It is the same with the six outer sources of consciousness: Form is empty of form, sound is empty of sound, smell is empty of smell, taste is empty of taste, tactile sensation is empty of tactile sensation, and phenomena that appear to the mental consciousness are empty of themselves as well. The example that helps us to understand this more clearly is when these twelve sources of consciousness appear in a dream. When the twelve sources of consciousness appear in dreams, they are dependency arisen mere appearances that are empty of themselves, empty of being anything, empty of any inherent nature. This is what we have to think about.

The Heart of Wisdom Sutra teaches that there is "no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no tactile sensation, no phenomenon"—going through all of the twelve sources of consciousness. It does not use the exact same language as the passage from the Sutra of the Great Mother quoted here, but its meaning is the same. Therefore, the meaning of the statement "There is no eye," for example, is not that there is no appearance of the eye, but rather that the eye that appears is empty of essence.

You may be familiar with the life story of the great Tibetan siddha Machig Labdron (fn *Siddha* means "one who has gained accomplishment." It refers to the great Buddhist practitioners who have gained direct realization of the true nature of reality.). She was the fastest reader in the history of Tibet. In Tibet there is a tradition of reading all the volumes of the Buddha's teachings on special occasions in monasteries, nunneries, or the homes of sponsors. A good reader can read one volume in a day; someone who is exceptionally fast can read three volumes in a day. Well, Machig Labdron could read all twelve volumes of the extensive Great Mother Prajnaparamita Sutra in a single day, which she did on one occasion for thirty days in a row. When she did this, she read, for example, that form, the first of the six outer sources of consciousness, is not white, it is not red, it is not rectangular, it is not circular—form is empty of inherent nature. As a result of reading this again and again, she realized emptiness directly and became known as the Prajnaparamita siddha, the siddha who realized emptiness by means of the Prajnaparamita Sutras. After she passed away, her son, Gyalwa Dondrup, sang a song in which he praised her for this incredibly unique feat, because while most other siddhas gain realization through Vajrayana (fn Vajrayana, or "adamantine vehicle," is the set of Mahayana practices that is kept secret.) practices, she was able to do so from simply reading the Prajnaparamita Sutras' descriptions of emptiness. In honor of her accomplishment, Gyalwa Dondrup praised her as "Mother, Prajnaparamita siddha-mother." Thus we can see that it is indeed possible to realize the nature of reality by gaining an understanding of emptiness. By meditating on emptiness, if we become skilled at it, we too can become siddhas.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to those who argued that phenomena are not empty, that they truly exist, because each of the six inner sources of consciousness perceives its respective object among the six outer sources of consciousness. For example, they would say, "This flower exists because my eyes perceive it." Thus, in order to help these people overcome this mistaken belief, Nagarjuna analyzes the sources of consciousness and demonstrates that they do not truly exist after all.

In the course of his analysis, Nagarjuna asks, "If these six inner and six outer sources of consciousness truly exist, then how do they exist in terms of their time sequence?" There are three possibilities: first, that the inner perceiving sources of consciousness exist before the objects they perceive; second, that the perceived objects exist before the subjects that perceive them; and third, that the perceiving subjects and perceived objects come into existence simultaneously.

In fact, all three of these possibilities are logically impossible. The perceiving subject cannot exist before the perceived object, because then there would be a perceiving subject without any object to perceive. Similarly, it cannot be that the perceived object exists before the perceiving subject, because a perceived object cannot exist if there is no subject perceiving it—the term perceived object necessarily implies the presence of a perceiver. Thus, the perceiving subject and the perceived object cannot exist sequentially.

They also cannot come into existence simultaneously, because two things that exist simultaneously cannot have any connection or relationship with each other. They cannot have the relationship of being cause and result, for example. This is because something that arises simultaneously with something else has no opportunity to be that second thing's cause. It only arises at precisely the same time as its supposed result, so how could it have produced that result? It would have had no time to do so. It can therefore only be that things that arise simultaneously do so independent of each other.

In this case, it would be impossible for the perceived object and the perceiving subject to be unrelated in the way that two things that come into existence simultaneously are unrelated, because the perceived object and perceiving subject are cause and result—the cause for there being a perceiving consciousness is that there is an object to perceive. If they arose simultaneously, however, they could not have such a relationship, because the perceived object would have no opportunity to cause the perceiving consciousness to arise.

Thus, we see that in fact there is no way that the inner and outer sources of consciousness can truly occur, because they cannot occur sequentially, they cannot occur simultaneously, and there is no other possibility. So then what are they? They are mere appearances, like illusions, like e-mail, and like movies. They have no true existence.

Snap your fingers and then analyze by asking, "What comes first, the finger snap or the ear consciousness perceiving it?" We have to analyze based on our own experience, so how did they happen? Did the finger snap come first? Or did the ear consciousness perceiving the finger snap come first? Or did the finger snap and the ear consciousness perceiving it occur at the same time?

The snap you perceived could not have come before the consciousness that perceived it, or else there would have been a perceived object without any perceiver of that object. Similarly, the consciousness that perceived the finger snap could not have come first because then it would have preceded the finger snap that it perceived. Finally, the consciousness perceiving the finger snap and the finger snap could not have truly occurred simultaneously, because if they did, they would have been unrelated entities—the finger snap would not have been the cause of the arising of the consciousness that perceived it. Thus, they did not exist sequentially, they did not exist simultaneously, and there is no other possibility. Your finger snap and the consciousness that perceived it, therefore, were dependently arisen mere appearances that did not truly exist.

This is an analysis using logical reasoning that Nagarjuna first applies to the eye seeing forms, but, as we have just seen, it is also applicable to the ear hearing sounds and to all the other sense experiences as well. The verse that explains this is the eighth in the chapter:

Know that these reasonings refuting the faculty that sees
Refute the faculties that hear, smell, taste, touch, and the mental faculty as well,
Refute the hearer and the other perceiving consciousnesses,
Refute sound and the other perceived objects.

Sometimes it might seem as if the object exists before the consciousness that perceives it. For example, when we light a candle in the morning, we might come back a little while later and see the candle again, so it seems that the candle flame existed before our perception of it. That is not really the case, however, because what we are doing in that situation is mixing together all of the moments of the continuum of the candle flame and thinking that they are all the same thing. They are not just one thing, though, because each moment is completely individual, different from every other moment; each individual instant of the candle flame arises only in dependence upon its own independent set of causes and conditions, then ceases, and then is replaced by a completely different candle flame in the next instant. Thus, the individual moments of flame arising and ceasing one after the other in succession are not all the same thing, but rather they are many different things that only look alike, which is why it is so easy to mistake them for being just one thing. So the candle flame we perceive when we walk back into the room did not exist for even the slightest instant

before the moment we perceived it to be there. In the same way, whenever we talk about a perceived object, whatever it is, we are talking about something whose existence is only momentary, perceived by an equally momentary consciousness. Analyzing in this subtle way helps us to see why an object that is perceived cannot exist before the consciousness that perceives it.

We can also look at the case of a father and his son and see that the father cannot really exist before the son, the son cannot exist before the father, and they cannot come into existence simultaneously either, so they too cannot be real. If we asked people, “Who comes first, the father or the son?” everyone in the world would answer, “The father comes first.” The reason people would say that is that they mistake an entire continuum of separate instants for one thing. If it were really the case that the father existed first, then the man would have been a father before the birth of his son, and even when that man was a little boy he would also have had to be a father. That is not the case, though, because every instant in the continuum of his existence is different from all the other instants.

We have to see how it is that we confuse individual entities in a continuum for one thing, how these confused appearances exist in accordance with worldly convention, and then we have to distinguish this confused way things appear from the way things actually are, which we can determine with logical analysis.

Thus, the father cannot exist before the son, because if he did, he would be a childless father. The son cannot exist before the father, because if he did, he would be a fatherless son. They cannot exist simultaneously either, because if they came into existence at the same time, one would have no opportunity to bring the other into existence. Therefore, they do not truly exist. They are not real. Then what are they? They are mere appearances that arise due to the coming together of causes and conditions, like dreams, water-moons, and rainbows. Their true nature transcends conceptual fabrications. It is open, spacious, and relaxed.

WESTERHOFF (Chapter 8)

8

Epistemology

An account of the theory of knowledge is important for Nāgārjuna's investigation for at least two reasons. First of all, objects of knowledge and means of accessing them form an essential part of our conceptualization of the world and our place in it. The means of knowledge are instruments used by the self in order to apprehend objects of knowledge which connect our inner world with that of a world of outside objects. Given the centrality of these key notions of epistemology, it is obviously important to investigate whether any of these could be regarded as existing with *svabhāva*. Second, Nāgārjuna's account of epistemology also has to provide the foundations of his own project. Given that the *knowledge* of the theory of universal emptiness is what Nāgārjuna wants to establish, it is important for him to describe the epistemology on the basis of which such knowledge is to be gained.

The Indian philosophical tradition distinguishes a variety of *means of knowledge* (*pramāṇa*) by which *objects of knowledge* (*prameya*) are epistemically accessed. Which means of knowledge are accepted and how their function is understood differs among different philosophical theories.[1] In his discussion of epistemology Nāgārjuna lists four such means of knowledge: perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), recognition of likeness (*upamāna*), and testimony (*āgama*).[2]

Nāgārjuna's primary concern is not a discussion of the nature and interre lation of these different means of knowledge, but the question of how to establish *any* particular set of means of knowledge, whether it is the one just indicated or a different one. Once we have agreed that the existence of objects of knowledge is established by the means of knowledge (as for example the existence of the desk in front of me is established by my perceptual abilities, in this case primarily non-defective vision), we then have to address the further question of how to establish the means of knowledge.[3] How do we know that these means of knowledge are good guides to the objects out there in the world?

There are three different ways in which we could try to establish the means of knowledge. First of all we could regard them as *established by mutual coherence*: perception is an adequate means of knowledge of the desk because its accuracy is established by other means of knowledge indicating its presence as well. Having the receipt of the delivery of the desk allows me to *infer* that there must be a desk in my room (since if I have such a receipt, the item in question must have been delivered), my perceptual recognition of the desk is in important ways *like* the perception of other medium-sized dry goods, such as tables and chairs, and finally, I can rely on the *testimony* of other people who also see the desk in my room. In a similar way we could then argue for the establishment of inference by the fact that the conclusions inferred are supported by perception, likeness, and testimony, and so on for all the other means of knowledge.

Second, we could assume that the means of knowledge *justify themselves*. We do not have to go beyond perception to realize that perception usually delivers an accurate picture of the world, but perception itself presents a faithful representation of the world and of its own validity. A popular example illustrating this point is that of the lamp which illuminates other objects at the same time as illuminating itself. We do not need another lamp in order to illuminate the lamp.

Finally, one could regard the means of knowledge and their objects as *mutually establishing each other*. The means of knowledge establish an object of knowledge by giving us epistemic access to it. But we could also argue that the object in turn establishes the means of knowledge. Given that we manage to interact with the objects of knowledge more or less successfully (as confirmed

1. See Potter (1970–2003: II, 154–178) for a summary; also Chatterjee (1939: 53–74).

2. VV 5, VS(S) 46:15–16, 72:6–17.

3. Matilal (1986: 49).

by the evolutionary success of our species), there must be something among our cognitive means that gives us a relatively accurate account of the way things are. In this way epistemic success allows us to establish the means of knowledge via the objects successfully cognized.

Nāgārjuna does not devote a great deal of discussion to the first alternative, the establishment of the means of knowledge by mutual coherence.[4] This seems sensible, for even if the argument succeeds, the kind of establishment of the means of knowledge that can be derived from it is not exactly what Nāgārjuna's Naiyāyika opponent is looking for.[5] He is trying to argue that the means of knowledge provide us with information about the nature of independently existing reals. But it is clear that the mutual establishment of means of knowledge can do no such thing. All it can do is establish the *coherence* of statements arrived at by different means of knowledge. But the mere coherence of some set of statements is not sufficient for showing that there is anything with an independent existential status that they describe. There are, after all, coherent fairy-tales.[6]

Let us therefore now consider the remaining two possible ways of establishing the means of knowledge.

8.1. Means of Knowledge as Self-established

Regarding the means of knowledge as self-established[7] has the immediate advantage of avoiding two difficulties. First, we get around the infinite regress of establishing the means of knowledge by other means of knowledge, which then in turn need yet other means of knowledge to establish them, and so forth.[8] Unlike other forms of infinite regress that Nāgārjuna accepts (such as an infinitely extended chain of causes and conditions), this regress is vicious, since the burden of proof is transferred in its entirety to the preceding stage, since preceding means of knowledge would have to establish all the succeeding ones.[9]

Second, the self-establishment of the means of knowledge allows the opponent to hold on to the assumption that *everything* knowable is established by the means of knowledge.[10] It might be attractive to give up this assumption in order to escape the vicious regress, but doing so then makes it necessary to give a special reason (*viśeṣahetu*) explaining why ordinary objects are established by means of knowledge, but the means of knowledge themselves are not.[11]

8.1.1. Means of Knowledge Compared to Fire

In support of the self-establishment of the means of knowledge, we are presented with the following example:[12]

Fire illuminates itself as well as other objects. In the same way, the means of knowledge establish themselves as well as other objects.

This argument is based on a recognition of likeness (*upamāna*).[13] Because the means of knowledge are like the fire, to the extent to which fire illuminates objects in the dark and thus brings them to our attention, in the same way the means of knowledge retrieve objects from the darkness of ignorance.[14] Now it would be absurd to suggest that there is a vicious regress involved in the illumination of the fire, with someone arguing as follows: "Because we can see the object, it must be illuminated by something. It is illuminated by the fire. But we can see the fire too. So something must illuminate it. So there must be a second fire, which is either invisible or visible. But how can it be invisible, since it illuminates a visible object (namely the fire)? So it must be visible. But then we need a third fire to illuminate the second fire, and so forth." It is clear that the error occurs through the assumption that there must be a *different* fire illuminating the fire: a fire can illuminate both itself and other things. Therefore, given the similarity of fire and means of knowledge, and thereby of

4. *na* [. . .] *prasiddhih.* [. . .] *parasparatah.* [. . .] *bhavati* [. . .] *pramān. ānām*. VV 51.

5. For the relationship between Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka and Nyāya with a special focus on epistemology, see Oberhammer (1963), Bhattacharya (1977), Bronkhorst (1985).

6. I do not think that the problem of an infinite regress (as argued by Matilal [1986: 56]) is the main difficulty with the establishment of means of knowledge by mutual coherence.

7. *na* [. . .] *svatah. prasiddhih.* [. . .] *bhavati* [. . .] *pramān. ānām*. VV 51. See Matilal (1986: 51–53).

8. VV 32, 51, VP 5, Siderits (1980: 310–312); Matilal (1986: 50). Compare NS 2, 1, 17.

9. To argue that the regress could just be stopped after a finite number of steps, after which the correctness of the means of knowledge is established as " highly probable" (as is done by Burton [1999: 159], following the arguments presented in NS 2, 1, 8–20), confuses the pragmatic question of how our epistemic enterprise should proceed with the philosophical question of its justification. See also Siderits (1980: 331); Siderits (2003: 141).

10. *don thams cad tshad mas bsgrub par bya ba yin no*. VP(S) 23:15; see also VV(S) 63:6–7 31, 64:11–13.

11. See NS 2, 1, 18.

12. *dyotayati svātmānam. yathā hutāśas tathā parātmānam / svaparātmānāvevam. prasādhayanti pramān. āni*. VV(S) 64:18–19. See also VP 6, MMK 7:8–12, NS 2, 1, 19.

13. Chatterjee (1939: 325–342); Potter (1970–2003: II:174–176); Matilal (1986: 57–58).

14. Some references supporting the close connection between illumination and cognition in Indian thought are given by Burton (1999: 163–164). He also offers a different reading of this argument, claiming that as an illuminated object manifests the existence of light, the existence of a known object manifests the existence of a means of knowledge (161). This, however, appears to conflate this argument with the establishment of means of knowledge by their objects, discussed separately below. This reading is also not very satisfactory from a hermeneutical perspective, given that it lets all of Nāgārjuna's arguments dealing with self-illumination come out as very problematic (as Burton sets out to argue on pages 165–172).

the relations of illumination and establishment, the means of knowledge can establish both themselves and other things.[15]

Nāgārjuna tries to counter the use of the example of fire to demonstrate the means of knowledge as self-established by arguing for two claims:

- Fire does not illuminate other objects.
- Fire does not illuminate itself.

Note that the establishment of either of these theses is sufficient for refuting the opponent, because each one would demonstrate that an argument by the recognition of likeness between the means of knowledge and fire cannot be used. Nāgārjuna sets out to establish both claims.

In order to argue for the first claim, he observes that in order to illuminate an object, a fire has to illuminate the darkness concealing that object. In order to do so, fire and darkness must come into causal contact, so that one can remove the other. Such a situation, however, is impossible:

A lamp cannot illuminate when it is connected with darkness since their connection does not exist. Why are the lamp and darkness not connected? Because they are opposed. Where the lamp is, darkness is not. How can the lamp remove or illuminate darkness?[16]

The point Nāgārjuna wants to make here is that darkness and light cannot be understood as two independently existent objects one of which acts on the other when they come into contact.[17] The illumination of darkness by light is not analogous to the dissolution of salt by water, because darkness is the mere *absence* of light[18]; it is wherever light is not. For this reason the two can never come into spatial contact.

Nāgārjuna's opponent argues in VV 38 that light and darkness might coexist during the process of origination (*utpadyamāna*) of light. So light and darkness would both be present at the same time for a single moment, and then the light would start to act on the darkness in order to remove it. But this theory leaves us with the problem of explaining what causes light to remove the darkness in its second moment of existence but not in the first. If light does not have the causal power to remove darkness in the moment of its origination, how could it have this power later on?[19]

On the other hand it would be highly unsatisfactory to regard light and darkness as independently existing objects which interact *without* coming into contact. For if light could act on darkness at a distance without spatial contiguity (as the planets were seen to act on human beings in ancient India,[20] and as we now know such forces as gravity and magnetism to work) without influencing it causally, it is difficult to explain why for example a certain lamp can dispel only a certain darkness (namely the one in this room) but not other ones (such as the darkness in the room next door).[21]

The refutation of the second claim (that fire illuminates itself) proceeds by analysis of the notion of illumination. For something to be illuminated, it must first exist hidden in darkness and subsequently made visible by light shining on it.[22] But it is obvious that this is not true of the fire: it does not first exist hidden away in darkness, like a pot in a dark room, and is then made visible by shining its own light onto itself.[23] If we conceive of illumination as the prevention of darkness (*tamasah. pratigātah.*),[24] we would have to assume that darkness is somewhere in the fire or encapsulating it to hide it from view.[25] But this would mean that we are again thinking of darkness as an independently existing substance preventing illumination, something like a thick lampshade which prevents the light from reaching our eyes. But as Nāgārjuna has argued above, this view of darkness as a substance is thoroughly unsatisfactory, since darkness is nothing but the absence of light.

15. We might want to note the similarity of this argument to the "glue" objection to Bradley's regress. This regress occurs once we think that what unifies two constituents of a state of affairs (such as an individual and a property) is the instantiation relation holding between them, and that this instantiation relation has a distinct ontological status, because then we need a further relation to connect the instantiation relation with the individual and the property and so forth. To see what goes wrong here, we can argue that when glueing two things together we do not require superglue to first glue the glue to the objects and then super-superglue to glue the superglue to the glue and so forth. It is the glue itself that can connect to the objects, as well as connecting the objects themselves.

16. *re zhig mar me ni mun pa dang phrad nas gsal bar byed par mi 'gyur te phrad pa med pa'i phyir ro | gang gi phyir mar me dang mun pa ni phrad pa yod pa ma yin te | 'gal ba'i phyir ro | gang na mar me yod pa de na mun pa med na ji ltar mar me 'di mun pa sel bar byed pa'am gsal bar byed par 'gyur*. VP(S) 24:2–8. See also VV 38, MMK 7:10.

17. Another example where Nāgārjuna rejects this assumption (even though we are here dealing with mutually dependent rather than with mutually exclusive entities) is the case of fire and fuel. Nāgārjuna argues that we cannot conceive of these as two distinct entities which produce an effect (heat and illumination) when put together, in the same way in which the union of man and woman produces an effect, i.e., a child (MMK 10: 1, 6. See also Garfield (1995: 191–192)). This is so because fire is existentially dependent on fuel, while fuel is at least notionally dependent on fire.

18. *'od med pa ni mun pa'o*. VP(S) 25:10. See also Burton (1999: 71–72).

19. See Siderits (1980: 314).

20. VP 8; compare the discussion in Burton (1999: 178–179, n. 27). See also Āryadeva's *Śataśāstra*. Tucci (1929: 9).

21. MMK 7:11; VP 8, VV 39; Tucci (1929: 9). See also Burton (1999: 169–171).

22. VV(S)65:3–4. See also Burton (1999: 166).

23. Siderits (1980: 313).

24. VV(S) 66:10.

25. VP 10. See also BCA 9:18.

Nāgārjuna also adds a second argument against the self-illumination of fire. He first claims that since the illumination by fire proceeds by the consumption of fuel, self-illumination would entail self-consumption, that is, fire would burn itself as well as its fuel.[26] Of course we cannot argue that if one quality of an object acts on itself, any other of its qualities will do so as well.[27] An oven may heat a piece of wax as well as itself, and melt the wax, but not melt itself. Nāgārjuna must therefore regard the fire's burning of fuel and its illumination of objects as the very same process. But we do not have to say that the fire burns down because there is less fuel (it being gradually consumed by the fire) *and* less fire (because it gradually consumes itself). Fire *is* just the burning of the fuel rather than some distinct entity acting both on the fuel and also on itself.[28] Therefore, if there is no self-consumption of fire, there should also be no self-illumination.[29]

Second, if fire illuminated itself, and perception was to be understood as structurally similar to illumination, the different modes of perception should also be able to perceive themselves: seeing should be able to see itself, hearing hear itself, and so on.[30] Vision would be possible in the absence of any distinct object, because vision could act as its own object of sight. Visual perception would then be regarded not as an intrinsically relational phenomenon, but as something based solely on some essentially perceptive quality of vision. Since such a non-relational understanding of visual perception (and of any other kind of perception as well) is unsatisfactory, Nāgārjuna argues that if the parallel between perception and illumination is maintained, fire cannot be seen as self-illuminating.

Third, since darkness is the opposite of light, if light illuminates itself, darkness should conceal itself.[31] But then we should not be able to perceive darkness, as we are not able to perceive a pot concealed in darkness. Since darkness can be perceived, however, it is not self-obscuring and therefore, Nāgārjuna argues, fire cannot be self-illuminating either.[32]

8.1.2. The Problem of the Independence of Means of Knowledge from Their Objects

Apart from attempting to find fault with the opponent's example based on the supposed self-illumination of fire, Nāgārjuna also presents us with positive arguments against the self-establishment of the means of knowledge. First of all, if a means of knowledge, such as visual perception, were self-established, it should be able to exist independently of the existence of an object of vision.[33] But if we then assume that it is an essential property of visual perception to see,[34] visual perception must be able to function as its own object, because otherwise there might be no other object to be seen. This reasoning, Nāgārjuna claims, then leads to the same problem encountered in the analysis of motion. [35] Because the mover and the place being moved over cannot exist simultaneously, since motion takes time, vision cannot see something that exists simultaneously with it (such as itself), since vision takes time too.[36]

Second, observing again that if the means of knowledge are self-established, then they will be established independently of the objects known,[37] Nāgārjuna argues as follows. Assume that we wanted to chose those among all the different means of cognitive access to the world that deliver accurate knowledge of the nature of the objects known, that is, that qualify as means of knowledge. We would select all those that have a specific internal quality (such as the cognitive equivalent to self-illumination). The possession of this quality would then guarantee that its possessor delivered accurate information about the nature of the objects cognized. But how is the connection between the specific internal quality and the correct representation of the object justified? After all there are all sorts of properties our means of cognitive access to the world can have, so how do we know that a specific one is a guide to accurate representation?

Suppose we are presented with a set of fancy mechanical devices and are asked to select the five best can openers from these. No detailed study of the

26. VV 35.

27. As pointed out by Burton (1999: 167).

28. MMK 10:1.

29. It is interesting to note that the Madhyamaka argument against the Yogācāra view of the mind as selfilluminating (*svaprakāśa*) given by Śāntideva in the BCA is another reason by recognition of likeness (*upamāna*): that of a sword that cannot cut itself (9:17). The Yogācāra view is also criticized by Śan˙ kara in the *Upadeśasāhasrī* 16:13, in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 2:2:28, and in his commentary on the *Br. hadāran. yaka Upaniṣad* 4:3:7. For further references to this "anti-reflexivity principle," see Siderits (2003: 32, ṇa). It is important to note, however, that even though the example of the lamp or fire is used in the discussion of both, the question of whether the mind is self-illuminating and the question whether the means of knowledge are self-established are distinct. See Siderits (1980: 334–335, n. 4), Burton (1999: 155–156).

30. Nāgārjuna mentions only the case of seeing seeing itself (MMK 3:2). This reading of the verse is supported by a variety of commentaries, such as PP 114:1–5, Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (2006: 130), Garfield (1995: 137–138) and Weber-Brosamer and Back (1997: 15). For a different reading see Kalupahana (1991: 133–134). See also the further references given in May (1959: 79, n. 135).

31. MMK 7:12, VV 36, VP 11.

32. Some more discussion of this argument is in Burton (1999: 167–168).

33. MMK 3:2.

34. As is stated, e.g., in Vimalamitra's *Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti*, Kalupahana (1991: 133).

35. MMK 3:3.

36. See Garfield (1995: 138–139).

37. VV 40. See Siderits (1980: 314–315).

internal properties of each will allow us to accomplish that task. We have to analyze each *in relation to a can* and try to determine the way in which it might open it. Only then would we be able to conclude which particular properties of the mechanisms are correlated with good can-opening abilities. In the same way, we can regard an internal quality of a way of accessing the world only as a characteristic of a means of knowledge once we have assessed it in relation to the objects cognized. Only then can we conclude that this particular property really leads us to the knowledge of the nature of the object, rather than doing something else. But in this case the establishment of the means of knowledge can no longer be regarded as self-establishment, since it incorporates reference to other objects (namely the objects known) at an essential place.

8.2. Means of Knowledge and Their Objects as Mutually Established

If the argument for the self-establishment of the means of knowledge is not successful, the remaining option is to argue that the means of knowledge and the objects of knowledge mutually establish one another.[38] Assume that I see an apple on the table. The existence of the apple, the object of knowledge, is established by the means of knowledge that is perception. But we could equally argue the other way around: that the object known establishes the means of knowledge. This argument would invite the immediate objection that we then need prior cognitive access to the object known, and if we have this we must already have established the means of knowledge.[39] We are therefore pointlessly establishing it twice.[40] But if we somehow gain this access without relying on the means of knowledge, the whole project of establishing these means seems futile, since it is precisely the justification of our means of gaining knowledge of the world which we have set out to scrutinize.[41]

We will therefore need a different argumentative strategy to argue for the mutual establishment of objects known and means of knowledge, and in particular for the establishment of the latter by the former. One way of going about this (which does not commit us to the viciously circular mutual establishment criticized by Nāgārjuna)[42] is to argue that because the object of knowledge is perceived, there must be something bringing about such a perception, and this is the means of knowledge. In this case the apple establishes the existence of the means of knowledge by which it is known.[43] An essential prerequisite for this latter direction of establishment is of course *success*. Because we successfully apprehend an apple, our means of apprehension is regarded as a means of knowledge.[44] If we were susceptible to frequent apple-hallucinations which disappeared once we tried to touch them, we would not regard perception as a reliable apple-detector, that is, as a means of knowledge. But since we are generally successful in our cognitive interactions with the world and normally only perceive the existence of apples which are indeed there, the very fact that we successfully apprehend a world of outside objects serves as an argument for regarding the successful means of apprehension as means of knowledge.[45]

An immediate difficulty with this procedure is that we also need a means of knowledge for establishing the success of our cognitive actions,[46] that is, we need to ascertain whether we really are perceiving the apple or just an applehallucination. Nothing seems to rule out that there are some means of knowledge that first deceive us about what we see and later deceive us about the outcome of whatever procedure we use to establish whether the first cognition was successful.[47] But this possibility need not rule out any attempts of mutually establishing the means and the objects of knowledge if we do not use epistemically suspect procedures (which we know to have led to unsuccessful cognitions in the past) to establish the success of our cognitive actions.[48]

A more worrying question is whether the mutual establishment of means and objects of knowledge—if successful—actually delivers the account of means of knowledge that Nāgārjuna’s opponent wants to defend. In order to see whether it does, we have to note first that the notion of “successful cognitive apprehension” referred to above cannot just be an act of cognition which leads to a successful action, since many of our cognitions (and many of the beliefs subsequently acquired) are never acted upon. We therefore also have to include coherence with other cognitions or beliefs as a criterion for the success of some means of knowledge as well. Our cognition of the apple on the table might therefore be deemed successful either if it leads to a successful action

38. VV 42–51.

39. Matilal (1986: 56–57); Burton (1999: 183).

40. This is the fallacy of “proving the proven” (*siddhasya sādhanam*.). See VV 42.

41. VV 44.

42. VV 46–48.

43. This way of establishing the means of knowledge is what Nāgārjuna criticizes in VV 51 by saying *prasiddhih.* [. . .] *bhavati na ca prameyaih.* [. . .] *pramān. ānām*.

44. VP 17. See the commentary in Tola and Dragonetti (1995b: 111–112).

45. For more discussion of the Nyāya criterion of pragmatic success as an indication of valid knowledge see Chatterjee (1939: 81–89); D’Almeida (1973: 46–62); Bijalwan (1977: 53–60); Matilal (1986: 160–179).

46. Siderits (2003: 140–141).

47. Burton (1999: 184–185).

48. Siderits (1980: 317).

(we reach out, grasp the apple, and eat it) or if it coheres with other means of knowledge (for example, with my memory of buying a bag of apples and putting them on the table). However, the difficulty with employing coherence in this way is that we have to select a certain set of cognitions or beliefs which we hold fixed, so that we can then evaluate the status of *other* cognitions relative to them. One problem now is of course how to ensure the accuracy of this selected set: if they are not accurate themselves, coherence with them has very little weight. But let us assume for the sake of argument that they are indeed accurate and constitute an epistemological fixed point relative to which other means of knowledge could be justified.

The remaining worry is that Nāgārjuna's Naiyāyika opponent wants to establish the means of knowledge as something which gives us cognitive access to a world of independently existing reals. But as long as we do not *know* the initial set to be accurate (even though it may be), it is hard to see why coherence with the selected set should provide us with such access. Since we cannot establish the accuracy of the initial set without circularly assuming that we have already established some means of knowledge, the possibility remains that a different selected set would have provided us with a different set of means of knowledge coherent with it. As Mark Siderits observes: "Since at no point in our proof is there appeal to any facts other than those concerning logical relations among cognitions, we cannot legitimately include in the resultant theory of the pramāṇas the claim that they yield direct knowledge of their objects."[49] There is no explanation why coherence with the selected set should assure us that the means of knowledge indeed "reach out" to provide us with knowledge of an independently existent world of objects as long as we do not have an independent way of establishing the accuracy of the selected set.[50] But if such could be done, the entire attempt of mutually establishing means and objects of cognition would be superfluous.

The argument against the mutual establishment of means and objects of knowledge just presented is very much a rational extrapolation: it is what Nāgārjuna (as well as a Mādhyamika more generally) should say in response, even though we do not find such a detailed argument in Nāgārjuna's texts. The argument in the VV fundamentally boils down to the observation that the mutual establishment of the means and objects of knowledge excludes the possibility of either existing by substance-*svabhāva*, that is, independently of any other object. If father and son were mutually established in the same way as means of knowledge and their objects, Nāgārjuna argues, father and son would not be distinguished by any substantial difference.[51]

This is a familiar argumentative move we encounter repeatedly in Nāgārjuna's works. A different and more unusual response to the proposal of mutual establishment is given in the VP. Nāgārjuna observes:[52]

Potness is perceptible, but the pot is not. That which is the object of the sense-faculty (*dbang po la rab tu phyogs pa'i don*), that is perceived. If we apply the term (*brda*) "visual sense-faculty" then the object [of that faculty] is perceptible and depends on conditions like light and so forth. Thus pot and so forth are established as perceptible.

The idea behind this argument is to deny the establishment of the means of knowledge by the object known by denying that the object of knowledge (the *prameya*) is an external, independently existent real. The Naiyāyika opponent wants to argue that since our cognitions are generally successful, and since this success serves as an indication of the existence of an external, mindindependent reality, the means of knowledge are just those things that allow us access to this reality. Nāgārjuna replies that in fact the object perceived by our sense-faculties is not the external object, but a mental representation of the object. Nāgārjuna here embraces a representative theory of perception which does not assert (as a naïve realist would) that we have direct and unmediated cognitive access to the objects of the external world.[53] What is directly perceived is the sense-datum (what Nāgārjuna calls the object of the sense-faculty [*dbang po la rab tu phyogs pa'i don*]), on the basis of which information about the external object is inferred. If, for example, we look at a white disc under red light at an angle, our sense-datum will be a red ellipse, though, knowing some basic facts about vision and about the peculiar lighting conditions, we perceive a white disc. Nāgārjuna stresses the contribution of inference to knowledge gained by

49. 1980: 318.

50. See Siderits (1989: 237–238).

51. VV 49–50. Compare BCA 9:12–14.

52. *bum pa nyid mngon sum yin gyi bum pa ni ma yin te dbang po la rab tu phyogs pa'i don gang yin pa de ni mngon sum yin par byas nas | mig gi dbang po la dbang po'i brda byas la de la rab tu phyogs pa'i don gang yin pa de ni mngon sum yin zhing de yang snang ba la sogs pa'i rkyen la ltos pa ste | de phyir bum pa la sogs pa nyid mngon sum du yongs su grub pa yin*. VP(S) 29:6–13.

53. Burton (1999: 192) "suspects that Nāgārjuna actually means that [. . .] the knowledge-episode itself is constitutive of the object known." This is indeed the case. Burton is also correct in claiming that there is not much of an argument for this position in Nāgārjuna's texts. But given the generally elliptic nature of the VP, this philological gap does not necessarily entail the existence of a gap in Nāgārjuna's philosophical argumentation as well. Tola and Dragonetti (1995b: 12) suggest that the Yogācāra flavor of VP 18 could be interpreted as evidence for locating the composition of the VP after the appearance of the Yogācāra school, about 350 A.D., which would speak against its attribution to Nāgārjuna. Given the somewhat isolated nature of VP 18 in Nāgārjuna's argument, this suggestion does not seem to me to be able to bear much weight.

perception.[54] He notes that in the same way in which the inferential process is based on some perception in order for us to arrive at some piece of nonperceptual knowledge, such as when we infer fire from smoke,[55] there is an inferential process at work in ordinary perception as well, which, on the basis of the object of direct acquaintance (the sense-datum) subsequently produces the object of perception.[56] But it is evident that for the proponent of a representative theory of perception, an object of knowledge cannot serve as establishing a means of knowledge in the way the Naiyāyika requires. Since all we are directly acquainted with is the sense-datum, we cannot use this acquaintance to support the view that there are epistemic processes which give us direct access to a world of external, independently existent reals.

8.3. Temporal Relations between Means and Objects of Knowledge

Apart from the question of how the means of knowledge are established, Nāgārjuna also investigates the question of how they are related to the objects of knowledge. The two stand in a causal relation. In the case of perception, for example, the contact between the sensory faculty and the object perceived brings about the object of knowledge which for Nāgārjuna is not an external object but a sense-datum.[57] It is therefore hardly surprising that Nāgārjuna sees the relation between means of knowledge and objects of knowledge as facing the same difficulties as those of other causes and effects. He concentrates specifically on the problematic nature of their temporal relation.[58]

If the means of knowledge exists *before* its object, there is no justification for calling it a means of knowledge, since Nāgārjuna argued earlier that being such a means cannot be a purely intrinsic feature of some cognitive way of accessing the world.[59] A different interpretation of this difficulty is found in Vāt.syāyana's *Bhāṣya* on the NS 2.1.9.[60] Here the means of knowledge is regarded not as the perceptual faculty, but as a specific act of perception, and the object of knowledge as the object in the world which, when in contact with the sense-organ, produces the perception.[61] The prior existence of the means of knowledge would then be equivalent to the existence of the effect before the cause.[62]

If it existed *after* the knowable object, there is no justification for calling the object of knowledge an object of knowledge, since there is not anything yet by which it is known.[63] Nāgārjuna also identifies another difficulty when he argues that an arisen and a non-arisen thing cannot abide together.[64] If two things are such that one exists only now and the other only at a later moment, it cannot be the case that the second has any effect on the first, such as making it known.

The final possibility is that the means of knowledge and its object exist *simultaneously*.[65] The difficulty is here that for two simultaneously existing things (such as the two horns of a cow, which Nāgārjuna gives as an example, but also, e.g., the two ends of a see-saw moving in opposite directions), it becomes problematic to establish which is the cause and which is the effect. For Nāgārjuna the means of knowledge brings about the object of knowledge, the sense-datum. Therefore the means of knowledge is a cause, the object of knowledge its effect. But in this case we would better not assume that they exist

54. See Matilal (1986: chapter 8).

55. "In the same way [in the case of inferential knowledge] based on the connection between fire and smoke there is an inference preceded by a perception." *de bzhin du me dang du ba la 'brel pa las mngon sum sngon du 'gro ba can rjes su dpag pa yin no*. VP(S) 29:14–16.

56. The role of inference (or, as contemporary cognitive science would prefer to put it: the implicit reliance on biologically hard-wired rules in interpreting perceptual input) in the formation of visual perception in particular is now well supported by empirical research. See Hoffman (1998) for an accessible summary.

57. See VV(S) 70:17–18 where the means of knowledge is described as the cause (*kāraṇa*) of the object of knowledge.

58. VP 12. See also the discussion in Burton (1999: 191–199); Siderits (2003: 146).

59. See also Burton (1999: 172–174).

60. NS 443–445. Bronkhorst (1985: 107–111) argues that the discussion of the arguments concerning the temporal relations between means and objects of knowledge in NS 2, 1, 8–15 is evidence of Sarvāstivādin influence rather than an anticipation of Madhyamaka arguments, as claimed by Phaṇibhūṣaṇa. Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya (1968: 21–22).

61. In accordance with the definition of perception in NS 1, 1, 4.

62. While it is instructive to compare the explanation of the difficulties connected with the temporal relations between means of knowledge and their objects in the commentaries on NS 2, 1, 8–15 and Madhyamaka treatises, it is important to be aware of the significance of their respective background assumptions. The Nyāya theory of means of knowledge, based on Vaiśeṣika metaphysics, regards a particular knowledge-episode, such as an instance of perception, as caused by the combination of an externally existing object of knowledge and the respective sense-faculty. For Nāgārjuna, on the other hand, the object of knowledge (*prameya*) is not external but an internal object, a sense-datum. If we now regard the means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) as bringing about the internal representation which is the *prameya,* we realize that the causal relation between *pramāṇa* and *prameya* is seen in different ways by the Naiyāyika and by Nāgārjuna. For the former the *prameya* is causally prior, for the latter the *pramāṇa*.

63. For the Naiyāyika this dependence is purely notional (Jha [1984: 609, n. *]), whereas for Nāgārjuna it is both notional and existential, as argued in our discussion of causation on page 98 of this book.

64. *ma skyes pa dang skyes pa dag lhan cig mi gnas pa*. VP(S) 28:24–25.

65. In his commentary on NS 2, 1, 11 (NS 421–424) Vāt.syāyana argues that the problem is that if means and object of knowledge existed at the same time, there could be no sequence of cognitions. The point seems to be that if, for example, we hold a pot in our hand and thereby have both a visual and a tactile perception of it, the optical and haptic properties of the pot exist at the same time—and so should the corresponding perceptions. In our consciousness, however, they occur as successive, and indeed this non-simultaneity occupies an important place in the Nyāya theory of mind (see NS 1, 1, 16).

simultaneously, since it is the temporal ordering which characterizes one item as a cause, the other as an effect.[66]

One potential way of dealing with the difficulty of the temporal relation between means and object of knowledge is outlined by Vāt.syāyana in his commentary on NS 2, 1, 11.[67] He claims that the term *pramāṇa* is to be applied to something that has been the cause of apprehension of an object in the past, is so at present, or will be in the future. Similarly, the term *prameya* is to be used for an object that was apprehended in the past, is presently being apprehended, or will be apprehended in the future. Only in this way can we make sense of somebody saying "Bring the cook to do the cooking," since he has not cooked yet—otherwise the term "cook" would fail to refer. In this case we use "cook" just as a synonym for "whoever will do the cooking." The problem with this reply is that in this case it is obvious that being a cook is not regarded as an essential property of the person referred to. Since statements about the future are contingent, the expression "whoever will do the cooking" must be able to refer even if it turns out that person designated does not cook in the end. But now it is evident that someone who takes "cause" and "effect" to denote essential properties of things—as Nāgārjuna's Naiyāyika opponent does—cannot help himself to this reply. Because a statement referring to a cause or a means of knowledge might really be talking about what this thing is likely to do in the future, it must be possible that the thing picked out does not cause anything, or does not give us access to an object of knowledge—otherwise its intelligibility now would depend on what happens in the future. Since this is not the case (we know what "what is going to be a means of knowledge in the future" etc. refers to, and we do not know what is going to happen in the future), being a cause or a means of knowledge cannot be an essential property of the thing, since it could lose this property while remaining that very thing.

8.4. The Aim of Nāgārjuna's Arguments

Nāgārjuna's aim in his discussion of epistemology is not to argue that means of knowledge and their objects do not exist at all.[68] Such an argument immediately generates a paradox, for the non-existence of the means and objects of knowledge is itself an object of knowledge arrived at by some means. But then there must be at least one means and object of knowledge, something that was previously denied.[69]

What Nāgārjuna sets out to do is refute the existence of either means or objects of knowledge with substance-*svabhāva*.[70] He thus wants to show that there are no procedures that are intrinsically and essentially means of knowledge, nor are there independently existent reals of which they give us knowledge. Means of knowledge and their objects are notionally interdependent: without its ability to give us epistemic access to some thing, we would not label a cognitive procedure a means of knowledge. Similarly something cannot be called an object of knowledge unless there exist a means which allows us to know it. We can also argue that the two are existentially dependent on one another. The existence of certain objects of knowledge allows us to divide off certain types of our cognitive procedures and label them as means of knowledge; it is not the case that this division proceeds along certain fissures which had been there all along. Since our consciousness is a continuous flow without ready-made fissures, the objects of knowledge can be regarded as bringing the means of knowledge into existence. Similarly if the object of knowledge is to be identified with a mental representation (as Nāgārjuna argued above), it is evident that the means of knowledge brings this object about by unifying information received through the different sensory modalities. Means of knowledge and their objects therefore cannot be regarded as distinct substances.

This point is also stressed by Nāgārjuna's argument that each can assume another's role: a means of knowledge can be an object of knowledge and vice versa. There are two different ways to argue for this position.

First of all,[71] building on the familiar Nyāya definition that a means of knowledge is what produces the knowledge of something,[72] we can argue that since the object of knowledge is what brings the means of knowledge about, it is an essential part of what produces the knowledge of something, and therefore is an essential part of a means of knowledge. A similar argument can be applied to means of knowledge.[73]

Alternatively we could argue that a means of knowledge at one time can be an object of knowledge at another time, and vice versa. For example, when we establish a certain cognition as correct, this means of knowledge is an object of

66. I disagree with Burton's claim (1999: 193) that Nāgārjuna "provides no justification [. . .] for his unusual and far from self-evident assertion," since this matter is extensively discussed in those passages where Nāgārjuna deals specifically with causation (rather than with causal issues in epistemology). See chapter 5, section 5.4.3.

67. NS 421–424.

68. As claimed by Burton (1999: 194, 198).

69. VP 13.

70. MMK 3:5–6, VP 3–4.

71. VP 2.

72. See Vātsyāyana's *Bhāṣya* on NS 2, 1, 11 (NS 421–424).

73. See Burton (1999: 177).

knowledge. And what is thus known to be correct and is an object of knowledge can in turn be a means of knowledge for knowing other objects of knowledge later on. Vātsyāyana illustrates this point with the example of a piece of gold which can be both the object tested (if we want to determine how heavy it is) or a testing object itself (if we want to check the accuracy of a pair of scales).[74] In fact, as Nāgārjuna points out,[75] the Naiyāyikas themselves count ideas (*buddhi*, *blo*) both as a means of knowledge and as an object of knowledge.[76] Either way it becomes evident that means of knowledge and their objects cannot exist as essentially different entities.

It is important to realize that Nāgārjuna's rejection of the essentially existing means and objects of knowledge is presented within the discussion of the knowability of emptiness. His opponent argues that if all things are empty, means and objects of knowledge are empty too.[77] But if ultimately there are no objects of knowledge, emptiness cannot be an object of knowledge. And if there are ultimately no means of knowledge, if nothing has the intrinsic nature that is characteristic of a means of knowledge, then emptiness, even if it obtained, could never be known. There appears thus to be a fundamental inconsistency in the Madhyamaka project of establishing the truth of emptiness.[78]

Nāgārjuna's response to this difficulty is to investigate the realist's way of accounting for means and objects of knowledge with characteristic natures as means and objects, in order to demonstrate that all possible ways of establishing them fail. This sequence of arguments, which has already been discussed above, is to be seen not so much as a *tu quoque* move on the side of Nāgārjuna[79] but as an assessment of the realist's epistemological position which lets emptiness come out as unknowable. For the realist, means and objects of knowledge have intrinsic characteristics, and there are invariant relations of epistemic priority, that is, cognitive procedures which are means of knowledge in all possible contexts. On this account of epistemology it is indeed impossible to establish emptiness. But as we saw earlier in this chapter, Nāgārjuna tries to argue that this is not the right account of epistemology. Even though there are no means of knowledge that are intrinsically such, that deliver knowledge in every context, there are still cognitive procedures which function as means of knowledge in the specific context in which they are employed, regimented by certain background constraints and other pragmatic features. By using these procedures (which, Nāgārjuna argues, are all the means of knowledge there are anyway) we can achieve knowledge of emptiness even though ultimately there are neither means of knowledge nor objects of knowledge. Certain procedures can still count conventionally as means of knowledge within the framework of certain aims and directions of inquiry. Nāgārjuna's arguments about epistemology have therefore to be seen as fulfilling two purposes. First, they continue his general project of examining different types of objects one by one and arguing that none has substance-*svabhāva* by considering means of knowledge and their objects. Second, and more specifically, they establish the necessary background epistemology needed for understanding how emptiness could in fact be known. It is this second aim which is particulary interesting, since it provides us with the outlines of a specific Madhyamaka theory of knowledge.[80]

74. In the commentary on NS 2, 1, 16 (NS 433–440). See also (Bhattacharya 1977: 268).

75. VP 20.

76. NS 1, 1, 9.

77. VV 5–6.

78. Siderits (2003: 140) refers to this as the "self-stultification objection."

79. Siderits (2003: 147).

80. For a good assessment of this and its relation to the debate about anti-realism, see Siderits (2003: chapter 7).

9

Language

In contrast to such topics as causation, motion, the self, and the theory of knowledge, language is not given much explicit discussion in Nāgārjuna's works. This does not mean that such matters were not important to Nāgārjuna but merely that his extant writings do not contain an extended connected discussion of the impact of his theory of emptiness on our view of language. Nevertheless it is possible to extract some of Nāgārjuna's views on this philosophically highly interesting issue from remarks found at different places in his works.

9.1. Nāgārjuna's View of Language and the "No-Thesis" View

A good starting point for the discussion of Nāgārjuna's conception of how the theory of emptiness affects our view of language is his so-called no-thesis view. This is without a doubt one of the most immediately puzzling philosophical features of Nāgārjuna's thought and is also largely responsible for ascribing to him either sceptical or mystical leanings (or indeed both). The *locus classicus* for this view is found in verse 29 of the VV:

If I had some thesis the defect [just mentioned] would as a consequence attach to me. But I have no thesis, so this defect is not applicable to me.[1]

1. *yadi kācana pratijñā syān me tata eṣa me bhaved doṣah. / nāsti ca mama pratijñā tasmān naivāsti me doṣah.* .

That this absence of a thesis is to be regarded as a positive feature is stressed in YS. 50, where Nāgārjuna remarks about the Buddhas:

For these great beings there is no position, no dispute. How could there be another's [opposing] position for those who have no position?[2]

Now it is important to observe that when these passages are considered in isolation, it is very hard to make any coherent sense of them, for even if we assume that the Buddhas do not hold any philosophical position anymore (having perhaps passed beyond all conceptual thinking), how are we to make sense of the first quotation which, in the middle of a work full of philosophical theses, claims that there is no such thesis asserted at all?

In fact this first statement is even more difficult to interpret than the famous last sentence of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, which is preceded by the equally famous ladder-metaphor.[3] Although Wittgenstein here denies that his preceding statements are of anything but instrumental value, claims that they turn out to be nonsensical *after* they have fulfilled their instrumental role, and that there is something outside of the grasp of these statements, at least he does not deny making any statements at all!

9.2. VV 29 in Context

In order to get a clearer understanding of what these passages might mean, it is important to consider them in the argumentative context in which they occur. The VV, which contains the first passage given above, is a work of seventy verses, accompanied by Nāgārjuna's autocommentary. As its title—which translates as "The Dispeller of Objections"—suggests, its main aim is to answer objections which had been advanced concerning Nāgārjuna's theses. Its being of a rather technical and specific nature makes it plausible to assume that the VV was written later than his main work, the MMK, and was meant to deal with particular problems arising from the arguments set out there.[4] The first twenty verses and their commentaries contain criticisms of Nāgārjuna's

2. *che ba'i bdag nyid can de dag / rnams la phyogs med rtsod pa med / gang rnams la ni phyogs med pa / de la gzhan phyogs ga la yod*.

3. 6.54 My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually realizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)[. . .] 7. Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.

4. Mabbett (1996: 306–307); Bhattacharya (1999: 124).

position, which are answered in the remaining verses and their commentaries. Verse 29, given above, specifically addresses the problem raised by the opponent in verse 4.

The principal point the opponent makes at the beginning of the VV concerns the status of Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness. The opponent argues that Nāgārjuna faces a dilemma whose horns are *inconsistency* and *impotence*. If he assumes his claim not to be empty, he has contradicted his own thesis of universal emptiness (because there is now at least one thing that is not empty). If, on the other hand, Nāgārjuna takes his own claim to be empty too, the opponent argues, this claim is then unable to deny the existence of independently existing phenomena that the opponent asserts. As becomes clear later in verse 22, Nāgārjuna accepts the second horn of the dilemma: everything is empty, and his claim that everything is empty is empty too. As he stresses in the next verse, this reasoning, however, does not entail that the claim could not carry out its philosophical function. A key can open a door in a film even though it is only a key in the film, not a real key.[5] Verse 4 now considers a specific comeback Nāgārjuna could make in reply to the difficulty arising from accepting this second alternative, the charge of the argumentational impotence of his claim of universal emptiness. Nāgārjuna could argue that if universal emptiness renders his own claim impotent, the opponent's claims, being also subsumed under the universal statement of everything being empty, are similarly impotent and therefore cannot act as a refutation of Nāgārjuna's claim either. But as the opponent is quick to point out, this thinking involves a blatant *petitio principii*: only if we already accept that everything is empty will the opponent's arguments be rendered empty and impotent. But this is exactly the thesis the opponent denies. For him at least, some things are not empty, and in particular his own statements are not subject to Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness. The difficulty the opponent raised is one that arises because of the specific character (*lakṣaṇa*) of Nāgārjuna's system, namely the claim that everything is empty. It does not apply to someone who does not make that assumption.

Verse 29 then is made in reply to this supposed counterargument and its rejection as a *petitio*. There Nāgārjuna claims that the particular defect (of his thesis of universal emptiness rendering his own philosophical assertions impotent) would indeed apply *if he had any position*. But given that he has no position, the difficulty therefore does not apply to him.

5. As Nāgārjuna points out in MMK 1:10, this is in fact a necessary condition for its being able to perform its function: only a cinematic key could open a cinematic door, a real key could not. See also the commentary on this verse in Garfield (1995: 119).

Now it will strike the reader that this is a rather curious reply to make. It is evident that the opponent's criticisms formulated in verse 4 as well as in the preceding verses rest on a misunderstanding of the central term "emptiness." What exactly this misunderstanding amounts to is less clear. In fact the above set of arguments would make sense if we assumed that the opponent understood "empty" to mean "false," or "meaningless," or even "nonexistent."[6] But as a reply to a criticism based on misunderstanding of this kind Nāgārjuna's reply in verse 29 seems a little extreme, given that it would have been perfectly sufficient and far less controversial for him to point out that emptiness entailed neither falsity nor meaninglessness nor non-existence and that he thereby could assert that his claims both are empty *and* simultaneously are able to refute the opponent's objections (in fact he makes exactly these points in verses 21 and 22). Even if we agree with Mabbett that

> it may be the case that the objection addressed by a given verse has already been essentially refuted, but in turning to each new objection Nāgārjuna seeks to make a fresh rebuttal in order to administer the *coup de grâce*[7]

Nāgārjuna here seems to use a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Why deny holding any proposition whatsoever if it would have been perfectly sufficient to point out that since "empty" does not mean "non-existent," it is completely unproblematic to claim that one's own position is as empty as everything else?

We can distinguish at least three different ways in which Nāgārjuna's crucial statement that he has no position can be interpreted. I will refer to these as the *semantic*, *argumentational*, and *transcendent* interpretations. According to the *semantic* interpretation Nāgārjuna does not claim to hold no thesis whatsoever, but claims only to accept no statements that are taken to have a particular semantics. If we follow the *argumentational* interpretation, Nāgārjuna makes a claim about how one should proceed in debates, namely by always refuting

6. Indeed we might think that the argumentative context makes it most likely that the opponent misunderstands "empty" as "nonexistent." In this case the problem that nonexistent statements cannot really refute anything seems to be most pressing. But in the case of the other two alternatives other problems become more serious. If Nāgārjuna meant "meaningless" when he said "empty," his claim that everything is empty would obviously just be false, given that we perfectly well understand the claim he makes (in the same way as somebody saying "all statements, including this one, are not grammatically well formed" would be uttering a falsehood). If, however, "empty" meant "false," Nāgārjuna's thesis of universal emptiness would reduce to the liar paradox and there is no good textual evidence that *this* is the problem the opponent had in mind. On this last point compare also the discussion in Mabbett (1996) and Sagal (1992).

7. (1996: 307).

opponents via *reductio* arguments, without ever adopting any thesis oneself. The *transcendent* interpretation finally reads Nāgārjuna's statement as the assertion of the existence of an inexpressible reality beyond concepts and language.

All three of these interpretations have historical predecessors in the commentarial tradition. The semantic and argumentational interpretation can be found in works of the dGe lugs tradition, in particular those of Tsong kha pa[8] and mKhas grub rje,[9] while a variety of views which can all be regarded as some kind of transcendental interpretation can be found in the writings of scholars like rNgog blo ldan shes rab,[10] Go rams pa,[11] and dGe 'dun chos 'phel.[12] The following discussion will be restricted to an exposition of the semantic interpretation, primarily because this appears to give us the clearest understanding of the role of verse 29 in the context of Nāgārjuna's arguments.

The argumentational and transcendent interpretations tend to use Nāgārjuna's denial of a thesis as a textual peg on which to hang an argument concerned with quite different matters from those dealt with in the VV. Tsong kha pa, for example, refers to this verse in the context of expounding the distinction between Svātantrikas and Prāsaṇgikas; Sa skya Pandita[13] offers the transcendent interpretation in the context of a debating manual (advising the reader on how to debate with somebody who does not put forward a position); dGe 'dun chos 'phel's work, despite its title, is not a study of Nāgārjuna's thought in particular, but is concerned mainly with criticizing the then prevalent dGe lugs interpretation of Madhyamaka philosophy more generally.

This is not to say, of course, that the argumentational and transcendent interpretations are for this reason deficient or lacking in interest within the context in which they are presented. However, it is important to be aware that these contexts were not Nāgārjuna's context. There is certainly no reason for suspicion toward later Indian or indeed non-Indian works as not giving a valid interpretation of Nāgārjuna's thoughts. Nevertheless, the most interesting of these for the present purpose of a philosophical analysis of Nāgārjuna's thoughts are those that allow us to understand passages from his works in their argumentative context, rather than using them as a starting point for presenting their own ideas on a particular topic.

8. Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (2000–2004: III:230, 236–249).

9. Ruegg (2000: 173–187).

10. See Ruegg (2000: 32–33, n. 59).

11. See Ruegg (2000: 194–195, n. 135).

12. See Lopez (1994). A translation of dGe 'dun chos 'phel's *Klu grub dgongs rgyan* is in Lopez (2005).

13. In his *mKhas pa rnams 'jug pa'i sgo*, III: 37–39. See Jackson (1987: vol. 1, 271) for the Tibetan text, volume 2, 341–342 for an English translation. A summary with comments is in Ruegg (2000: 169–171).

9.3. The Semantic Interpretation

If we consider the major dGe lugs pa commentaries on verse 29 it becomes evident that these usually regard Nāgārjuna's statement as elliptical. What Nāgārjuna *really* means when saying that he has no position, these commentaries claim, is that he has no positions that are non-empty.[14]

The key to understanding the point made in these commentaries lies of course in a precise understanding of what it means for a position or statement to be empty. An object is empty if it does not exist from its own side and is therefore dependent on other objects, so that its existence is not grounded in its "own-nature" (*svabhāva, rang bzhin*). The Buddhist commentarial tradition considers a variety of dependence relations in which objects stand and which prevent them from existing in a non-empty way. These dependence relations include causal dependence, dependence of a whole on its parts, as well as dependence on a cognizing subject.[15] While in the case of certain objects their independent existence seems at least a *prima facie* plausibility which the Mādhyamika then attempts to refute by appropriate arguments, the emptiness of statements appears to be entirely uncontroversial. Material objects might be considered to exist in causal and mereological dependence, but independent of a cognizing subject; abstract objects, platonistically conceived, will be assumed to be independent in all three ways. Statements, however, can hardly be taken to "exist from their own side" in any of the three senses.

As even Nāgārjuna's opponent affirms in VV 1, *token*[16] utterances are events that arise in dependence on causes and conditions like all other events. When we consider utterances as *types*, it is equally clear that, assuming a compositional semantics, these are mereologically dependent on their parts, since the meaning of the sentence type is a function of the meanings of its constituents or parts. Finally, considering a constituent like the expression "red," we realize that its referring to the color red is no property the word "red" has independent of everything else: the connection of this particular phonetic or typographic object with the property is a convention that holds for speakers of English; for speakers of French the same property is connected (by a different set of conventions) with "rouge," for speakers of Tibetan with "dmar po," and so forth. That

14. "It is not being said that the Mādhyamika has no theses; he merely has not theses that inherently exist." Hopkins (1983: 471). The same point is made in mKhas grub rje's commentary on this passage; see Ruegg (2000: 179).

15. See, e.g., Gyatso (2005: 66–69).

16. A particular utterance of a sentence is a sentence-token, what is expressed by several such utterances that say the same thing is a sentence-type.

"red" refers to the color red depends on a complex framework of conventions connecting a community of cognizing subjects that share a language. Unless we mistakenly consider "empty" to mean "false" or "meaningless" or "nonexistent," the claim that utterances conceived of as either tokens or types are *not* empty seems to be a position it is hard to make sense of.

Despite the *prima facie* strangeness of their claims, theories of the nonemptiness of language have found their defenders. Perhaps the most extreme example is the view of language defended by the Mīm. āmsākas.[17] A primary motivation of the Mīm. āmsā theory of language was to provide a justification of the authoritative status of the Vedas. As opposed to the Naiyāyikas, who justify the Vedas by their divine authorship, the Mīm. āmsākas regard them as authorless (*apauruṣeya*). The elements of the Vedic language are assumed to exist eternally, without the necessity of a speaker. Any particular human utterance of course depends on a phonetic or typographical instantiation of a piece of language, but the types thus instantiated exist *ante rem*, without depending on the tokens instantiating them. The referents of expressions, which the Mīm. āmsākas take to be eternal and unchanging universals, are related to these expressions via a set of objective and necessary relations.[18]

While the Mīm. āmsā view of language attracted plenty of criticism from the Buddhist side (centred around Dignāgas *apoha* theory),[19] there is no good evidence that this is the view Nāgārjuna's opponent in the VV wants to defend.[20]

There is, however, some interesting evidence that at least some of Nāgārjuna's Indian commentators saw him as opposed to similar conceptions of language. When commenting on MMK 2:8 in his *Prajñāpradīpa*, Bhāviveka raises the question why the verbal root *gam*, "to go," is used in its *ātmanepada* form "*gacchate*" rather than being conjugated in the usual *parasmaipada* manner as a "*gacchati*."[21] Bhāviveka lists a variety of quotations from Indian grammarians illustrating the perils of wrong grammar. When the god Tvaṣṭr created a serpent to destroy Indra, he exclaimed *indraśatrur vardhasva*, intending to say "May you prosper, destroyer of Indra!" Since he intended the compound to be a *tatpuruṣa*, it should have been stressed on the ultimate syllable. Unfortunately Tvaṣṭr stressed it on the first syllable, turning it into a *bahuvrīhi* meaning "having Indra as a destroyer." The words did what they meant rather than what Tvaṣtr intended them to mean, and Indra destroyed the snake, not the other way round.[22] Bhāviveka then continues to observe that Nāgārjuna's irregular use of *gacchate* not only was intentional, but served a philosophical purpose. By demonstrating that no disaster would strike from an irregular use of grammar, Nāgārjuna was aiming to convince his opponents to give up their attachment to mere words, together with the assumption that there was a substantial nature (*svarūpa*) of words which determined that they could appear only in certain grammatical forms.[23]

Nevertheless, for the purposes of interpreting the VV it makes better systematic sense to ascribe a different (and less extreme) theory than that to Nāgārjuna's opponent. According to this theory, whether a statement is empty or not does not depend on the mind-independent existence of language in some Platonic heaven but on the *semantics* we employ when interpreting the statement. Even if we accept that the link between "red" and the property of redness is conventional, this fact does not imply that we also think that the property of redness only has conventional existence as well. It can still be a property that exists in the world independent on human conventions and intentions. Moreover, even if the linkage of *particular words* to their referents should prove to be conventional, the linkage of entire sentences to the world might not be. For example we might suppose that the statement "The apple is red" is linked to the state of affairs it refers to by a relation of structural similarity, by their sharing of a common logical form, which in turn is not a product of convention. Once we have linked up the simple signs of our language with the simple objects in the world, we then do not need a *further* set of conventions to link up the complex signs (the sentences) with the complex objects (facts or states of affairs), in the same way as once we have settled by convention how the different chessmen are to move we do not have to bring in further conventions to decide whether a particular distribution of chessmen on the board will allow white to mate in five moves. This can be decided just by reference to the initial conventions, and in the same way the truth-conditions of a sentence such as "The apple is red" can be worked out by considering the simple signs it is made up of and how these are put together in the sentence.

17. The basic text of this school is Jaimini's *Pūrva Mīm. āmsā Sūtra*. For the Mīm. āmsā theory of language, see especially the first *adhyāya*, first *pada* of this text (Jaimini [1916: 1–22]). See also D'Sa (1980: 80–82, 113–140).

18. Sharma (1960: 220–222).

19. See Dreyfus (1997: 213–215).

20. That Nāgārjuna's opponent was a Naiyāyika (as claimed by Bhattacharya [1977: 265] and Bhattacharya et al. [1978: 1]) is supported by the close connection between the VV and the NS (Meuthrath [1999]). See Bhattacharya (1999: 124) for further references.

21. Ames (1995: 309). This form is not found in any version of Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* from which the Sanskrit text of the MMK is usually extracted. Here we just read "*gacchati*" (PP 97:14, see also de Jong [1978]). Only recently some fragments of older manuscripts of the MMK independent of the *Prasannapadā* have been discovered (see Ye [2006a; 2006b]). Unfortunately the verse in question is not among them. Nevertheless, recent palaeographical research strongly suggests that "*gacchate*" is indeed the correct reading MacDonald 2007: 32–33.

22. Ames (1995: 342, n. 65). Notes 64–70 provide very useful information for identifying some of the authors Bhāviveka quotes.

23. Ames (1995: 310).

In fact both the assumptions behind this picture of the non-emptiness of statements—the assumption that there is a "ready-made world," to borrow a phrase of Putnam's, and the assumption that there is a structural link between language and the world—are extremely widespread, so widespread indeed that we might refer to them jointly as the "standard picture." This standard picture provides us with a good idea of what is meant by the notion of *svabhāva* in the context of language, as opposed to an ontological understanding of *svabhāva* in terms of substance, or a cognitive understanding in terms of a superimposition (*samāropa*) which conceptualizes objects as permanent and observerindependent. The standard picture therefore represents the third, the semantic dimension of *svabhāva* mentioned in chapter 2.

It is evident that the standard picture does not sit well with the thesis of universal emptiness. Neither the existence of a world sliced up "at the joints" into particulars and properties nor the existence of an objective structural similarity between sentences and the world would be acceptable for the Mādhyamika. A Mādhyamika-compatible semantics would deny the existence of a world differentiated objectively into different logical parts and would try to replace the structure-based picture of the language-world link by a different one, perhaps by a theory built on speaker conventions.

There is good historical evidence that the standard picture is indeed what Nāgārjuna's opponent presupposes if we take into account how closely many of the arguments in the VV engage with the NS. Garfield[24] points out:

[I]n the Nyāya-influenced logico-semantic context in which these debates [in the VV] originate the dominant view of meaningful assertion (the one that Nāgārjuna calls into question) is one that from our vantagepoint can best be characterized as a version of Fregean realism: meaningful assertions are meaningful because they denote or express independently existent properties. A proposition is the pervasion of an individual entity or groups or entities by a real universal or sequence of universals.[25]

On this understanding of the emptiness of statements we can read the opponent as claiming in VV 1 that because of Nāgārjuna's thesis of universal emptiness, the Mādhyamika cannot accept the standard semantic interpretation for his utterances. For Nāgārjuna both questions of ontology (how the world is sliced up) and of semantics (how language and the world are linked) must be settled by appeal to conventions. The opponent, on the other hand, can assume that there is a "ready-made world," as well as an objective, structural way of linking this to our language.[26] Now the opponent argues that on this picture Nāgārjuna never gets out of his system of conventions to connect his claims with the things—and *that* is the reason why his claims are unable to refute the opponent's claims, which manage to connect with the things. Nāgārjuna's arguments can no more refute the opponent than the rain in a meteorological simulation can moisten real soil.[27] Nāgārjuna's opponent thus considers the interesting case of a language in which we have two kinds of statements: some are interpreted according to the standard semantics (referring via an objective reference relation to objects that exists independently of us), some are interpreted according to Nāgārjuna's semantics (which does not make these assumptions). The opponent argues that statements of the second kind could not possibly influence the first kind. To see this point, consider a similarly structured case. Assume we recognize two kinds of norms, norms that are real, objective, "out there," and norms that are the product of human convention. (Moral realists take certain ethical norms to be of the first kind, rules for the regulation of traffic are generally considered to be of the second kind). Now it is clear that although the two kinds of norms could be in conflict, a norm of the second kind could never override one of the first kind, since the former are part of the objective normative framework of the world while the latter are only a supplement of human design.

Although he does not explicitly say so, Nāgārjuna's arguments seem to imply that he agrees this situation would indeed be problematic. If there are two kinds of statements, the latter would be as impotent compared to the former as a film would be to reality: we could not escape the burning cinema by entering the scene projected onto the wall. Nāgārjuna counters the charge of impotence by denying that there are two kinds of statements, which differ like film and reality. All statements are to be interpreted in the same way, so that their interaction is not ontologically any more problematic than the interaction of different characters in a film.[28]

Understanding the emptiness of statements as their interpretation according to a non-standard semantics, we can also give a more interesting rendering

24. Garfield (1996: 12).

25. On the relation between the VV and the Nyāya school, see Oberhammer (1963), Bhattacharya (1977) and Meuthrath (1999). For some remarks on the realist background of the Navya-Nyāya see, Ingalls (1951: 1, 33–35).

26. Another manifestation of the Naiyāyika opponent's conception of a harmonious word-world link is the view that the simple terms of our language cannot fail to refer (as is discussed in chapter 3).

27. In VV(S) 43:2–6 the opponent claims, that "A fire that does not exist cannot burn, a weapon that does not exist cannot cut, water that does not exist cannot moisten; similarly a statement that does not exist cannot deny the *svabhāva* of all things." *na hy asatāgninā śakyam. dagdhum | na hy asatā śastreṇa śakyam. chettum | na hy asatībhir adbhiḥśakyaṃkledayitum | evam asatā vacanena na śakyah. sarvabhāvasvabhāvapratiṣedhah. kartum.*

28. See particularly VV 23, 27; MMK 17:31–33.

of the argument in VV 4. Remember that there the opponent claims that Nāgārjuna might want to say:

According to this very method, a negation of negation is also impossible; so your negation of the statement negating the intrinsic nature of all things is impossible.[29]

The opponent has just claimed that because Nāgārjuna's theory entailed a nonstandard semantics, his assertions did not manage to connect with the world and were therefore meaningless. But if the opponent then sets out to refute the thesis of universal emptiness, this attempt means either that he takes it to be meaningful after all (and therefore deserving refutation) or that the statement he wants to defend (which is the negation of Nāgārjuna's claim) is meaningless as well, since plugging in the word "not" will not help to turn nonsense into sense.

The opponent could reply to this charge by pointing out the difference between internal and external negation. While it is plausible to assume that the internal negation of a nonsensical statement is nonsensical too ("the number seven is *not* yellow [but rather some other color]" is as problematic as "the number seven is yellow"), this is not the case for an external negation ("*it is not the case that* the number seven is yellow" is not just meaningful but also generally taken to be necessarily true). Nāgārjuna's opponent could then claim that his negation of the claim of universal emptiness is external only and therefore not affected by the lack of meaning in the claim it negates.[30]

It is possible that the opponent had argued like this because a distinction between the different scopes of negation, as well as between the accompanying presuppositional and nonpresuppositional readings, was made in the philosophical literature of the time.[31] It has to be noted, however, that the passage in question fails to make any direct reference to different kinds of negation being involved.[32]

A more abstract way of employing the distinction between the two kinds of negation in the opponent's reply consists in rejecting Nāgārjuna's peculiar semantics. Here the opponent points out that he does not have to accept Nāgārjuna's semantics, since it is a particular characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) of Nāgārjuna's system but nothing the opponent would be forced to take on board.[33] The opponent negates not just Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness, but the entire non-standard semantics which comes with it. If *prasajya*-negation is seen as a presupposition-cancelling negation which negates not just a proposition but also that proposition's presuppositions,[34] and if the semantics according to which a speaker wants the set of his utterances interpreted is included among these presuppositions, denying a claim together with the semantics it comes with can be regarded as an example of *prasajya*-negation.

9.4. The Specific Role of Verse 29

It is interesting to note that verse 29, which is meant to be a reply to the opponent's argument given in verse 4, does not attempt a comeback in trying to argue that the opponent's negation of Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness is somehow impossible after all. Instead Nāgārjuna addresses a difficulty (*doṣa*) arising from the "specific character" of his system which the opponent raises at the end of verse 4.

In mKhas grub rje's *sTong thun chen mo*, an influential dGe lugs commentary which deals with the interpretation of this passage,[35] this difficulty is taken to be inconsistency. If Nāgārjuna assumed that his thesis of universal emptiness was non-empty itself (*rang bzhin gyis yod pa*) and, on our interpretation, would therefore have to be supplied with a semantics according to the standard picture, his position would be inconsistent (at least until he proposed a special reason why this statement should be excepted, which Nāgārjuna does not do). But, mKhas grub rje argues, since none of Nāgārjuna's claims of universal emptiness are taken to be non-empty, the difficulty of inconsistency does not arise.[36] The same point is made by Tsong kha pa:[37]

Therefore, the issue as to having or not having theses is not an argument about whether [Nāgārjuna] has them *in general*. It is an

29. *pratiṣedhapratiṣedho 'py anenaiva kalpenānupapannah. tatra yadbhavān sarvabhāvasvabhāvapratiṣedhavacanam. pratiṣedhayati tad anupapannam iti.* VV(S) 45:16–18.

30. Garfield (1996: 12) reads the argument in this way and argues that the opponent just wants to negate Nāgārjuna's position, without asserting the contrary.

31. For present purposes we can assume a (simplifying) identification of *paryudāsa* with internal negation and of *prasajyapratiṣedha* with external negation. For further differentiation, see Ruegg (2002: n. 6, 19–24) as well as the discussion in chapter 4, section 4.1.

32. Compare also the discussion in Ruegg (2000: 117).

33. "The objection applies only to the specific character of your proposition, not to that of mine. It is you who say all things are void, not I. The initial thesis is not mine." *tava hi pratijñālakṣaṇaprāptam. na mama | bhavān bravīti śūnyāh. sarvabhāvā iti nāham | pūrvakah. paks.o na mama*. VV(S) 45:19–66:2.

34. As, e.g., in Shaw (1978: 63–64).

35. See Ruegg (2000: 173–187) for a summary and analysis of the relevant part of the commentary.

36. 150a1–3: Ruegg (2000: 179).

37. *des na dam bca' yod med ni spyir yod med rtsod pa ma yin gyi | dngos po thams cad la rang bzhin med do zhes dam bcas pa'i tshig la rang bzhin yod med rtsod pa yin pas | de 'dra ba'i dam bcas pa'i tshig de la rang bzhin yod par khas blangs na dngos po thams cad rang bzhin med par dam bcas pa dang 'gal ba'i skyon nged la yod na'ng | nged de ltar mi 'dod pas skyon de nga la med* (1985: 687:13–17); (2000–2004: III:241).

argument as to whether the words of the thesis "all things lack intrinsic nature" have intrinsic nature. [Therefore the meaning of the lines from the VV is this:] If I accepted that the words of such a thesis had an intrinsic nature, then I could be faulted for contradicting the thesis that all things lack intrinsic nature, but because I do not accept that, I cannot be faulted.

What is unsatisfactory about this interpretation is that Nāgārjuna has already made the point ascribed to him here in verse 22. There he claims that his claim of universal emptiness is also empty, and he gives reasons why he thinks it can still have argumentative force, thus avoiding the charge of impotence. Unless we assume Nāgārjuna to be unnecessarily repetitive, it is not clear why we should assume that he makes the very same point once again a couple of verses later, and also formulates it in a much more obscure manner than the first time.

It is important to note that verses 21–28, which deal with the objections raised in the first three verses of the VV, are concerned primarily with solving the dilemma of inconsistency and impotence which is faced by Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness. Verse 29, however (*pace* mKhas grub and Tsong kha pa), is not again concerned with the thesis of universal emptiness. Nāgārjuna realizes that the twin problem of inconsistency and impotence is a problem not just for his thesis of universal emptiness, but for *any other claim* he holds as well. Any other claim either will face the problem of being a counterexample to Nāgārjuna's assertion that all claims should be given a non-standard semantics, or will fail to connect with the world in the way sentences with the standard semantics do, and will therefore be meaningless. I want to argue that this is the difficulty arising from the "specific character" of Nāgārjuna's system to which the opponent refers in verse 4 and which Nāgārjuna takes up again at the beginning of verse 29. He is not interested in defending the claim (attributed to him by the opponent in verse 4) that his thesis of universal emptiness could not possibly be negated. Instead he takes up the opponent's more important point that apart from defending his claim of universal emptiness from the twin problems of inconsistency and impotence, he should better say something about the status of his *other* assertions as well. This is why he says in verse 29 that none of his other assertions should be regarded as propositions with standard semantics (*pratijñā*) either.[38]

The plausibility of this interpretation rests on there being two meaning of "thesis" (*pratijñā*) in play here, one referring to theses with standard semantics (which Nāgārjuna rejects) and one refering to theses with nonstandard semantics (which Nāgārjuna does not reject). In fact there appears to be good textual evidence that the notion of "thesis" is indeed used in two different ways in Madhyamaka literature.

38. Oetke (2003: 468–471) reconstruction of Nāgārjuna's argument results in a different reading of verse 29; he argues that here Nāgārjuna claims that for the Mādhyamika there is no thesis to be made at the absolute level (*paramārtha*)—a reading entirely consistent with Nāgārjuna's other statements (e.g., MMK 18:9).

Candrakīrti's commentary on Nāgārjuna uses one sense of thesis (*pratijñā*) to refer to statements with clearly unproblematic status; indeed some utterances by Nāgārjuna himself are regarded as theses in this way,[39] while theses in another sense are firmly rejected. We might want to refer to the first kind of theses as *propositions*, and to the second as *views*. How are we to understand the distinction between them? It has been claimed that views are theses with philosophical or metaphysical commitments[40] and, more specifically, that they postulate an independently existing entity (*bhāva*).[41] Propositions, on the other hand, do not make such commitments and are therefore philosophically unproblematic. It is important to note at this point, however, that what distinguishes a view from a proposition is not just that the former asserts the existence of objects existing by *svabhāva* while the latter does not. On this understanding the statement "Object *x* does not depend in any way on any other object" would be a view concerning *x*, while "Object *x* stands in a variety of dependence relations with other objects" would not be. Ontological commitment comes into play only at the level of semantics. Whether someone asserting that the average man has 2.4 children is committed to an object that acts as the reference of the expression "the average man" depends on the semantics given. If we interpret the statement in the way statements such as "Paul has two children" are usually interpreted, such commitment to a strange man with partial children ensues; if, on the other hand, we read it (more plausibly) as a statement about ratios between the number of men and children in a certain set, there is no such commitment.

It therefore seems to be plausible to take the distinction between views and propositions and between theses with standard and non-standard semantics as coinciding. The views the Mādhyamika rejects are theses that are interpreted by referring to a ready-made world and a structural link between this world and our language. The propositions he takes to be unproblematic, and some of which he holds himself, are theses that are given a semantics that makes neither of these two assumptions.

39. For example, MMK 1:1 in PP 13:3. See Ruegg (1983: 213–214) for further examples. Oetke (2003: 458– 459), however, argues that the distinction between two senses of *pratijñā* arises only in the later Prāsan. gika literature and should not be read back into Nāgārjuna's works.

40. Sagal (1992: 83).

41. Ruegg (1983: 213).

Some support for this semantic interpretation of the difference between the two senses of “thesis” can be gained from MMK 13:8:

The Victorious Ones have announced that emptiness is the relinquishing of all views. Those who in turn hold emptiness as a view were said to be incurable.[42]

Although Nāgārjuna does not use the word *pratijñā* for “view” but rather talks of *dṛṣṭi*, it seems sensible to treat the two terms as synonymous in this context.[43] If the difference between propositions and views just depended on what the statement asserted, statements asserting the emptiness of some phenomenon such as “each spatio-temporal object depends causally on some other object” *ex hypothesi* could not be views, contrary to what Nāgārjuna says in the verse just cited. If, however, we treat “view” as denoting a statement together with the standard semantics, this is indeed possible. For if we read “each spatio-temporal object depends causally on some other object” as asserting the existence of various objectively existing individuals in the world, linked by a relation of causation, about which we speak by exploiting an objectively obtaining structural similarity between language and the world, it would indeed be turned into a view.

That the point at issue here is a specific (and, as Nāgārjuna sees it, inappropriate) conception of semantics is supported by Candrakīrti’s commentary on this verse. Candrakīrti argues that one taking emptiness to be a view is like one who, when being told by a shopkeeper that he has nothing to sell, asks the shopkeeper to sell him that nothing. The customer (like the White King in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*) treats “nothing” like a proper name and therefore expects it to denote a particular object, as proper names do. But though this view is justified by the surface grammar of the sentence concerned, it does not lead to an understanding of what the merchant wants to say. Similarly, giving a standard semantical interpretation of statements asserting emptiness does not lead to an understanding of what Nāgārjuna wants to say.[44]

The semantic interpretation outlined above provides a good way of making sense of verse 29 within the argumentative structure of the VV and also provides us with an idea of what a Madhyamaka theory of language would look like. What Nāgārjuna means when he says that he “has no thesis” is that none of his theoretical statements (including the claim of universal emptiness) is to be interpreted according to a semantics based on the standard picture. For the Mādhyamika no assertion is to be taken to refer to a ready-made world of mindindependent objects, nor can he assume that there is a structural similarity linking word and world which is independent of human conceptual activity.

42. *śūnyatā sarvadṛṣṭīnām. proktā nih. saraṇam. jinaih. / yeṣām. tu śūnyatādṛṣṭis tān asādhyān babhāṣire.*

43. As done by Ruegg (1986: 232–233) and Mabbett (1996: 301). For more details on the relation between the two terms *pratijñā* and *dṛṣṭi*, see Ruegg (2000: 129–136).

44. This interpretation does not imply, of course, that one could hold “any position at all” as long as one gives it the required nonstandard semantics, as Galloway (1989: n. 5, 27) asserts. A statement such as “Things arise from what is other than themselves” will be regarded as false by Nāgārjuna, independent of whether it is interpreted according to the standard or the non-standard semantics.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter III

चक्षुरादीन्द्रियपरीक्षा तृतीयं प्रकरणम्।

cakṣurādīndriyaparīkṣā nāma tṛtīyaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀六情品第三(八偈)

zhōng lùn guān liù qíng pǐn dì sān(bā jié;jì)

|དབང་པོ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་གསུམ་པའོ||

| dbaṅ po brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa (4)gsum pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER III - Examination of the Eye-faculty, etc.

JONES (Skt):
3. The Senses

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of the Faculty of Eye

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
3. Analysis of the Eye, etc., the Faculties

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[3] Examination of Eyes and other Sense organs (8 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Vision and the Other Sense Faculties

STRENG (Skt):
Section 3 - An Analysis of "Vision" and Other Sense-Faculties (the sense-fields) In 9 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
3. the sense-faculties (perception).

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 3. Contemplation of the six sense-faculties 8 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of the Sense Organs

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER III - Analysis of the Sense Sources

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter III: Examination of the Senses

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER III - Examination of the Senses

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of the Senses

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 3: AN EXAMINATION OF THE SOURCES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

PINGALA COMMENTARY

3/0 Question: In the sutras it says that there are six sense faculties, namely;

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter V]

Some might interject here that although motion, the one in motion and the space traversed do not in fact exist, nevertheless the existence of the one who sees, the object of sight and seeing itself should be accepted because this is established in the authoritative commentaries (Abhidharma). There it is said,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Three Examination of the Faculty of Eye (Caksur-indriya-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter III Examination of the Senses

In this chapter, which is most immediately about vision, Nāgārjuna really addresses the status of sense perception generally, as he makes clear in the opening and closing verses. Just as in Chapter II, where the target positions Nāgārjuna argues against are positions according to which motion and the mover inherently exist as distinct, independent, but somehow related entities, here he argues against positions according to which the sense faculties, the sense organs, the subject of sensory experience, and the sense object inherently exist and are distinct, independent, but somehow related entities. For we do perceive motion and change, and the argument for the conventional existence of motion did suggest that it could be seen as a relation between the positions at which we perceive objects at different times. So one can imagine an opponent saying, “Even if the motion we perceive is not real, the perception must be.” Again, it will be important for Nāgārjuna that his analysis of perception as empty of inherent existence, and as merely dependently arisen, does not entail its complete nonexistence. He must, that is, steer a middle path between reification and nihilism using emptiness as his compass.

Kārikā III.1

दर्शनं श्रवणं घ्राणं रसनं स्पर्शनं मनः।
इन्द्रियाणि षडेतेषां द्रष्टव्यादीनि गोचरः॥१॥

LVP 113,5-6 - LVP 122,9
darśanaṃ śravaṇaṃ ghrāṇaṃ rasanaṃ sparśanaṃ manaḥ |
indriyāṇi ṣaḍ eteṣāṃ draṣṭavyādīni gocaraḥ ||1||

眼耳及鼻舌 身意等六情
此眼等六情 行色等六塵

T1564: vol 30, pg 5c15
yǎn ěr jí bí shé shēn yì děng liù qíng
cǐ yǎn děng liù qíng xíng sè děng liù chén

།ལྟ་དང་ཉན་དང་སྣོམ་པ་དང་། །མྱོང་བར་བྱེད་དང་རེག་བྱེད་ཡིད། །
།དབང་པོ་དྲུག་སྟེ་དེ་དག་གི། །སྤྱོད་ཡུལ་བལྟ་བར་བྱ་ལ་སོགས། །

Tg tsa 3a7 - Tg tsa 3b3-4
|| lta daṅ ñan daṅ snom pa daṅ | | myoṅ bar byed daṅ reg byed yid |
| dbaṅ po drug ste de dag gi | | spyod yul blta bar bya la sogs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - The six sense faculties are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking. These have their respective fields of action, such as, what is to be seen, etc.

JONES (Skt):
[1] The six senses are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and the mind. Their domains are what is seeable, and so forth.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and mind are the six faculties. Their spheres consist of the object of seeing, etc.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking are the six faculties and the sphere, their objects of seeing, etc.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. Function to see, function to hear, function to smell,
Function to taste, function to touch, and function of central sense perception.
Those six kinds of sense functions are very familiar to us,
And what has been seen, and so forth, are the objects of sense functions.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 Vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, thought are the six senses. Their objects are the visible, the audible and so on.

STRENG (Skt):
1. Vision, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thought Are the six sense faculties. The area of their concern is that which is seen heard, smelled and so forth.

BOCKING (Ch):
3v1 The faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue,
Body and mind.
These six faculties, the eye and so forth,
Go with the six objects, of form and so on.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Seeing and hearing and smelling and tasting and touching, mind are the six sense organs; their experienced objects are what-is-seen and so forth.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Sight, hearing, smell,
Taste, touch, and cognition—
The experiential domain of these six faculties
Are the objects that are seen and so forth. [III.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Seeing, hearing, smelling,
Tasting, touching, and mind
Are the six sense faculties.
Their spheres are the visible objects, etc....

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Seeing, hearing, smelling,
Tasting, touching, and mind
Are the six faculties.
Their spheres are the visible objects, etc.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[The traditional understanding is:] Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking are the six senses. Their fields consist of sights, etc.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

3/1 In this case, the eye constitutes the inner faculty and form the outer object, and the eye can see forms, and so on up to mind is the inner faculty, dharmas the outer object and the mind cognizes dharmas.

Reply: Not so, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

It follows that vision and the other senses are self-existent.

The concept of vision is unintelligible

We reply that they do not so exist. According to this way of thinking the act of seeing (pasyati) is vision (*darsana*) and this is eyesight (*caksu*). What the eye sees is said to be object. That vision does not see anything as object (*rupa*) Nagarjuna expounds in this way:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Although the traditional Adhidharma classification lists the "aggregates" (skandha), "spheres" (ayatana), and "elements" (dhatu) in that order, for Nagarjuna, the epistemology, the faculties (included under spheres) were more important, primarily because of the current controversies surrounding the concept of existence (dharma). Furthermore, even in the discussion of faculties, Nagarjuna was not so much interested in the faculties per se, for there was not much controversy regarding the eye, etc. No school doubted the existence of these faculties. The controversies were centered more on the function of the faculties, that is, with regard to seeing, hearing, smelling, tasing, touch, and thinking. For this reason, after providing a title for the chapter as "Examination of the Faculties" (Indriya-pariksa). Nagarjuna immediately moves on to an analysis of the more complicated issues relating to their functions. Hence the reference to seeing, hearing, etc., especially as means of identification of events (see, e.g., P. F. Strawson, Individuals, New York: Doubleday, 1963, p ff.) that is so important for an empiricist like Nagarjuna. Even among these various faculties and their functions, the most important epistemological issues were connected with seeing. Hence Nagarjuna's interest in the problem of seeing or visual perception. Note that the term manah is used here to refer to the function, even though manana would be more appropriate in the context. This may have been done to preserve the metre.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. This is a standard Buddhist catalog of the sense faculties. It differs from the standard Western catalog only in that the Buddhists regard introspection literally as an inner sense with the same epistemic structure as outer senses and presumably subserved by analogous physical structures. Nāgārjuna will not dispute the reality of these faculties or of their respective spheres. But he will insist that that reality must be characterized interdependently and conventionally.

Kārikā III.2

स्वमात्मानं दर्शनं हि तत्तमेव न पश्यति।
न पश्यति यदात्मानं कथं द्रक्ष्यति तत्परान्॥२॥

svam ātmānaṃ darśanaṃ hi tat tam eva na paśyati |
na paśyati yad ātmānaṃ kathaṃ drakṣyati tat parān ||2||

是眼則不能 自見其己體
若不能自見 云何見餘物

shì yǎn zé bù néng zì jiàn qí jǐ tǐ
ruò bù néng zì jiàn yún hé jiàn yú wù

།ལྟ་དེ་རང་གི་བདག་ཉིད་ནི། །དེ་ལ་ལྟ་བ་མ་ཡིན་ཉིད།
།གང་ཞིག་བདག་ལ་མི་ལྟ་བ། །དེ་དག་གཞན་ལ་ཇི་ལྟར་ལྟ།

| lta de raṅ gi bdag ñid ni | | de la lta ba ma yin ñid |
| gaṅ źig bdag la mi lta ba | | de dag gźan la ji ltar lta |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 (Nagarjuna asserts) - The seeing activity, indeed, does not see its own self. If it cannot see its own self, how is it possible to see other (things).

JONES (Skt):
[2] Seeing does not see itself. How can what does not see itself see other things?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Seeing does not perceive itself, its own form. How can that which does not perceive itself, see others?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, seeing does not see itself.
How can that which does not see itself see others?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. The function of our own mind is also the object to be seen,
Because even the subject to see and the object to be seen are both actually the objects to be seen.
What can not be seen has been our own mind,
Why such a concrete thing has become to be seen so distant?

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 Vision does not see itself. How can something which does not see itself see other things?

STRENG (Skt):
2. Certainly vision does not in any way see its own self. Now if it does not see its own self, how can it possibly see something else?

ROBINSON (Skt):
Seeing does not see itself. When it does not see itself, how can it see others?

BOCKING (Ch):
3v2 The eye is unable
By itself to see itself.
If it is unable to see itself
How can it possibly see anything else?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Seeing does not see itself. How can what does not see itself see anything else?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Sight does indeed not see
Its own identity.
How can something that does not see itself
See anything else either? [III.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. That very seeing does not see
Itself at all.
How can something that cannot see itself
See another?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. That very seeing does not see
Itself at all.
How can something that cannot see itself
See another?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[Nagarjuna asserts:] Seeing does not see sight itself. How can sight which cannot see itself, see others?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

3/2 The eye cannot see its own self. Why not? Just as a lamp, shining by itself is able to illuminate something else, so the eye, if it had this characteristic of seeing, should see both itself and other things. But in fact this is not the case. So, in the verse he says: when the eye does not see itself, how can it see other things?

Question: Even, though the eye cannot see itself, yet it can see other things. Fire, for instance can bum other things without burning itself.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

He means that the very act of vision does not see itself because it is contradictory that an act (*kriya*) should be directed at itself. It follows from vision not seeing itself that it does not see colours and such things; and hearing and the other senses are the same. There is, therefore, no such thing as vision.

It may be argued that although vision cannot see itself, nevertheless it can see other things. Even as fire burns other things but not itself, so vision will see other things but not itself. But this does not make sense either, as

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna was clearly aware of the major controversy raging among the adherents of the various "essentialist" schools regarding the problem of perception. In their search for certainty, these essentialist schools assumed that in any act of perception the "most clear and distinct" is the perception of "oneself." (see Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 1.4.1). "I think, therefore, I am" (cogito ergo sum) was the premise with which the essentialist thinkers of pre-Buddhist India began their exposition of perception. The Buddha was himself aware of the difficulties involved in such an assumption when he advised his disciples not to follow such speculations (manta asmiti sabbam uparundhe, Sn 916). While the Buddha was willing to recognize consciousness or "self-consciousness" (vinnana ,vijnana) as an important constituent of the human personality as well as its experiences, he was not willing to assume a metaphysical substratum such as the "self" or "I" as being the object of such awareness. He was clearly aware that this latter epistemological method was the source of most obsessive conceptions (mulam papancasankhaya, ibid.). However, the later Buddhist metaphysicians, innocently unaware of the implications of such a method, seem to have been led in that direction, thereby dragging themselves into the quagmire of svabhava-metaphysics from which they could not easily get out. The result was the description of perception in the Vibhasaprabhavrtti (p. 32):

The substance called the eye is of the nature of that which sets. In it is produced an action of seeing, when its power is awakened on account of the emergence of the totality of its causes and conditions. The eye does not apprehend independently of consciousness (vijnana), not does eye-consciousness know the object unsupported by the active eye. Eye as well as eye-consciousness, with the help of accessories such as light, cooperate simultaneously toward bringing the perception of an object. The object, the eye, the eye-consciousness, and the light, cooperate simultaneously toward bringing the perception of an object. The object, the eye, the eye-consciousness, and the light, all manifest their power, i.e., become active and flash forth simultaneously. The object appears, the eye sees, and the eyeconsciousness knows it. This is called the direct knowledge of an object. [Emphasis mine] Reading through the present chapter of Nagarjuna, one can hardly miss the target of his criticism if one were to keep in mind the above passage of the Vibhasaprabhavrtti . These problems will be discussed in their contexts. However, before taking up the metaphysical issues involved in the above sort of description, Nagarjuna needed to eliminate the very source of such metaphysics, namely, the cogito. For Nagarjuna, the method by which one arrives at the cogito not only leads to the belief in a "sva atman", but also the sharp dichotomy between "self" (sva atman) and "other" (para atman). Therefore, having stated positively that there is no "seeing of oneself" (svam atmanam darsanam), Nagarjuna raises question as to the possibility of "seeing an other" (param). Thus, the dichotomy between self and other in a more metaphysical form is not only ethically unacceptable, but also epistemologically unfounded.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. This cryptic argument is aimed at any theory according to which vision is inherently existent. The idea is this: If the visual faculty were to be inherently existent, then seeing would be its essence. Its action would hence require no distinct conditions and no external object to be seen. That is, if vision were inherently existent, vision would occur simply in virtue of the existence of the visual faculty. Suppose then that there is an inherently existent visual faculty and no external sense object for it. It would then have only itself as a possible object of sight, yet it would be seeing and so would have to be seeing itself. Therefore, Nāgārjuna argues, a view of vision as inherently existent would entail the possibility of visual apperception. But there is no such possibility. So the fact that vision can see other things cannot be in virtue of its containing percipience as an inherent property.

There is also a plausible Pyrrhonian interpretation of this verse: The point of a sensory faculty is to make knowledge possible. But that is only possible if the data the faculty provides are themselves perceived. But the data that the visual faculty delivers are visual. If they themselves are to be perceived, one would require either another visual faculty, hence generating a vicious regress, or apperception by vision, which is absurd. The point is not then that vision is impossible, but rather that visual perception - or any kind of perception - can only be completely explained and characterized by reference to things outside of the visual faculty itself. Vision is relational, and not an intrinsically identifiable phenomenon. (fn 40. I am indebted to the Yen. Gen Lobzang Gyatso for my reading of this verse. Kalupahana (1986) reads this quite differently - as an empiricist rejection of a Cartesian cogito argument. While I agree that Nāgārjuna has no sympathy with a Cartesian position, to see this verse as articulating an empiricist view with regard to self-knowledge seems unmotivated.)

Kārikā III.3

न पर्याप्तोऽग्निदृष्टान्तो दर्शनस्य प्रसिद्धये।
सदर्शनः स प्रत्युक्तो गम्यमानगतागतैः ॥३॥

na paryāpto ’gnidṛṣṭānto darśanasya prasiddhaye |
sadarśanaḥ sa pratyukto gamyamānagatāgataiḥ ||3||

火喻則不能 成於眼見法
去未去去時 已總答是事

huǒ yù zé bù néng chéng yū;yú;wū yǎn jiàn fǎ
qù wèi qù qù shí yǐ zǒng dā shì shì

།ལྟ་བ་རབ་ཏུ་བསྒྲུབ་པའི་ཕྱིར།།མེ་ཡི་དཔེས་ནི་ནུས་མ་ཡིན།
།སོང་དང་མ་སོང་བགོམ་པ་ཡིས།།དེ་ནི་ལྟ་བཅས་ལན་བཏབ་པོ།།

| (3b1)lta ba rab tu bsgrub pa’i phyir | | me yi dpes ni nus ma yin |
| soṅ daṅ ma soṅ bsgom pa yis | | de ni lta bcas lan btab po |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - The example of the fire (i.e., which burns material but does not burn itself) is not adequate enough to establish the seeing activity. The fire example and the seeing activity can be refuted (analogically) by the concepts of "present passing away," "that which has transpired," and "that which has not transpired."

JONES (Skt):
[3] The counter-example that fire can burn other things but cannot burn itself does not apply. Rather, the above analysis of motion applies to both fire and seeing.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The example of fire is not adequate for the establishment of seeing. That [fire] together with seeing are refuted by [a refutation of] the present moving, the moved and the not moved.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The example of fire [which burns but does not bum itself] is not sufficient for the explanation of seeing.
That, and seeing, is refuted by the already gone, the present process of going and the not yet gone.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. What we have got relying upon our own enormous efforts,
Are different from a simple fire, which we have got easily,
What has been seen is perfectly opposite to what has been spoken.
What have been spoken are usually very abstract like "Is Going," "Have gone," or "Haven't gone yet."

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 The example of fire is not conclusive for proving the reality of vision. Like vision it is refuted by the analysis of movement, past, present and future.

STRENG (Skt):
3. An understanding of vision is not attained through the example of fire which, itself, burns. On the contrary, that example of fire together with vision is refuted by the analysis of "present going to," "that which is already gone to," and "that which is not yet gone to."

BOCKING (Ch):
3v3 The example of fire cannot establish anything
About eyes and seeing
In the contemplation of present, past and future going
We have already dealt with this topic.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The example of fire is not able to fully establish seeing. It, along with seeing, has been refuted by “gone”, “not gone” and “going.”

DOCTOR (Tb):
A solid establishment of sight cannot
Be provided through the example of fire.
With what was, has yet to be, and is being traversed
We have replied to that along with sight. [III.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. The example of fire
Cannot elucidate seeing.
Along with the moved and not-moved and motion
That has been answered.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. The example of fire
Cannot elucidate seeing.
That, along with seeing has been dealt with
Through the analysis of the gone, the not-gone, and the going.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The example of fire does not explain seeing. Fire, as well as seeing, are refuted as present moving, the moved and the not-moved are refuted.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

3/3 Although you offer the example of fire, this cannot illustrate anything about eyes and seeing. This topic has already been dealt with in the chapter on going and coming. Just as in what has already gone there is no going, and in what has not yet- gone there is no going and in the moment of going there is no going, so in the already-burnt, not-yet-burnt and moment of burning there is no burning at all. Likewise in the already seen, the not-yet-seen and the moment of seeing, no characteristic of 'seeing' can be found at all. Again:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

3ab *The example of fire is not conclusive for proving the reality of vision.*

Nagarjuna means that the example of fire adduced to prove the reality of vision is not conclusive, that is, it is not appropriate, not adequate and is not logically tenable. For

3cd *Like vision it is refuted by the analysis of movement, past, present and future.*

'Like vision' means 'along with vision'. This example of fire adduced to establish the reality of vision is refuted, along with vision, for which it stood as the example. You may ask how it is refuted. By the analysis of movement, past, present and future: what has been traversed is not in motion, nor is what has not been traversed, nor is what is being traversed. The same can be said of fire: what has been burned by fire is not being burned nor is what has not been burned, and so on (fn 1 See Chapter XI, 'Fire and Fuel'). As what has been traversed, what is at rest, and what is traversing are not in motion, similarly: 'Neither what has been seen nor, emphatically, what has not been seen is being seen. And what is just being seen, as something wholly other than the seen and the not seen, is not being seen.' (fn 2 This quotation has the form of a *kārikā*, but it is not so treated by Candrakīrti.)

As was said, 'The mover does not move', and so on, so it can be said 'the agent of burning is not burned', and so on. Similarly 'the one seeing does not see', is entailed, on the model of fire, by the analysis of motion. As there is the same fault, the proof of the reality (siddhi) of vision makes as little sense as the proof of fire. So it is established that, as vision cannot see itself, it cannot see other things either. This being so, then

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

While those who accepted the cogito assumed that seeing oneself precedes any act of seeing, their opponents seem to have used the example of the fire to maintain that, like fire which burns everything but itself, seeing perceives everything else but itself.

The theory of moments (ksana) that led to metaphysics in the sphere of causation (Chapter I) and change (Chapter II) did not leave the problem of perception untouched. Indeed, it was the problem of perception that was most affected by a theory of moments, as is evident from the variety of contradictory theories of perception presented by the Sarvastivadins, the Sautrantikas and the Theravadins (see Kalupahana, Buddhist Philosophy, p).

Being aware of this fact, Nagarjuna takes the easy route of referring to his previous refutation of change (Chapter II). Hence Candrakīrti's composition of a verse comparable to II. 1: What has been seen is not being seen; what has not been seen is also not being seen. Apart from the seen and the not seen, the present seeing is also not seen."

The same can be said of that which is burnt (dagdhvam), etc. This is what Nagarjuna means when he says: "That [fire] together with seeing are refuted by [a refutation of] the present moving, the moved and the not moved."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. This is a reply to a standard substantialist counterexample to a Madhyamika analysis, specifically: Fire burns other things, but does not burn itself. And it can be intrinsically identified. Perhaps then vision is like fire, in that it can see others but not itself, while it does not need to be relationally identified. This example is a standard in early Buddhist debates about intrinsic versus relational identity, and Nāgārjuna devotes an entire chapter to its refutation as a dialectical device (Chapter X), arguing there that fire cannot be intrinsically identified. But at this point, he is willing to

grant the opponent that premise for the sake of argument. For, he claims, its utility as an analogy has already been undermined by the argument in the second chapter.

How? Whatever fire is burning must be burned in the past, the future, or the present. But, as with motion, burning cannot be, by its very nature, in the past, on pain of regress. Nor can it be in the future for the same reason. But burning cannot take place in the present either, for there is not enough time in an instant for anything to burn. Mutatis mutandis for vision. In the case of vision, for Nāgārjuna, there is a further problem with vision of another in the present. The visual process - and any sensory process - takes time. So if vision is seeing another thing, the other thing is already past. The only thing that vision could see in the present is a visual sense-impression. But then we are back to the problem of visual apperception. So even if fire were intrinsically identifiable, there is no point at which it could burn another. And if vision were intrinsically identifiable, there would be no moment at which it could see another.

Kārikā III.4

नापश्यमानं भवति यदा किंचन दर्शनम्।
दर्शनं पश्यतीत्येवं कथमेतत्तु युज्यते॥४॥

nāpaśyamānaṃ bhavati yadā kiṃ cana darśanam |
darśanaṃ paśyatīty evaṃ katham etat tu yujyate ||4||

見若末見時 則不名為見
而言見能見 是事則不然

jiàn ruò wèi jiàn shí zé bù míng wéi jiàn
ér yán jiàn néng jiàn shì shì zé bù rán

།གང་ཚེ་ཅུང་ཟད་མི་ལྟ་བར།།ལྟ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།
།བལྟ་བས་ལྟ་བར་བྱེད་ཅེས་བྱར།།དེ་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་རིགས་པར་འགྱུར།།

| gaṅ tshe cuṅ zad mi lta ba | | lta bar byed pa ma yin no |
| lta bas lta bar byed ces byar | | de ni ji ltar rigs par 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - As a seeing activity which is presently not seeing is nonexistent, how is it justifiable to speak of a seeing activity which sees?

JONES (Skt):
[4] When no seeing exists at all that is not currently occurring, how can we say that "seeing sees"?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When some form of seeing that is not perceiving does not exist, how pertinent is the view that seeing perceives?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If there is seeing which is not presently in the process of seeing,
then how can this statement "seeing sees" obtain?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. The situations, which are different from what we are just looking at something, can never exist actually.
In such a situation, the ability to look at things and phenomena, can never exist at all.
The function to see, has ability to look at like this,
Therefore how is it possible for the facts here can be attached actually?

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 As there can be no vision at all which is not actively seeing, how can it make sense to say vision sees?

STRENG (Skt):
4. When no vision occurs, nothing whatsoever is being seen. How, then, is it possible to say: Vision sees?

BOCKING (Ch):
3v4 Seeing, before the moment of seeing,
is not called seeing.
But you say that 'seeing' can see.
This is not so

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When not seeing the slightest thing, there is no act of seeing. How can it [then] be reasonable to say: "seeing sees"?

DOCTOR (Tb):
When nothing at all is seen,
Neither is there one that sees.
"Sight is what performs seeing"
How could this be right? [III.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. When there is not even the slightest
Nonseeing seer,
How could it makes sense to say
That seeing sees?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. When there is not the slightest seeing,
There is no seer.
How could it makes sense to say
That in virtue of seeing, it sees?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When there is no seer who does not see, what sense would it make to say that seeing sees?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

3/4 When the eye is not yet confronted with the visible form, then it cannot see it. At this juncture we do not call it 'seeing'. It is because of the confrontation with form that we call it 'seeing'. This is why it says in the verse: before there is seeing, there is no seeing. So how can we see by means of seeing? Moreover, within these two events there is no dharma of seeing, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

As, that is, there cannot be any vision at all which does not see (*apasyan*) — because there is no relation between the power of vision and an unseeing thing like a post - to say 'vision' is 'what sees' does not make sense (fn 3 The thought is: vision, distinct from an agent and an object of vision, is unintelligible; or vision is seeing.). Although the text has, for reasons of metre, 'vision sees', in exposition one should read it 'how can it make sense to say "vision" "sees" '.

Further, in this way of thinking to say ' "vision" is "what sees" ' is to suppose a connection of an act of seeing with the sense of sight, either as endowed or not endowed with self-existent vision (*darsanasvabhava*).

Nagarjuna explains that neither possibility makes sense:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The essentialist definition of "seeing" as possessing the "nature of seeing" (darsana-svabhava) is tantamount to saying that "seeing always sees." This, indeed, is the statement with which the Sarvastivada (specifically Vaibhasika) began its description of perception, as indicated by the quotation referred to in the note to III.2. In other words, it is not possible to recognize any form of seeing that is "not presently perceiving" (na apasyamanam), or there cannot be a "non-seeing perception." If such be the definition, Nagarjuna raises a question regarding the appropriateness of the statements, "Seeing perceives."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. When all there is to vision is visual perception, what is the motivation for positing an entity to undertake the process of perception? All there is to vision is the perceptual process: We don't need to posit an entity - the visual faculty over and above the set of interdependent phenomena that subserve vision. The desire to do so is of a piece with the more general substantialist imperative to posit an independent substratum to support every capacity or property.

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Kārikā III.5

पश्यति दर्शनं नैव नैव पश्यत्यदर्शनम्।
व्याख्यातो दर्शनेनैव द्रष्टा चाप्युपगम्यताम्॥५॥

paśyati darśanaṃ naiva naiva paśyaty adarśanam |
vyākhyāto darśanenaiva draṣṭā cāpy avagamyatām ||5||

見不能有見 非見亦不見
若已破於見 則為破見者

jiàn bù néng yǒu jiàn fēi jiàn yì bù jiàn
ruò yǐ pò yū;yú;wū jiàn zé wéi pò jiàn zhě

།ལྟ་བ་ལྟ་ཉིད་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།།ལྟ་བ་མིན་པ་མི་ལྟ་ཉིད།
།ལྟ་བ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ལྟ་བ་པོའང༌།།རྣམ་པར་བཤད་པར་ཤེས་པར་བྱ།།

| lta ba lta ñid ma (2)yin te | | lta ba min pa mi lta ñid |
| lta ba ñid kyis lta ba po'aṅ | | rnam par bśad par śes par bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - The seeing activity does not see nor does a non-seeing activity. Again, it must be admitted that the seeing agent which relies upon the seeing activity has already been explained.

JONES (Skt):
[5ab] Seeing does not see, nor does non-seeing see. [5cd] In addition, the seer could only be explained by means of seeing.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Seeing does not perceive, nor does non-seeing perceive. One should admit that a seer is explained by [the analysis of] seeing itself.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Seeing does not see nor does nonseeing see.
And moreover, the seer has been explained above by and as the seeing.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. The ability to look at others, can never be seen by others,
And at the same time the ability, which does not have any ability to look at anything others at all, has no ability to look at too.
The explanations in detail can be done by a person, who looks at everything carefully,
And a person, who can look at everything well, is truly a person, who can be actually well in approaching the object.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 Neither vision as such nor non-vision as such is what sees. It must be accepted that the seer is accounted for as was vision itself.

STRENG (Skt):
5. Therefore, vision does not see, and "no-vision" does not see. Nevertheless, it is explained that also the "seer" is to be known only by his vision.

BOCKING (Ch):
3v5 Seeing cannot see
And non-seeing cannot see
Since we have already refuted seeing
This amounts to a refutation of a seer also.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Seeing does not see; non-seeing does not see. It should be understood that seeing explains the seer too.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Sight does not see,
Yet nonsight does not see either.
Know that sight itself
Also explains the one that sees. [III.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. Seeing itself does not see.
Nonseeing itself does not see.
Through seeing itself
The clear analysis of the seer is understood.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. Seeing does *not* see.
Nonseeing does *not* see.
Through seeing itself
The analysis of the seer is understood.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Neither seeing nor non-seeing see. It is through the careful examination of seeing itself that the seer is accounted for.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

3/5 Seeing cannot see, for reasons explained in our refutation of errors. Non-seeing cannot see because it possesses no characteristic of seeing, and when there is no characteristic of seeing how can there be seeing? Where no dharma of seeing exists, no seer exists either, and why? if there were seers who existed apart from seeing, then those without eyes should also be able to see, using their other faculties. If we saw by means of seeing, then the characteristic of seeing would exist within the act of seeing. But the one who sees is not the characteristic of seeing. This is why it says in the verse: when we refute seeing, this implies a refutation of the seer. Again :

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

5ab *Neither vision as such nor non-vision as such is what sees.*

It is not logically possible (*nopapadyate*) to add the idea 'it sees' to a self-existent vision which is by nature the activity of seeing; because this would imply that both the act of seeing and vision are uselessly duplicated. Nor does non-vision see because it is devoid of the activity of seeing as are things like the tip of the finger. This is the meaning.

If 'Neither vision as such nor non-vision as such is what sees' then, '. . . how can it make sense to say "vision" "sees"?' In this way we see the connected thought.

Some, however, think that there are imperishable elements (*dharmamatra*) (fn 4 "Vision', for example. This is a view of the Vaibhasika school of Buddhism. The elements become 'active' on entering into existence.) which enter into existence, but are inactive at the moment when they do so. No one sees any object if there is no activity of seeing. They think that what we are trying to prove, namely, that 'vision does not see' is already established.

Our answer to this is that if an activity does not exist as a factor in the transactional world (*vyavaharahgabhuta*) then there is no corresponding imperishable element either. Being destitute of activity, like the sky-flower, how can such a dormant, imperishable element exist? So, if, for the transactional world one should accept that, given an imperishable element, there must be activity as well so, for the way things truly are (*tattvacinta*), one must acknowledge that even as there is no activity there is no imperishable element either.

As Aryadeva says in the Catuhsataka: 'Nothing eternal has activity, nor is there activity in the all-pervading; yet the non- active is like the non-existent. Wiry do you not value what is neither (*nairatmya*)?'

And so this stricture is not an obstacle; nor do we incur the fault of proving the obvious.

The concept of an agent of vision is unintelligible

But our opponent objects. We do not suppose that vision derives its name from being the agent of seeing (*karta*); rather it derives its name from being the means of seeing. So we do not incur the fault you charge us with. The one who, by vision as the means, sees something is the seer (*drasta*) which is either consciousness or an enduring self. Because the agent of vision truly exists, vision is proved as well.

Nagarjuna replies

5cd *It must be accepted that the seer is accounted for as was vision itself.*

As the inadequacy of the concept of vision was shown in the verse beginning, 'Vision does not see itself, so the inadequacy of the concept seer should be understood in the same way. The following quotation, among others, bears on the subject: 'The seer does not see himself by means of vision. How will something which does not see itself see other things?' (fn 5 i.e. the very notion of 'one who sees' yields no sense. Cf. *Kārikā* 2, p. f.)

Thus the agent, like vision itself, has been proved not to exist.

Our opponent objects. The seer does exist because the object of seeing (*karma*) and the means of seeing (*karana*) exist intact. That is, there can be neither object nor means of something, for example the son of a barren woman, which does not exist. But the means exist, namely, the act of vision and the object as well, namely, the thing seen. Therefore an agent whose means and whose object factually exist does himself exist, like one who splits wood.

We reply. There is no object of vision (*drastavya*) and no act of vision (*darsana*); so how could there be an agent of vision (drasta)? Object and act require an agent. On being investigated, however,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

After explaining the difficulties involved in the statement, "Seeing perceives," here Nagarjuna insists that it is not possible to assert that "non-seeing perceives." Just as much as a substantial event like "seeing" cannot be appropriately explained, even so a substantial entity like a "seer" (drastr) also can- not be established. The rejection of the latter follows from the refutation of the former. This point is further elaborated in the following verse.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. Perception is not accomplished by any independent entity known as vision. But that doesn't mean that things that are incapable of sight thereby perceive. In order to know what the proper subject of vision is, it is important to undertake a careful analysis of the perceptual process and not simply to posit a faculty with the nature of vision.

Kārikā III.6

तिरस्कृत्य द्रष्टा नास्त्यतिरस्कृत्य च दर्शनम्।
द्रष्टव्यं दर्शनं चैव द्रष्टर्यसति ते कुतः॥६॥

[tiraskṛtya] draṣṭā nāsty atiraskṛtya tiraskṛtya ca darśanam |
draṣṭavyaṃ darśanaṃ ceva draṣṭary asati te kutaḥ ||6||
[Note: "tiraskṛtya" reconstructed from the Tibetan by LVP]

離見不離見 見者不可得
以無見者故 何有見可見

lí jiàn bù lí jiàn jiàn zhě bù kě dé;děi;de
yǐ wú jiàn zhě gù hé yǒu jiàn kě jiàn

|མ་སྤངས་ལྟ་པོ་ཡོད་མིན་ཏེ||ལྟ་བ་སྤངས་པར་གྱུར་ཀྱང་ངོ་|
|ལྟ་པོ་མེད་ན་བལྟ་བྱ་དང་||ལྟ་བ་དེ་དག་ག་ལ་ཡོད||

| ma spaṅs lta po yod min te | | lta ba spaṅs par gyur kyaṅ ṅo |
| lta po med na blta bya daṅ | | lta bde dag ga la yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - The seeing agent does not exist whether it is with or without the seeing activity. Since it does not exist, where can the seeing activity and the object to be seen be?

JONES (Skt):
[6] There is no seer apart from seeing, nor not apart from seeing - when there is no seer, how can there be "seeing" or "the seen"?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A seer does not exist either separated or not separated from seeing. When a seer does not exist, whence can there be seeing and the object of seeing?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The seer does not exist separated or not separated from seeing.
If the seer does not exist, where is the seeing and the seen?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. A person, who looks at everything well, is not always a person, who does not criticize anything others at all.
It is sometimes true that an attitude to despise others' products severely, suggests also some kinds of sincere attitude to the products.
What has been seen, is just what we have seen actually, and furthermore,
If there were no person, who esteems the product, where can those products actually exist.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 No agent of seeing exists either detached from or not detached from the act of seeing. How can there be seeing and an object of seeing if the seer does not exist?

STRENG (Skt):
6. There is no "seer" with vision or without vision; Therefore, if there is no "seer," how can there be vision and the object seen?

ROBINSON (Skt):
The seer does not exist either apart from or non-apart from the seeing; when the seer does not exist, where are the seen and the seeing?

BOCKING (Ch):
3v6 Whether separate from seeing, or not separate from seeing,
No seer can be found.
Since there is no-one who sees,
How can there be seeing, or anything seen?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Without letting go of [seeing] a seer does not exist; in letting go of seeing, there is also [no seer]. If there is no seer, where can there be what-is-seen and seeing?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Whether seeing is involved or not,
There is nothing that sees.
Without the one that sees,
How could there be something seen and seeing? [III.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. Without detachment from vision there is no seer.
Nor is there a seer detached from it.
If there is no seer
How can there be seeing or the seen?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. Without detachment from vision there is no seer.
Nor is there a seer detached from it.
Without a seer
How can there be seeing or the seen?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
No seer is ever found either with or removed from seeing. When no seer is found, where is there either seeing or the seen?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

3/6 When there is seeing, then no seer can be established, and also when there is no seeing no seer can be established. Since there is no seer, how can there be seeing, or anything seen? And if there is no seer, who is there to employ a dharma of seeing to distinguish external forms? For these reasons it says in the verse: Since there is no-one who sees, how can there be seeing, or filing seen? Again :

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

6ab *No agent of seeing exists either detached from or not detached from the act of seeing.*

This means that if an agent of seeing existed, he would either be dependent (*apeksa*) on the act of seeing, or not. If he is considered to be dependent then he is not detached from the act of seeing. The seer will be dependent on seeing either as having seen or as not having seen. If the seer has seen, he is not dependent on seeing; how can a seer who has already seen still be dependent on seeing? For what has been accomplished need not be accomplished (*siddha*) again. Then there is the seer who has not seen (*asiddha*) but who is dependent on, i.e. related to, seeing. Because he has not seen he cannot be dependent on seeing any more than the son of a barren woman can be. Thus, in so far as he is not detached from seeing, the seer cannot exist in dependence on it; that he cannot exist detached either because then he does not require seeing was explained earlier. Thus, as the seer, whether separate or not separate from seeing, does not exist, so:

6cd *How can there be seeing and an object of seeing if the seer does not exist?*

If the seer does not exist, an object and an act of seeing, thus lacking any basis, will not be possible; how then will the seer be established by their existence?

Consciousness cannot be urged as proof of vision and its object

You may object that the act of seeing and its object do exist because their consequences exist as fact. That is,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The metaphysical views discussed previously lead to two different conceptions of a "seer" (drastr), namely, (i) a seer associated with seeing (a seeing seer), which is based on a theory of identity, and (ii) a seer dissociated from seeing (a non-seeing seer), which emphasizes difference. Having denied both, Nagarjuna raises the question: "In the absence of a seer, whence can there be seeing and the object of seeing?" This question is raised not by a dogmatic philosopher, but by a critical epistemology. It is simply asking the question, "Just because you have come up with an unacceptable definition of a 'seer', are we going to ignore the fact that there is seeing and also the objects of such seeing? If there were to be no seer, how can you account for the perception of objects?" In other words, Nagarjuna, in the way he formulates his question, is asserting that seeing and the objects of seeing are mutually dependent upon a seer. This assertion leads Nagarjuna directly to the statement of the Buddha in the early discourses.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. On Nāgārjuna's analysis, we can't make sense of an autonomous subject of visual perception. For such a subject would by definition have its identity as a visual subject independent of perception. But there is no sense in calling something that does not see a seer. On the other hand, if we pack vision into its definition, we thereby fail to identify the subject nonrelationally. Vision and its subject are thus relational, dependent phenomena and not substantial or independent entities. So neither seeing nor seer nor the seen (conceived of as the object of sense perception) can be posited as entities with inherent existence. The point is just that sense perception cannot be understood as an autonomous phenomenon, but only as a dependent process.

Kārikā III.7

[This kārikā has no correlate in the Chinese translation and some Sanskrit & Tibetan editions.]

प्रतीत्य मातापितरौ यथोक्तः पुत्रसंभवः।
चक्षूरूपे प्रतीत्यैवमुक्तो विज्ञानसंभवः॥७॥

pratītya mātāpitarau yathoktaḥ putrasaṃbhavaḥ |
cakṣurūpe pratītyaivam ukto vijñānasaṃbhavaḥ ||7||

[n/a]

[n/a]

།ཇི་ལྟར་ཕ་དང་མ་དག་ལས།།བརྟེན་ནས་བུ་ནི་འབྱུང་བར་བཤད།
།དེ་བཞིན་མིག་དང་གཟུགས་བརྟེན་ནས།།རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ་འབྱུང་བར་བཤད།།

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - As it is said that a child is born out of the father and mother relationship, so also does consciousness arise from the bond between the eye and its material form.

JONES (Skt):
[7] Just as the birth of a son is said to be dependent upon the mother and the father, so too the arising of visual consciousness is said to be dependent upon the eye and the material form.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Just as the birth of a son is said to be dependent upon the mother and the father, even so, the arising of [visual] consciousness is said to be dependent upon eye and material form.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
As the birth of a son is said to be dependent upon a mother and father,
so the arising of consciousness is dependent upon eye and form (material objects seen).

NISHIJIMA (Skt?): -

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 The birth of a son is held to depend on the mother and father; similarly the genesis of consciousness is held to depend on the faculty of sight and its object.

STRENG (Skt):
7. As the birth of a son is said to occur presupposing the mother and the father, Knowledge is said to occur presupposing the eye being dependent on the visible forms.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Because the seen and the seeing inexist, it is stated that the four—consciousness, etc.—do not exist; so how can appropriation, etc. come into being?

BOCKING (Ch):
[n/a]

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Just as it is said that a child emerges in dependence on a father and a mother, likewise it is said that consciousness emerges in dependence upon an eye and a visual form.

DOCTOR (Tb):
-

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. Just as the birth of a son is said to occur
In dependence on the mother and father,
So consciousness is said to arise
In dependence on the eye and material form.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
[Tsong-kha-pa: "it [this verse] is not consistent with Avalokitavata's statement that *Mulamadhyamakakarika* contains 449 verses. Therefore, it appears that it was translated from a corrupted version.]

HAGEN (paraphrase):
As the birth of a child is said to depend upon a mother and a father, so it is said eye consciousness depends on an eye and material form.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Consciousness comes into existence dependent on the act of seeing and its object. From the conjunction of these three there is contact with things which results in afflicted existence (*sasrava*) (fn 4 The three *asravas* (fn 6 harmful influences or conditions of affliction) are desire, belief that being is particular, and ignorance.) and simultaneously there is feeling. Dependent on feeling there is craving for existence. These four factors of existence (fn 7 Consciousness, contact, feeling, craving for existence.) are caused by the act of seeing and its object. Therefore, as their effects are real, seeing and its object must be real.

We reply that these two could be real if the four factors - consciousness and the others - were real. That is,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Being a competent and insightful philosopher, Nagarjuna immediately perceives the difference between the Buddha's analysis and those of his "substantialist" protagonists. Abandoning the misleading terminology of the substantialist, Nagarjuna adopts the Buddha's own terminology to explain the process of perception: "Depending upon the eye and visible form arises visual consciousness," (Cakkhun ca paticca rupe ca uppajjati cakkhu-vinnanam) (M 1.11).

Even though the three terms used here correspond to the terms used by the substantialistscakkhu stands for darsana,rupa for drastavya, and drastr for vijnanathe description itself is different. Here the explanation of visual perception does not begin with the assertion of the cogito in order to end with the perception of the external object, which was one of Nagarjuna's criticism of the substantialist view. Neither is perception defined in a more substantialist way as in the quotation from the Sarvastivadins which says: "The substance called the eye is of the nature of that which sees," (see note III.2). No metaphysical jargon is introduced here at all. Without getting involved in the substantialist terminology and concepts, the present statement of perception is based entirely on the principle of dependence (pratityasamutpada). Thus, visual consciousness is said to be dependent upon the eye (= faculty) and visible form (= object). Such an explanation immediately eliminates the conception of a substance (svabhava, atman) and replaces it with a principle of "dependence" (pratityasamutpada). In order to illustrate this process of perception, Nagarjuna utilizes the example of the birth of a son depending upon the mother and father.

It would, therefore, be unfair to think that an illustrious Buddhist philosopher like Nagarjuna failed to see the important philosophical differences between the Buddha's explanation of the causality of perception and that presented by the metaphysicians. This verse, therefore, embodies another of the more appropriate views (kalpana yatra jojyate, see XVII. 13) that Nagarjuna has been elsewhere attributing to the Buddhas, the Sravakas, and the Pratyeka-buddhas.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. (fn 41. The authenticity of this verse is a matter of dispute. It is not present in all editions of the text and may be a later interpolation.)

Here the opponent offers yet another argument in favor of the inherent existence of the visual faculty (and, by extension, the other sense faculties): Consciousness is a consequence of vision, and it surely exists - in fact, its existence, one might say, is self validating. Given the reality of the effect, the cause must also be real. (fn 42. And from the standpoint of a Buddhist analysis of human existence there is more to it than this: In many presentations of the "twelve links of dependent origination," consciousness conditions craving for existence, which gives rise to existence in *saṃsāra*.) The final two verses reply to this objection and state the obvious generalization to all other senses, sense objects, sense faculties, and faculties of knowledge. The reply consists in pointing out that the other faculties and aggregates, including introspection and consciousness, exist and fail to exist in exactly the senses that vision and its objects exist and fail to exist: All are empty of inherent independent existence. But all exist conventionally. So the effect that, according to this interlocutor, exists inherently and demands an inherently existent cause does not so exist. And in the sense that it exists, its causes also exist:

Kārikā III.8

द्रष्टव्यदर्शनाभावाद्विज्ञानादिचतुष्टयम्।
नास्तीति उपादानादीनि भविष्यन्ति पुनः कथम्॥८॥

draṣṭavyadarśanābhāvād vijñānādicatuṣṭayam |
nāstīty upādānādīni bhaviṣyanti punaḥ katham ||8||

見可見無故 識等四法無
四取等諸緣 云何當得有

jiàn kě jiàn wú gù shí děng sì fǎ wú
sì qǔ děng zhū yuán yún hé dāng dé;děi;de yǒu

|བལྟ་བྱ་ལྟ་བ་མེད་པའི་ཕྱིར||རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་ལ་སོགས་པ་བཞི|
|ཡོད་མིན་ཉེ་བར་ལེན་ལ་སོགས||ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ན་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར||

| blta bya lta ba med pa’i phyir | | rnam par śes (3)pa la sogs bźi |
| yod min ñe bar len la sogs | | ji lta bur na yod par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - From the non-existence of the seeing activity and the object to be seen, it follows that the four-fold consciousness, etc. (i.e., touch, sensation, desire) do not exist. How then, again, could it be possible for clinging action, etc., to arise?

JONES (Skt):
[8] Because of the nonexistence of the seeable and the seeing, the four psychological factors constituting a person - feeling, forming ideas, dispositions, and consciousness - do not exist. How then can the remaining steps in “dependent-arising” (see Chapter 26) arise?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is the view that the four factors, beginning with consciousness, do not exist, because of the absence of seeing and the object of seeing, how then can there be grasping?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
From the non-existence of seeing and the object seen, consciousness and the other four [form, sensation, perception, and disposition] do not exist.
How will there be grasping [sensation, liking, desiring], etc.?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Leaving from the wrong idea that What has been seen, and What we have seen, do not exist really,
The Four, that is, consideration, perception, action at the present moment, and Reality itself, are this World.
If we insist that it is perfectly impossible for perception, consideration, Action at the present moment, and Reality, not to exist,
What kind of Real Existence can really exist even in future at all?

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 Because the act of seeing and its object do not exist, the four factors — consciousness and the others — do not exist. How will the entire series — grasping and so on — exist?

STRENG (Skt):
8. Since the "object seen" and the vision do not exist (independently, on their own), there is no four-fold consequence: knowledge, etc. cognitive sensation, affective sensation, and "desire". Also, then, how will the acquisition (upadana) of karma and its consequences i.e., existence, birth, aging, and death be produced?

ROBINSON (Skt):
You should know that hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thought, the hearer and the heard, etc. have been explained merely by the explanation of seeing.

BOCKING (Ch):
3v7 Since seeing and what can be seen do not exist,
The four dharmas of consciousness etc., do not exist.
Nor the four types of attachment, nor causal links.
How could these things exist?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Because there is no what-is-seen and no seeing, the four such as consciousness do not exist. How can clinging etc. exist?

DOCTOR (Tb):
As there is nothing to see and no sight,
The four, such as consciousness, do not exist.
How could appropriation and other
Such factors come into existence? [III.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. From the nonexistence of seeing and the seen it follows that
The other four faculties of knowledge do not exist.
And all the aggregates, etc.,
Are the same way.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. From the nonexistence of seeing and the seen it follows that
The four—consciousness, etc.—do not exist.
Since this is the case, how could such things as
The appropriator exist?

HAGEN (paraphrase):

If seeing and the object seen cannot be discerned, it follows that distinction, touch, sensation, and desire cannot be discerned. how, then, can there be grasping?

GOLDFIELD (Tb):

Know that these reasonings refuting the faculty that sees
Refute the faculties that hear, smell, taste, touch, and the mental faculty as well,
Refute the hearer and the other perceiving consciousnesses,
Refute sound and the other perceived objects. (8)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

3/7 Since the dharmas of seeing and what is seen do not exist, none of the four dharmas of consciousness, contact, reception and craving exists, and since there is no craving etc., the four graspings etc., and each one of the twelve causal links similarly does not exist. Again :

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

8abc *Because the act of seeing and its object do not exist, the four factors - consciousness and the others - do not exist.*

The thought is that as the agent of seeing does not exist neither do seeing and its object, as has been explained. How then can the four factors — consciousness, contact, feeling and craving existence — be real? It follows that they are not real (*na santi*).

You may argue that they do exist because their effects are fact. One says 'Because of craving for existence there is appropriation of things.' From the existence of the four factors the entire series (fn 8 This is the twelvefold 'causal' account of afflicted existence or *saṃsāra* accepted by all Buddhists.) — grasping, existence, birth, old age and death — arises. Consciousness and the other factors exist therefore because their effects are fact.

We reply. If the four factors — consciousness and the others — existed, then the entire series — grasping and so on — would exist too. As, however, because vision and its object do not exist, the four factors — consciousness and the others — cannot exist either, so,

8d *How will the entire series - grasping and so on - exist?*

The meaning is that the entire series grasping and so on does not exist.

The analysis applies to the other sense faculties

Finally, in order to apply this exposition of the faculty of vision to the remaining sense faculties, Nagarjuna says

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Candrakīrti's negativist approach creates a problem in regard to the interpretation of this verse. The use of the iti-formula needs to be carefully handled if we are to avoid a gross misinterpretation of Nagarjuna's thoughts at this point. Nagarjuna has already refuted the metaphysical views pertaining to seeing and seer. However, at III.6, he was asserting that one cannot speak of seeing and the seen without a seer. It is possible that someone may insist: "If there were to be no seeing (darsana, caksu) and the seen (drastavya , rupa), then the four factors [namely, feeling (vedana), perception (samjna), dispositions (samskarah) and consciousness (vijnanam), which constitute the psychic part of the psychophysical personality and hence the equivalent of drastr] are also nonexistent (nasti)." The iti-formula converts this to a view or a statement someone could express. If so, Nagarjuna's counter-question would be: "How then can there be grasping?" Surprisingly, Candrakīrti interprets Nagarjuna's question as implying a denial of grasping (na santy upadanadinity arthah). However, if the statement preceding iti is understood as the view of the opponent, then Nagarjuna's answer is: "How can you explain grasping?" In other words, Nagarjuna seems to be saying: "Grasping exists, for that is what is eliminated at the moment of enlightenment and freedom (anupada-vimukti). Grasping is dependent upon consciousness (vijnana) which is, in turn, dependent upon the eye and visible form. Any other explanation of perception is unacceptable to me."

Such an explanation is in perfect conformity with the contents of the two preceding verses both of which represent positive statements of Nagarjuna.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. ("And all the aggregates," fn 43. The *skandhas* (literally "heaps'" or "piles," but most often translated as "aggregates") are the basic constituents of the personality. Five are typically identified: form (really matter - the physical body), sensation, perception, disposition (behavioral and cognitive), and consciousness. But the term *"skandha"* indicates two features of this decomposition that must be born in mind to avoid confusion: The division is practical and empirical, and not philosophically principled, and the *skandhas* themselves are decomposible into further heaps, etc. These are not, hence, ontological fundamentals, but rather the first level of a psychology.)

Kārikā III.9

व्याख्यातं श्रवणं घ्राणं रसनं स्पर्शनं मनः।
दर्शनेनैव जानीयाच्छ्रोतृश्रोतव्यकादि च॥९॥

vyākhyātaṃ śravaṇaṃ ghrāṇaṃ rasanaṃ sparśanaṃ manaḥ |
darśanenaiva jānīyāc chrotṛśrotavyakādi ca ||9||

耳鼻舌身意 聲及聞者等
當知如是義 皆同於上說

ěr bí shé shēn yì shēng jí wén zhě děng
dāng zhī rú shì yì jiē tóng;tòng yū;yú;wū shàng shuì

|ལྟ་བས་ཉན་དང་སྣོམ་པ་དང་||མྱོང་བར་བྱེད་དང་རེག་བྱེད་ཡིད|
|ཉན་པ་པོ་དང་མཉན་ལ་སོགས||རྣམ་པར་བཤད་པར་ཤེས་པར་བྱ||

| lta bas ñan daṅ snom pa daṅ | | myoṅ bar byed daṅ reg byed yid |
| ñan pa po daṅ mñan la sogs | | rnam par bśad par śes par bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - Based on the discussion of the seeing activity, it is to be known that the functions of hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking or the hearer and what is to be heard, etc., could be explained (in the same manner).

JONES (Skt):
[9] This analysis should be applied to the other senses, the agents who sense, and their domains.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
What has been explained as hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and mind, as well as the hearer, the sound, etc. should be known in the same way as seeing.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What has been explained for seeing [applies equally to] hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking as well as the origin of the hearer and the sound, etc.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. The explanations of function to hear, function to smell,
Function to taste, function to touch, and function of the central sense perception,
Can be explained relying upon the function to see as a matrix,
Therefore it is possible for us to utilize it for to hear and what is heard, and other kinds of sense functions too.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 It should be realized that by this analysis of vision, the agents and objects of hearing, smell, taste, touch and thought have been analysed as well.

STRENG (Skt):
9. Likewise hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thought are explained as vision. Indeed one should not apprehend the "hearer," "what is heard," etc. as self-existent entities.

BOCKING (Ch):
3v8 Ear, nose, tongue, body and mind
Sound and hearer and so forth
Must be understood in the same way
Together with what has been discussed above.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It should be understood that seeing explains hearing and smelling and tasting and touching, mind, hearer, what is heard, etc.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Hearing, smell,
Taste, touch, and cognition;
Vie hearer, the heard, and so forth—
Know that all are explained through sight. [III.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. Like the seen, the heard, the smelled,
The tasted, and the touched,
The hearer, sound, etc.,
And consciousness should be understood.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Through the explanation of seeing,
Hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and mind,
Hearer and sound, etc.,
Should also be understood.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Just as seeing is accounted for, so hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking are accounted for.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

3/8 Just as the dharmas of seeing and what is seen are empty because they are wholly dependent upon conditions and not fixed, so the five remaining faculties of ears etc. and five objects such as sound etc. must be understood in the same way as seeing, what is seen, and so on. Because these may be interpreted according to the same principle they are not discussed separately.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

As the illustrious one has said, 'The eye does not see material objects nor does the mind know ideas; but that is the surpassing truth where the ordinary person does not penetrate. When the teacher, who is aware of the surpassing truth, explains vision in terms of causes he is speaking in a modified way to serve a purpose.'

And again, it is commonly supposed that visual consciousness arises in dependence on the organ of sight and the object; but the object is not based in the organ nor does the organ enter into the object. The putative elements are ill and without substance, but are thought to have substance and to be good; visual consciousness has the same origin: it is a misconception, a non-existent figment. The wise one discerns, in meditation, how the contents of consciousness arise and vanish, are born and destroyed; he understands that consciousness neither comes nor goes, that it is a magician's trick, and devoid of being.'

And from the *Upaliprccha*: 'The eye sees in conjunction with all the enabling conditions, it does not see in default of these. The eye does not see an object because conjunction and disjunction are just ways of thinking. The eye sees differentiated, coloured, pleasant objects in conjunction with light; because the eye depends upon this conjunction the eye never sees. Again, when a pleasing sound is heard it never enters into the mind; one cannot perceive its passage; it is by a theory that we explain the origin of sound.'

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Thus, after pointing out the inappropriatness of certain metaphysical views per-mining to visual perception and having stated the Buddha's own explanation of perception in terms of "dependent arising" (pratityasamutpada), Nagarjuna concludes that the other five faculties and their objects should be understood in the same way as "seeing." This indeed is a very positive explanation of sensory experience and a faithful representation of the Buddha's teaching as embodied in the "discourses."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. Again, the point of this chapter is emphatically not that there is no perception, or that there are no sense faculties, sense organs, or sense objects. Rather the point is that none of these can be analyzed successfully as autonomous entities. They are interdependent phenomena that depend for their existence and their character on each other. None of them exists independently. They are all, hence, empty of inherent existence, and carving the process of perception into these components represents a conventional taxonomy of a process that does not present itself with natural joints demanding cleavage on their own.

Chapter IV

स्कन्धपरीक्षा चतुर्थं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀五陰品第四(九偈)

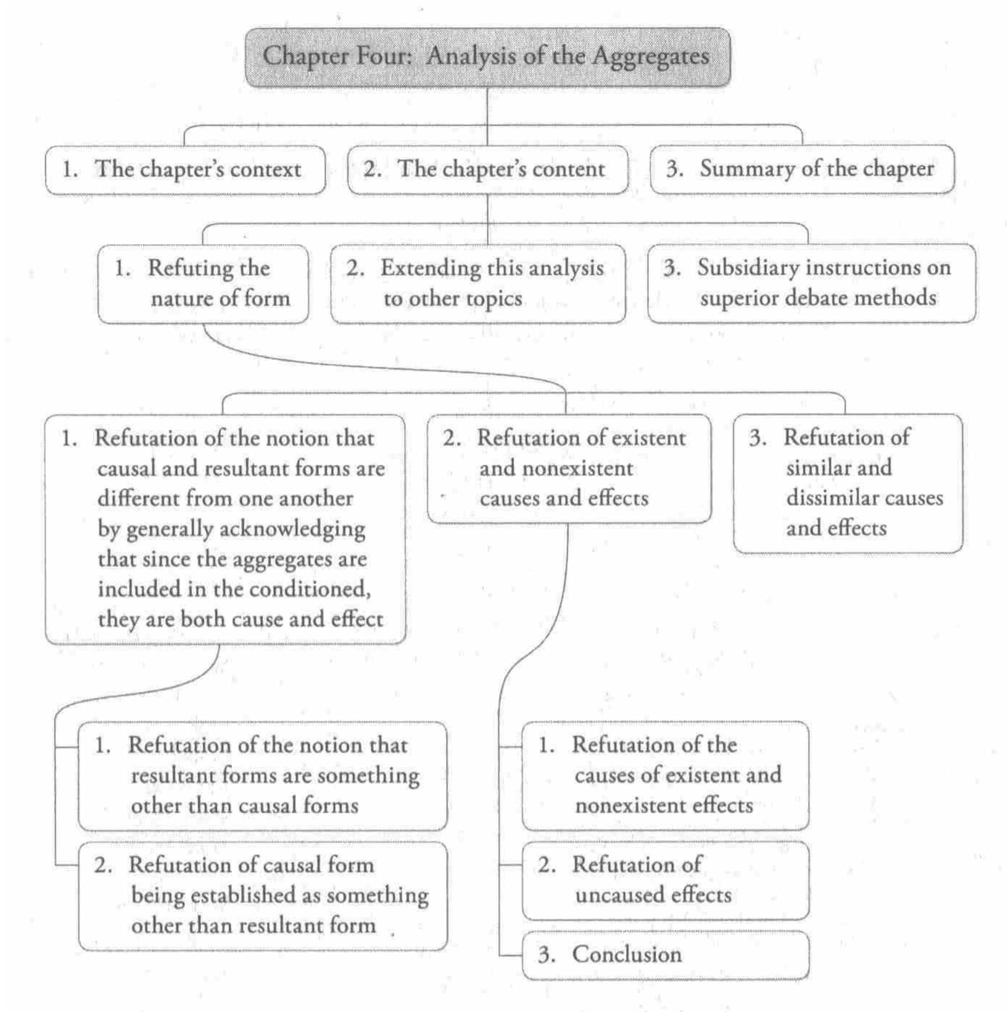
།ཕུང་པོ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཞི་པའོ།།

skandhaparīkṣā nāma caturthaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter IV: Examination of the Aggregates

Chapter IV

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the section of the text explaining that the three kinds of phenomena are selfless. We have completed the first part—the refutation of the phenomenal self of the faculties—and we now turn to the second part—the refutation of the phenomenal self of the aggregates **[128:2]**.

EXPLANATION:

In response to this previous analysis one might say, "Even though the sense faculties have been refuted, since the five aggregates have not been refuted, it follows that they exist. If they exist, since the sense faculties are included among them, it follows that they exist essentially."

The refutation of this argument has three parts: refutation of the essential existence of the form aggregate, applying this argument to the other aggregates, the mode of reply to the arguments advanced by others.

SUMMARY:

As the causes and effects of the aggregates have been explained, one should establish by reasoning that cause and effect make no sense at all if they exist as they are grasped—as existing inherently, without being merely nominally imputed. Thereafter, one should train one's mind in reasoning which shows, through dependent origination, by the mutual reinforcement of the ascertainment of their aspects of emptiness and of appearance, that only in the context of nominal imputation do the elements and that which is arisen from elements— such things as contact and feeling—make sense.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER IV - Examination of the Skandhas

With the same motive in mind as in previous chapters, i.e., to establish the impossibility of imputing either an enduring entity or characteristic, this chapter takes up the subject of the five skandhas (rupa, vedana, samjna, samskara and vijnana). Again, as it was done in Chapter III, Nagarjuna treats only the first of the five skandhas, i.e., rupa, and assumes that the same line of argument can be cogently carried out with respect to the other four. He first states that it is inconceivable to say that rupa can be separated from the Four Great Elements (Earth, Water, Fire, Wind) for these are after all concomitant causes for the rupa's own being. On the other hand, the Four Great Elements cannot be thought of in the absence of rupa. But all this does not mean that neither rupa nor the elements cease to exist. Nagarjuna is only trying to exhibit the fact that any concept or thing cannot be described by reference to a simple cause-effect relationship in order to establish its existential status.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

4. *Aggregates* (*skandha*). Of the five aggregates into which the human personality came to be analysed in the Buddhist tradition, Nagarjuna takes up only the first, namely, material form (*rupa*). After explaining Nagarjuna's treatment of material form, Inada rightly remarks: "But all this does not mean that neither *rupa* nor the elements cease to exist."72 This confirms what we have said about Nagarjuna's treatment of other concepts such as cause, effect, motion, or seeing. However, Inada's explanation of the reason for this needs to be qualified. He maintains: "Nagarjuna is only trying to exhibit the fact that any conception or thing cannot be described by reference to a simple cause-effect relationship in order to establish its existential status." On the contrary, it seems that Nagarjuna may not have any difficulty in maintaining that there is a simple cause-effect relationship between the four primary elements (*manbhuta*) and material form (*rupa*), so long as that causeeffect relationship is understood as one of dependence, which was the Buddha's own view.73 Yet, what is being introduced here is not such a simple theory of dependence of the effect upon the cause.

The conception of *karana* that Nagarjuna refers to here is one of the six causes (*hetu*) referred to in the Sanskrit Abhidharma texts and interpreted by the Sarvastivadins as a "unique cause," that is, "anything other than itself" (*svato 'nye karanahetuh*).74 In other words, it is any cause whose serf-nature is different from that of the effect. The four great elements (*mahabhuta*) depending upon which the material form (*rupa*) comes to be would be the *karana* of material form. Yet as a *karana* of material form it would be distinct from material form. It is this particular definition of *karana* that is criticized by Nagarjuna. His reason for denying it is stated in IV.2: "If material form is separated from the unique cause of material form [i.e. the four great elements], it would imply that material form is without a cause (*ahetuka*)." However, Nagarjuna's empiricist and analytical approach does not allow him to recognize an effect (*artha*) which is without a cause (*ahetuka*). Existence (*bhava*), which Nagarjuna was often criticizing implied self-existence (*svabhava*). The fact that the Sarvastivadins defined not only material form, but also the other four aggregatesfeeling, perception, disposition, and consciousnessas self-existent entities (*bhava*) is evident from Nagarjuna's statement at IV.7. Thus, Nagarjuna's basic criticism of the Sarvastivadins in this chapter is that they could not consistently speak of a unique cause (*karana*), while at the same time recognizing a cause and an effect that are related by way of self-nature (*svabhava*). In other words, the notion of self-causation (*svatotpatti*) contradicts a "unique cause" (*karana*), for it is anything other than itself.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Body

I have no body apart
From parts which form it;
I know no parts
Apart from a "body."

A body with no parts
Would be unformed,
A part of my body apart from my body
Would be absurd.

Were the body here or not,
It would need no parts.
Partless bodies are pointless.
Do not get stuck in the "body."

I cannot say,
"My body is like its parts."
I cannot say,
"It 's something else".

Feelings, perceptions,
Drives, minds, things
Are like this body
In every way.

Conflict with emptiness
Is no conflict;
Objections to emptiness,
No objections.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

4. The Aggregates of the Body

Notice that the Buddhist term for matter - *"rupa"* - means "form." It is a matter of what we *experience* things, rather than any *"material object"* existing independently of us. More generally, the Buddhist ontology is a matter of our experiences of the world, not the world independent of how we experience it. Its fundamental ontology is in terms of the factors of experiences - *dharmas* - not material particles or fields. Nagarjuna's emptiness is applied to this ontology.

The argument in verses 1-6 connects the concepts of "cause" and "effect." Something is a *cause* only in relation to an *effect,* and so if there is no cause, there is no effect, and vice versa. If something already exists, then it does not need a cause; and if something's effect does not exist, then we cannot speak of it being a "cause" (v. 4). Cause and effect are not the same, but the concepts are interconnected, and so we must identify them together (v. 6).

In verse 8, Nagarjuna affirms the impossibility of a refutation of emptiness by anything: the alleged refutation cannot involve self-existence because self-existence does not exist; and any refutation involving emptiness only confirms emptiness. That is, the refutation will be of the same nature of what is allegedly being refuted - emptiness - and so will not be a refutation at all. Nagarjuna here also refers to emptiness as a *means (upaya).* This might suggest that emptiness is substantive, since it is used to refute an argument rather than simply being the conclusion reached when self-existence is refuted, But it could be an instance of the "skillful means *(upaya)"* by which bodhisattvas use what is not in the final analysis real or true to help others. (See Jones 2004: 198-200.)

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

4

An Examination of the Aggregates

THE FIVE AGGREGATES (skandhas) are everything included in matter and mind. To describe them briefly, the aggregate of forms comprises all material phenomena. In sentient beings, this refers to each individual's body; it also generally includes all matter, all objects of sense perception that exist in the outside environment.

The aggregate of feelings is defined as our experiences of sensations that we find pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

The aggregate of discriminations is defined as "clinging to characteristics" and refers to all of our thoughts that things are either clean or dirty, hot or cold, good or bad, and so forth.

The aggregate of formations includes all the other thoughts and emotions that individuals experience. Some of them are positive, like faith, nonviolence, and joyous diligence; some are negative, like anger, jealousy, and arrogance; some could be either positive or negative, like regret or analysis. This aggregate also includes the entities that are the phases of the existence of what is material and

mental, like arising, abiding, cessation, and so forth—the stages that matter and mind pass through.

Finally, the aggregate of consciousnesses refers to the six primary consciousnesses that perceive the essence of their respective objects: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body sense consciousnesses, and the mental consciousness.

In the Heart of Wisdom Sutra, Shariputra asked Avalokiteshvara, "How should noble men and women who wish to engage in the profound practice of transcendent wisdom train?" By the power of the Buddha's blessing, Avalokiteshvara was able to respond in the following way:

Shariputra, noble men and women who wish to engage in the profound practice of transcendent wisdom should see this clearly: They should see clearly that the five aggregates are empty by nature.

In another passage in the Prajnaparamita Sutras, the Buddha taught:

Form is empty of form.

In this chapter, Nagarjuna proves the validity of these statements with logical reasoning.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to those who claimed that the aggregates truly exist because the Buddha explained them in his Abhidharma teachings (fn The Abidhar.ma is a set of the Buddha's teachings from the first turning of the wheel of Dharma in which he described the characteristics of, among other things, the sources of consciousness, aggregates, and elements. In these teachings, the Buddha did not explicitly refute the true existence of the phenomena that he described. He did explicitly refute their true existence, however, in the teachings of the second turning of the wheel.). The Buddha described them and therefore they must exist. It then must be the case, they argued, that the twelve sources of consciousness, the subjects of Nagarjuna's refutations in the last chapter, also exist, because the twelve sources of consciousness are included within the five aggregates. Therefore, the five aggregates exist, the twelve sources of consciousness exist, and things are not empty after all—they are real. To help these people understand that this is not the case, that things are actually empty of true existence, Nagarjuna had to demonstrate that the five aggregates do not truly exist. This is his focus in this fourth chapter.

The problem with the way that those who assert that things exist thought about things was that they thought that if you say things exist—if you use the word existence—it necessarily implies true existence. According to the proponents of the Middle Way, however, things in conventional reality exist as dependency arisen mere appearances. Therefore, to say that conventional appearances exist does not imply that they are real—they are simply mere appearances that occur due to the coming together of causes and conditions, like dreams, illusions, movies, and water-moons.

Out of the five aggregates, Nagarjuna analyzes the aggregate of forms because, since it is the coarsest of the five aggregates, it is the easiest to examine. The way he does so is to break down the aggregate of forms into its causal and resultant constituents. Thus there are causal forms, which consist of the four great elements of earth, water, fire, and wind, and resultant forms, consisting of the five sense faculties and the five objects they perceive—the results that arise from different combinations of the causal forms. Nagarjuna breaks forms down into these two categories and then looks at how these two could possibly exist in relation to each other.

In the preceding chapter Nagarjuna broke down the sources of consciousness into perceived objects and perceiving subjects. Here, he looks at the aggregates in terms of causes and results, and so we can see that there are many different ways one can analyze things.

The root verse that sets out the position of this chapter is the first one:

Except for there being the cause of form,
Form would not be seen.
Except for there being what we call "form,"
The cause of form would not appear either.

If the aggregate of forms truly existed, then the causal forms—the four great elements, and what results from those four elements—the five sense faculties and their five objects, would have to exist in relation to each other in one of the following ways: The cause would have to exist before the result, the result would have to exist before the cause, or cause and result would have to exist simultaneously. We need to examine each of these possibilities to see if any one of them is viable. If in fact none of them is logically possible, then we can conclude that forms do not really exist at all.

The first possibility is impossible, because a cause cannot exist before its result. If it did, why would it be a cause? Something is a cause only if it produces a result, but if no result exists, then there is no reason to call anything a cause—nothing has performed the function of a cause, and therefore no cause exists. Thus, the cause cannot exist before the result. Nor can the result exist before the cause, because if it did it would be a result that was not produced by anything. It would be a result that had no cause. Finally, cause and result cannot come into existence at the same time, they cannot exist simultaneously, because two things that come into existence at the same time do not have a chance to be cause and result—one does not have the opportunity to produce the other. Things cannot have a cause-and-result relationship if they occur simultaneously. Since when we analyze we find that they cannot occur sequentially and they cannot occur simultaneously, we can definitively conclude that causal and resultant forms do not truly exist. The

appearances of them are just like the appearances we perceive in our dreams.

Just as we have analyzed forms in this way and have determined that they do not truly exist, that they are mere appearances of things that are not really there, like dreams and illusions, so we can analyze everything else that is included in the four remaining aggregates, as Nagarjuna explains in verse seven:

Feelings, discriminations, formations,
Minds, and all the things there are
Are susceptible to the same stages of analysis
That forms have been put through here.

What this verse tells us to do is to analyze feelings, discriminations, formations, and consciousnesses in the same way that we analyzed forms. In the same way as we showed that causal and resultant forms cannot truly exist, because it is logically impossible for them to exist either sequentially or simultaneously and there is no third alternative, so we should examine everything else and see that whatever causes there are, whatever results there are, they cannot truly exist either.

We can analyze all different kinds of opposites in this way as well. For example, what comes first, darkness or light? Clean or dirty? Happiness or suffering? Which one of these really comes first?

Based on this analysis, we can gain certainty that dependently existent phenomena do not truly exist because they cannot exist one before the other, they cannot exist simultaneously, and there is no other possibility. Nevertheless, there are still appearances of them, mere dependently arisen appearances, like appearances in dreams. Since there certainly are these appearances, we have no reason to think that reality is complete nothingness. We have no reason to be afraid. We should not be afraid of emptiness, because emptiness does not mean complete nothingness. The true nature of reality is appearance-emptiness inseparable.

In this same chapter, Nagarjuna also describes the experience of debating the teachings on emptiness. What is it like when someone tries to challenge the Middle Way explanations of emptiness in a debate? The eighth verse reads:

When emptiness comes up for debate,
Whatever answers try to prove true existence,
Those answers are unsound
Because they are equivalent to the very thesis to be proved.

What happens first is that the ones who follow the Middle Way, who have understood the true nature of reality, encounter people who believe that things truly exist. When this happens, it is necessary for the followers of the Middle Way to explain emptiness to these people who think that things are real. It is also necessary to debate with them. Debate is a good way to bring out the doubts and wrong views held by people who think that things are real.

In the debate, first the people who believe that things really exist try to prove that their position is accurate, and then the proponents of the Middle Way demonstrate that the reasons these people think things really exist are not valid after all. Then the people who believe that things are real come back with answers for why they still believe that. Whatever example they try to give for things being real, however, it is not an example of things being real at all—it is in fact an example of emptiness. Whatever answer they try to give, it is not a valid answer because it is just as empty as what they are trying to prove. Whatever they say, therefore, actually does not prove their point; it proves the Middle Way’s point. The reason for this is that they cannot find an example of anything that truly exists. That is the problem they have.

For example, the people who want to say that things truly exist will point to lots of things that seem real, like rocks, diamonds, and mountains. For the proponents of the Middle Way, however, rocks, diamonds, and mountains just prove their own point because they are just as empty as everything else. They can be analyzed with the same reasonings we have used in this chapter that examines forms, and in this way they can be demonstrated to be as empty as anything else.

The people who want to prove that things truly exist have the problem that all phenomena are equally in need of proof of their existence. So whatever these people use as their proof of existence, it is just as in need of proof as the object whose existence they are using it to establish! For example, if someone says, “This table exists because I see it with my eyes,” then what proves the existence of the eyes? They cannot say, “My eyes exist because they see the table,” because the table’s existence is what they were trying to prove in the first place. So they just end up in a circular loop. Furthermore, the experience of seeing a table occurs in a dream, too, and just as the appearance of it in the dream does not prove that it is real, so the appearance of it during the daytime cannot establish its true existence.

In the ninth verse, Nagarjuna shows how it is that those who say that things truly exist cannot find any flaws in the explanations of emptiness:

When explanations are given about emptiness,
Whoever would try to find faults in them
Will not be able to find any faults at all,
Because the faults are equivalent to the very thesis to be proved.

Here, we are looking at the time when emptiness is being taught. After the teaching is given, someone might criticize the view of emptiness, saying, “If things are empty, then that means that there are no past and future lives. There is no

such thing as cause and result. There are no mental afflictions or enemies, and there is no suffering in samsara or liberation in nirvana. Even the three rare and supreme ones, the three precious jewels, do not exist." (fn The *three rare and supreme ones* or the *three precious jewels* refer to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha-the three objects of refuge in the Buddhist tradition. One goes for refuge from the suffering of samsara to the Buddha, the teacher; the Dharma, the teachings to be put into practice; and the Sangha, the community of noble practitioners who have directly realized the true nature of reality and who serve as one's guides along the path.)

The proponents of the Middle Way would respond to each of these criticisms by saying, "You are right! All the things you name— past and future lives, cause and result, mental afflictions, enemies, suffering, samsara, nirvana, and the three rare and supreme ones—do not truly exist because they are empty of their own essence." Thus, whatever someone claims is a fault in the Middle Way view is in fact empty of its own essence, and so it is precisely equivalent to the thesis that the Middle Way teachings have been proving all along. Since all faults are themselves of the nature of emptiness, it is impossible to find any valid criticisms of the Middle Way teachings on emptiness.

It is important to note here that while all things are empty of true existence, they do still appear, and no one would deny this. Therefore, appearances are described as being mere appearances: While empty they appear, and while appearing they are empty, like dreams, illusions, and water-moons.

This has been a brief explanation of the essential meaning of the fourth chapter of this text. When you read and reflect upon these explanations of the chapters of The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way, you will know whether you are gaining certainty in emptiness or becoming more afraid of emptiness. It will be clear to you. Fearlessness of emptiness is a quality that one gains on the third of the four levels of the path of junction, the level of patience (fn According to the Mahayana, there are five paths that constitute the journey to and attainment of enlightenment: the paths of accumulation, junction, seeing, meditation, and no- more-learning. The first two are the paths of ordinary individuals, the next two are traversed by noble bodhisattvas who have directly realized the true nature of reality, and the fifth is the path of the buddhas themselves.

The path of accumulation has three stages and the path of junction four, and although they are both the paths of ordinary individuals, the difference between practitioners at the different stages of these paths is great. For example, achieving only the second level of the path of accumulation brings one certain types of clairvoyance and miraculous powers. The point here is that the attainment of the level of patience on the path of junction is a most wonderful feat indeed.). When one gets to that point, one becomes truly unafraid of emptiness. Before that, however, we still have fear of emptiness, so we need to be on the lookout for that.

The reason that people who believe in the existence of things get frightened of emptiness is that they think the word emptiness means that there is absolutely nothing at all, that there is a complete vacuum, and this is frightening. In order to counteract that fear, it is immediately taught that there are the mere appearances of things— that emptiness does not mean a wipeout of everything we perceive and experience. Emptiness refers, rather, to the inexpressible, inconceivable reality that is the essence of all our perceptions and experiences. We can meditate on emptiness and try to cultivate this understanding of it, but if our meditation does not have a lot of power to it, the reason is that we do not have certainty in emptiness yet. And as long as we still have lots of doubts, our meditation on emptiness will not be very helpful.

As Gendun Chopel (fn One of the greatest scholars of modern times, Gendun Chopel lived from 1902-1951.) explained, we can examine with our intelligence and see that things do not really exist, but then, if we get stuck with a needle, we will have this very vivid experience of existence, and we will think, "Well, maybe there really is something there after all." Thus, when we analyze with logical reasoning, we can gain certainty that things do not truly exist, but we still keep having experiences in which things seem to be so real, contradicting the results of our earlier analysis. This is why it is so difficult to gain certainty in emptiness.

If we did not have all of these experiences that seem so real and if we were not so certain that things exist, then understanding emptiness would be easy. We would not need to study it so much; we would not require so many explanations of it. However, because we believe so strongly in the existence of things and because we keep having all of these experiences that seem to confirm our belief that things are real, it is difficult for us to gain certainty in emptiness. This is why we need to study emptiness so much after all. It is just as if we had a dream and we did not know that we were dreaming. If someone in the dream came up to us and said, "None of this is real. It does not really exist," we would not easily believe it.

The tradition of Nagarjuna is not the tradition of simply generating a belief or an opinion that things are empty and then proceeding to meditate on the basis of that. It is rather the tradition of cultivating in meditation the certainty that one has achieved through logical analysis. If you study this text in the stages in which it is laid out, its chapters that are the twenty-seven examinations of the emptiness of different subjects, then your certainty in emptiness will definitely grow broader, deeper, and stronger, and your meditation will be much more powerful.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter IV

स्कन्धपरीक्षा चतुर्थं प्रकरणम्।

skandhaparīkṣā nāma caturthaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀五陰品第四(九偈)

zhōng lùn guān wǔ yīn pǐn dì sì(jiǔ jié;jì)

|ཕུང་པོ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཞི་པའོ||

| phuṅ po brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa bźi (2)pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER IV - Examination of the Skandhas

JONES (Skt):
4. The Aggregates of the Body

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Aggregates

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
4. Analysis of the Personality Skeins

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[4] Examination of Aggregates (9 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Material Objects and the Other Factors of Personal Existence

STRENG (Skt):
Section 4 - An Analysis of the "Groups of Universal Elements" (the Aggregates) In 9 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
4. the skandhas.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 4. Contemplation of the Five Skandhas 9 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of the Aggregates

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER IV - Analysis of the Aggregates

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter IV: Examination of the Aggregates

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER IV - Examination of the Aggregates

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of the Aggregates

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 4: AN EXAMINATION OF THE AGGREGATES

PINGALA COMMENTARY

4/0 Question: The sutras state that there are five skandhas. What do you say about this?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter VI]

Some may argue that, although vision and the other sense faculties are not real, the constitutive factors of personal existence (*skandhas*) (fn 1 There are five: body or material object, feeling, ideation, character dispositions and consciousness) are, because they have not been explicitly denied. The sense faculties, however, belong to the factors of personal existence and therefore will exist as well.

Matter cannot be understood as the cause of material objects; nor can these be understood as the effects of matter

We reply that they would if the factors of personal existence were real. With reference to material objects (*rupa*) (fn 2 Objects within the fields of perception.), Nagarjuna says:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Four Examination of Aggregates (Skandha-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter IV Examination of the Aggregates

The five aggregates are the basic Buddhist categories of personal constituents. The first - that discussed as an example in this chapter - is in Sanskrit *rūpa,* in Tibetan *gzugs.* Unfortunately, given the lexicography of Western philosophy, this word has historically been translated as "form." This practice is so ubiquitous that I am loathe to depart from it, despite the confusion it engenders. For what the word means is *matter.* The other aggregates are sensation, perception, intellect, and the dispositions. It is important to realize that this taxonomy is to be understood pragmatically: There is no deep doctrinal or philosophical point that hangs on dividing the properties or capacities of humans up in just this way. In fact, most often the only important point about analysis in terms of the aggregates is that humans are composite. The precise nature of the best decomposition is of interest to psychology and to soteriological practitioners, but is at bottom, from the standpoint of the tradition, an empirical matter. (fn 44. That is not, of course, to say that it is arbitrary.) This chapter is motivated by the natural suggestion that even if vision itself is empty, as was argued in the previous chapter, there must be a truly existent basis for vision in the person and his/her faculties. For the emptiness of vision was established in part by showing that perception depends upon the perceiver and the perceived. And that might seem to suggest that these bases - or at least the most essential one, the perceiver - truly exist. For then one could say that whereas vision itself is not inherently existent, it does exist as a relation between an inherently existent perceiver and an inherently existent object, or at least as a property of such a perceiver, even if there is truly no object. (fn 45. The reason for this second possibility is the possible presence of an idealist in the dialectical neighborhood, who might argue that even though neither seeing nor the seen inherently exists, both exist as illusions of the putative seer, who must exist, even if only as the subject of delusion.) Nāgārjuna aims to demonstrate the emptiness of all of the constituents of the person by taking form as an example and applying arguments that are general in scope. Form is taken as an example precisely because it is the most solid, apparently nonempty of the aggregates - the one that we are most likely to reify. So the program is to use arguments with application to any of the aggregates and to apply them to the hardest case. The conclusion Nāgārjuna is after is that no decomposition of the person will yield constituents that are themselves independent and nonempty.

Kārikā IV.1

रूपकारणनिर्मुक्तं न रूपमुपलभ्यते।
रूपेणापि न निर्मुक्तं दृश्यते रूपकारणम्॥१॥

LVP 123,6-7 - LVP 128,15-16
rūpakāraṇanirmuktaṃ na rūpam upalabhyate |
rūpeṇāpi na nirmuktaṃ dṛśyate rūpakāraṇam ||1||

若離於色因 色則不可得
若當離於色 色因不可得

T1564: vol 30, pg 6b18
ruò lí yū;yú;wū sè yīn sè zé bù kě dé;děi;de
ruò dāng lí yū;yú;wū sè sè yīn bù kě dé;děi;de

།གཟུགས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུ་ནི་མ་གཏོགས་པར།།གཟུགས་ནི་དམིགས་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
།གཟུགས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་མ་གཏོགས་པར།།གཟུགས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུ་ཡང་མི་སྣང་ངོ༎

Tg tsa 3b4 - Tg tsa 4a1-2
|| gzugs kyi rgyu ni ma gtogs par | | gzugs ni dmigs par mi ’gyur ro |
| gzugs źes bya ba ma gtogs par | | gzugs kyi rgyu yaṅ mi snaṅ ṅo |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - Material form (rupa) separated from the efficient cause (karana) cannot be conceived. Moreover, separated from material form the efficient cause cannot be seen. - Note: The causes are in reference to the Four Great Elements Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind.

JONES (Skt):
[1] Apart from the cause of the material form of the body, the form is not perceived; apart from form, its cause is not seen.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Material form, distinct from the cause of material form, is not obtained. Similarly, a cause of material form, distinct from material form, is also not seen.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Material form separated from the cause of material form is not obtained.
And the cause of material form separated from material form is not seen.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. When all things and phenomena, or material substances, are separated and at random,
Even the form of things and phenomena are not perceived actually.
And even though relying upon all things and phenomena, there is no separation and freedom.
The oneness of all things and phenomena, or material substances, can be seen as they are.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 Objects are not perceived apart from matter as their cause; matter as cause is not perceived apart from objects.

STRENG (Skt):
1. Visible form (rupa) is not perceived without the basic cause of visible form (rupakarana); Likewise the basic cause of visible form does not appear without the visible form.

BOCKING (Ch):
4v1 Form that is separate from the cause of form
Is inconceivable
A cause of form separate from form
Is inconceivable

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Apart from the cause of form, form is not perceived. Apart from "form", the cause of form also does not appear.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Apart from the cause of form,
Form is not observed.
Likewise, aside from so-called form,
No cause of form can be observed either. [IV.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Apart from the cause of form,
Form cannot be conceived.
Apart from form,
The cause of form is not seen.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Apart from the cause of form,
Form cannot be conceived.
Apart from form,
The cause of form is not apparent.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Matter, apart from the cause of matter, is not conceivable. So too, the cause of matter, apart from matter, is never found.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Except for there being the cause of form,
Form would not be seen.
Except for there being what we call "form,"
The cause of form would not appear either. (1)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

4/1 As for 'cause of form'. It is like threads being the cause of the cloth. If you take away the threads, there is no cloth, and if you cast away the cloth, there is no thread. The cloth is like form, the threads are like its cause

Question: What is the error in saying that form exists separately from its cause?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Here 'objects' means particular material objects (*bhautika rupa*), and their material cause (*karana*) are the four elements (fn 3 Earth, air, fire, water). One does not perceive objects — the physical particulars designated sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch separated from the four elements and existing by themselves as a piece of cloth is separate from a jar (fn 4 That is, a perceived object is inseparable from a material base). And matter as cause (*rupa-karana*) is not perceived existing by itself apart from objects. Wishing to establish this double claim Nagarjuna says:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

From among the five aggregates (skandha), Nagarjuna selects material form (rupa), and not one of the explicitly psychological aggregates such as feeling, perception, disposition, or consciousness. The reason is clear. He has already examined the process of perception and, therefore, needs to analyse the object of perception, rather than perception itself.

In the discourses, material from (rupa) was analysed into the four great elements (cattaro mahabhuta) and the elements derived from these four (catunnam mahabhutanam upadaya rupam) (M 2.87). In their attempt to determine what these derived elements were, the Abhidharmikas scanned all the discourses looking for any element (dhavma) that would be predominantly material and compiled varying lists. As a result of speculation on these different lists, there came to be a distinction between gross matter (sthula-rupa) and subtle matter (suksma-rupa). Yet, it was assumed that the four great elements constituted the foundation of all forms of matter.

When the question regarding the nature of the four great elements was raised, the Buddha maintained that these consist of hardness and rigidity (kakkhalam kharigatam) which is earth (pathavi), watery element (apogata) which is water (apo), the fiery element (tejogatam) which is fire (tejo), and the airy (vayogatam) which is air (vayo) (M 1.421 ff.). This explains the manner in which they are experienced. However, the interpreters of the Abhidharma began to define them as "the four elements that support self-nature as well as derived form" (svalaksanopadayarupadharanad dhatavah, Akb). An almost identical definition was gradually being offered for the conception of dharma (svasamanyalaksanadharanad dharmah, Sakv p. 12) where svalaksana refers to self-nature or substance and samanyalaksana to "general characteristics" or "quality," the latter corresponding in some way to the derived elements. These ideas appeared in the Theravada tradition only in the Abhidhamma commentaries and the later manuals and sub-commentaries (e.g., sabhava-samanna-lakkhanam dharetiti dhamma, Abhvt). Thus, with the Sarvastivada speculation, two new categories were emergingsubstance and charcteristicswhich ultimately involved a one-way relationship. The substances serve as the cause (karana) of characteristics, but not vice versa.

Even though these speculations are recorded in treatises composed long after Nagarjuna, they did not originate with such treatises but were prevalent during his day or even before, as is evident from a careful reading of the Karika. It is the above mentioned substantialist view of material form (rupa) that is criticized in the present verse. For Nagarjuna (as well as for the Buddha), material form distinct from the cause of material form (rupa-karana = mahabhuta) is not acceptable. Similarly, a cause of material form distinct from material form is also not experienced. Here there is no denial of material form, but only a rejection of the idea that there is an invisible ground of material form.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. Nāgārjuna begins by making use of the results of the first chapter. Nothing arises causelessly, and no cause is ineffectual. So if any form exists, it exists with a cause. And if the cause of any form exists, so does that form. But there is an interesting problem to be posed: How about form itself - matter considered in general, not in its specific instances? Does it have a cause or not? This question is important because it gets at the question of whether we can imagine ultimate ontological categories that exist independently. If form has a cause at all, it must be either. the same or different from form. If the former, we have an infinite regress. If the latter, then we have the absurd conclusion that immaterial things can cause material things to come into existence. If it has no cause, then it cannot be said to exist at all. (fn 46. We must understand "form" in this context to designate physical reality as a whole, including matter and energy. We can presume (bypassing hagiographic considerations) that Nāgārjuna was unaware of the relativistic understanding of the interchangeability of these two; but it is clear that, from the standpoint of *"skandha* theory," the operative contrast is between the physical and the nonphysical. (And here, given the antisubstantial metaphysics in play, "nonphysical" does not mean made of spook stuff.) Form is just whatever is susceptible of physical description and explanation. Many kinds of supervenience are compatible with the decomposition suggested by Buddhist psychology.)

Kārikā IV.2

रूपकारणनिर्मुक्ते रूपे रूपं प्रसज्यते।
आहेतुकं, न चास्त्यर्थः कश्चिदाहेतुकः क्वचित्॥२॥

rūpakāraṇanirmukte rūpe rūpaṃ prasajyate |
āhetukaṃ na cāsty arthaḥ kaścid āhetukaḥ kva cit ||2||

離色因有色 是色則無因
無因而有法 是事則不然

lí sè yīn yǒu sè shì sè zé wú yīn
wú yīn ér yǒu fǎ shì shì zé bù rán

།གཟུགས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུ་ནི་མ་གཏོགས་པར། །གཟུགས་ན་གཟུགས་ནི་རྒྱུ་མེད་པར།
།ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར་ཏེ་དོན་གང་ཡང་། །རྒྱུ་མེད་པ་ནི་གང་ན་འང་མེད།།

| gzugs kyi rgyu ni ma gtogs par | | gzugs na gzugs ni rgyu med par |
| thal bar gyur te (5)don gaṅ yaṅ | | rgyu med pa ni gaṅ na'aṅ med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - If material form is separated from efficient cause, then it follows that form will be without a cause. However, nowhere is there a thing existing without a cause.

JONES (Skt):
[2] If there were form apart from its cause, then the form would be without a cause. But nowhere is there any effect without a cause.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When material form is [considered to be] distinct from the cause of material form, it follows that material form is without a cause. Nowhere is there any effect without a cause.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If material form separated from the cause of material form occurs, then there is material form without a cause.
But there is not any effect without a cause anywhere.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. When all things and phenomena, or material substance, are separated and at random,
Relying upon all things and phenomena, and attached to all things and phenomena,
What is not reasonable, does never exist as aim,
But at the same time something unreasonable might exists somewhere.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 If objects exist apart from matter as their cause, objects must be uncaused; but nothing is ever without a cause.

STRENG (Skt):
2. If the visible form existed apart from its basic cause, it would logically follow that visible form is without cause; But there is nothing anywhere arising without cause.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
IV.2 No object whatsoever exists without being caused.

BOCKING (Ch):
4v2 Form which existed separately from the cause of form
Would be form without a cause.
A dharma which exists without a cause?
This is not correct.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there were form apart from the cause of form, it would follow that form is without cause; there is no object at all that is without cause.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there were form apart from its causes,
It would follow that form has no cause.
Yet there are no objects at all
That do not have causes. [IV.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. If apart from the cause of form, there were form,
Form would be without cause.
But nowhere is there an effect
Without a cause.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. If apart from the cause of form there were form,
Form would, absurdly, be without a cause.
But nowhere is there a thing
Without a cause.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Were matter apart from the cause of matter, matter would appear without a cause. But never is an effect ever found without a cause.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

4/2 It is like a cloth existing separately from its threads, which would be a cloth without a cause. Things which are uncaused and yet exist are not found anywhere in the world.

Question: In the Buddha-dharma, in the doctrines of outsiders (non-Buddhists) and in worldly teachings there are dharmas which are uncaused. Buddhism has the three inactive (dharmas) which, being inactive are permanent and therefore without causes. In the non-Buddhist teachings they have space, time, direction, soul, atoms, nirvana and so forth. In the teachings of the ordinary world there are emptiness, time, direction and so on. These three dharmas, being nowhere non-existent are consequently called 'permanent'. Being permanent, they are uncaused, so how can you say that uncaused dharmas do not exist in the world?

(6c3) Reply: These 'uncaused dharmas' only exist as figures of speech. If we ponder and analyze them we find they are non-existent. If dharmas have their being through causes and conditions, we ought not to say that they are uncaused. If they have no causes and conditions then it is as we have said.

Question: Causes are of two kinds: One is the actual cause, the other is the 'figurative cause'. These 'uncaused dharmas' have no actual cause, they merely have a figurative cause, to make people know of them.

Reply: Although they have figurative causes, you are not correct. Just as 'Space' is refuted, in the (next chapter on the) six elements, so the remaining items will be refuted later. Moreover, since even visible things can be refuted, how much more so atoms and other invisible things? This is why we state that there are no uncaused dharmas in the world.

Question: If (we said that) the cause of form existed separately from form, what would be wrong with that?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

As a piece of cloth, being another thing than a pot, cannot be caused by the pot, so objects — material particulars cannot be caused by the four elements if thought of as separated from them. But, 'Nothing is ever without a cause.' Therefore, because causelessness is logically absurd, it cannot be accepted that objects are separate from matter as their cause.

Now, to show that matter as cause cannot exist apart from objects, Nagarjuna says:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

It is the sharp distinction between material form and its assumed cause that was posing an epistemological problem for Nagarjuna. In fact, evidence from a later Theravada sub-commentary seems to indicate that a school with Sautrantika leanings was trying to eliminate the distinction between these two ideas. Referring to the definition of dhamma mentioned in relation to IV. 1. It is said: "There is no dhamma over and above the nature of supporting," [na ca dhariyamana-sabhava añño dhammo nama atthi, DhsT p. 21; see also my article, "Schools of Buddhism in Early Ceylon," in The Ceylon Journal of the Humanities, Peradeniya 1 (1970):78], a view that resembles the one presented by George Berkeley during modern times.

Nagarjuna seems to be unwilling to accept such a solution. Considering the philosophical issues a philosopher like Berkeley had to face, one can understand Nagarjuna's unwillingness to subscribe to such a view. Without allowing the experienced elements (dharma) to hang loose, Nagarjuna was interested in providing a causal explanation. Therefore, following the Buddha's explanation of "dependent arising", Nagarjuna boldly asserts: "Nowhere is there any effect without a cause," (see also XXIV. 19, aprati tyasamutpanno dharmah kascin na vidyate).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. If form as such exists without any cause, we would have an example of an inherently existent category. But that would also violate the principle of dependent origination. That is, both Nāgārjuna and his opponent agree that all phenomena are dependently originated, and the discussion in the present chapter is in fact directed at figuring out just what material form depends on. So an attempt to posit material form as inherently existent on the grounds that it comes into existence causelessly is an ad hoc move that is unavailable to any participant in this debate. Moreover, Nāgārjuna points out in the next verse, if we held form to be dependent upon a cause that was itself inherently existent, we would have an inherently existing cause without an inherently existing effect. That putative cause would, hence, fail to be a cause in the full sense. Between genuine causes and their effects there is a relation of dependence. For something to count as a cause independent of its producing an effect would be incoherent. But since in the context of inherent existence merely conventional existence counts as no existence at all, an inherently existent cause with a merely conventionally existent effect would count just as much as an ineffective cause. So neither can we make sense of an inherently existent cause of the existence of material form if material form is held not to be inherently existent.

Kārikā IV.3

रूपेण तु विनिर्मुक्तं यदि स्याद्रूपकारणम्।
अकार्यकं कारणं स्यात् नास्त्यकार्यं च कारणम्॥३॥

rūpeṇa tu vinirmuktaṃ yadi syād rūpakāraṇam |
akāryakaṃ kāraṇaṃ syād nāsty akāryaṃ ca kāraṇam ||3||

若離色有因 則是無果因
若言無果因 則無有是處

ruò lí sè yǒu yīn zé shì wú guǒ yīn
ruò yán wú guǒ yīn zé wú yǒu shì chǔ

|གལ་ཏེ་གཟུགས་ནི་མ་གཏོགས་པར། |གཟུགས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུ་ཞིག་ཡོད་ན་ནི།
|འབྲས་བུ་མེད་པའི་རྒྱུར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། |འབྲས་བུ་མེད་པའི་རྒྱུ་མེད་དོ།

| gal te gzugs ni ma gtogs par | | gzugs kyi rgyu źig yod na ni |
| ’bras bu med pa’i rgyur ’gyur te | | ’bras bu med pa’i rgyu med do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - Granted that separated from material form an efficient cause of form exists, then there will be a cause without an effect. But a cause without an effect (in reality) does no exist.

JONES (Skt):
[3] If there were a cause of form apart from form, then the cause would be without an effect. But there is no cause without an effect.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If there were to be a cause of material form distinct from material form, there would then be a cause without an effect. There certainly is no ineffective cause.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
But if, in material form, there would be material form and the cause of material form separated in two parts,
then there would be a cause without an effect. There is no cause without an effect.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Relying upon all things and phenomena, it is situations of freedom now,
And then it might be oneness between all things and phenomena, or material existence.
What is in an impossible situation to do, might be what can not be done actually,
And both what can not be done actually, or what might be only material, do not actually exist.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 If matter as cause were separate from objects, Matter as cause would be without any effect. There is no cause without an effect.

STRENG (Skt):
3. On the other hand, if there would be a basic cause apart from visible form, The basic cause would be without any product; but there is no basic cause without a product.

ROBINSON (Skt):
If cause-of-form existed disjoined from form, then there would be an effectless cause [Therefore cause-of-form does not exist disjoined from form.].

BOCKING (Ch):
4v3 If its cause existed, separate from form,
Then this 'cause' would be without an effect.
If you are saying that there are causes without effects –
This circumstance does not exist.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If a cause of form existed apart from form, it would exist as a cause without fruit; causes without fruit do not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If, aside from form,
There were a cause of form,
There would be a cause with no effect,
Yet there are no causes without effects. [IV.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. If apart from form
There were a cause of form,
It would be a cause without an effect.
But there are no causes without effects.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. If apart from form
There were a cause of form,
It would be a cause without an effect.
But there are no causes without effects.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Were there a cause of matter apart from matter, there would be a cause without an effect. But never is a cause found without an effect.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

4/3 If we eliminate the effect, i. e. form, and merely have the cause of form, this would be a cause without an effect.

Question: What is wrong with there being a cause with no effect?

Reply: Nowhere in the world do you find a cause without an effect, and why? It is by virtue of its effect that we call something a cause. If there is no effect, how can you call it a cause?

Moreover, if there is no effect within the cause, why should things not arise from no-cause? This topic is similar to that dealt with in chapter one, on the refutation of causality. Therefore, no cause exists without an effect. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

3ab *If matter as cause were separate from objects*

If, that is, matter as cause were separate from objects as its effects then, just as the frying pan taken as separate from the pot cannot be the cause of the pot, so if matter as cause is conceived as existing separated from its effects,

3c *Matter as cause would be without any effect.*

It would be effectless. The condition for the causality of a cause is that it produces an effect. There is no production of an effect if this is thought of as separated from a material cause unrelated to the effect. Nagarjuna says that a cause without an effect, because it does not cause anything, does not exist, like the horns of a man or of a snake or of a horse.

3d *There is no cause without an effect.*

Further, what is taken to be the material cause of objects must be taken as the cause either of an object which exists or of one which does not exist. Nagarjuna says that neither way is logically possible.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The statement in the previous verse: "Nowhere is there an effect without a cause," (na casti arthah kascid ahetukah kvacit) could lead to the belief in an invisible ultimate cause (like substance, or even God) that is eternal. While the characteristics, perceived qualities, etc. could be looked upon as the experienced, yet variable, effects, their ultimate ground would be the substance, eternally existing even when it is not producing the effects. Realizing that such a view could emerge from his previous assertion, Nagarjuna immediately proceeds to nip it in the bud when he insists: "There is no in-effect-ive cause." Thus, IV.2 and 3, in combination should provide the interpreters of Nagarjuna with the clearest evidence that he was upholding the theory of dependent arising" (prati tyasamutpada) in the form in which it was formulated by the Buddha in the early discourses.

Kārikā IV.4

रूपे सत्येव रूपस्य कारणं नोपपद्यते।
रूपेऽसत्येव रूपस्य कारणं नोपपद्यते॥४॥

rūpe saty eva rūpasya kāraṇaṃ nopapadyate |
rūpe ’saty eva rūpasya kāraṇaṃ nopapadyate ||4||

若已有色者 則不用色因
若無有色者 亦不用色因

ruò yǐ yǒu sè zhě zé bù yòng sè yīn
ruò wú yǒu sè zhě yì bù yòng sè yīn

།གཟུགས་ཡོད་ན་ཡང་གཟུགས་ཀྱི་ནི།།རྒྱུ་ཡང་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་ཉིད།
།གཟུགས་མེད་ན་ཡང་གཟུགས་ཀྱི་ནི།།རྒྱུ་ཡང་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་ཉིད།།

| gzugs yod na yaṅ gzugs kyi ni | | rgyu yaṅ ’thad par mi ’gyur ñid |
| gzugs med (6)na yaṅ gzugs kyi ni | | rgyu yaṅ ’thad par mi ’gyur ñid |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - When material form exists, its cause is untenable. Moreover, even when material form does not exist, its cause is (likewise) untenable.

JONES (Skt):
[4] If the form were already existing, its cause would not be occurring; and if the form were not existing, its cause would also not occur.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When a material form exists, a cause of material form is not appropriate. When a material form does not exist, a cause of material form is also not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where material form is, the cause of material form does not occur.
Where material from is not, the cause of material form does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. Because of being in all things and phenomena, they belong just to all things and phenomena.
Material existence does not manifest itself.
Even when all things and phenomena do not exist in all things and phenomena,
Material existence does not manifest itself.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 Matter as cause of an object which exists is not logically possible; matter as cause of an object which does not exist is not logically possible.

STRENG (Skt):
4. Just as when there is visible form no basic cause of form obtains, So when there is no visible form no basic cause of form obtains.

BOCKING (Ch):
4v4 If form were already existent,
Then it would have no use for a 'cause of form'.
If form did not exist
Then, too, it would have no use for form.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If form existed, a cause of form would be untenable; if form did not exist, a cause of form would be untenable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When form exists,
A cause of form does not make sense,
Yet when form does not exist,
A cause of form does not make sense either. [IV.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. When form exists,
A cause of the arising of form is not tenable.
When form is non-existent,
A cause of the arising of form is not tenable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. When form exists,
A cause of form is not tenable.
When form is nonexistent,
A cause of form is not tenable.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When matter exists, its cause makes no sense. When matter doesn’t exist, its cause makes no sense.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

4/4 In neither case is there a cause for form. If form preexisted in the cause, the cause would not be called the cause of form. If no form pre-existed in the cause, in that case too the cause would be termed the cause of form.

Question: If both these cases are wrong, then what is wrong with there being simply uncaused form?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If an object is in being (*sant*), that is, factually exists (*sam-vidyamana*), what would be the point of its having a material cause? If an object is not in being, that is, does not factually exist, what could be the meaning of its 'cause'? What would one suppose such a cause to be the cause of? So, if an object does not exist, its cause is not logically possible.

You may say: Although a material cause of objects is in this way not logically possible, none the less objects exist in fact as effects and because of their real existence matter as cause will exist as well. This would be so if the object as effect existed, but it does not. So,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here Nagarjuna is reverting back to the criticisms he made of the Sarvastivada and Sautrantika views in Chapter I. The first is the identity theory of causation and the second, the non-identity theory, and these criticisms are here applied to the causality of material form (rupa).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. Any relationship between form and a putative cause is unintelligible, Nāgārjuna argues, following closely the reasoning in Chapter I. If form exists, the cause has ceased to exist. If form does not exist, the cause cannot have existed. This might seem at first glance to be a wholesale rejection of the possibility of dependency of effects on causal conditions. But if we recall the moral of Chapter I and keep the dialectical context of the current chapter firmly in mind we will see that this is not so: The paradox of causal contact arises - as Sextus also notes - only if we suppose that the causes we appeal to in explanation must have some special force by means of which they bring about their effects. That, as we have seen, is the view of the causal link as inherently existent and, hence, of causes as inherently existent. The opponent Nāgārjuna is attacking in this chapter is one who thinks that form/matter is inherently existent, but who has granted that all individual phenomena - all particular forms, such as human bodies, tables, and chairs - are dependently arisen. So the opponent agrees that all phenomena must be explicable. But the opponent wants to reify form, and that is to treat it as a phenomenon albeit an inherently existent one. Therefore, it must, for the opponent, have an explanation of its existence, and since its existence is inherent existence, it must be an explanation in terms of inherently existent causation. So all that Nāgārjuna has to do is to remind the opponent of the incoherence of *that* notion in order to undermine the view that form as such is inherently existent. The coherence of conventional dependent origination is not at issue.

Kārikā IV.5

निष्कारणं पुना रूपं नैव नैवोपपद्यते।
तस्मात् रूपगतान् कांश्चिन्न विकल्पान् विकल्पयेत्॥५॥

niṣkāraṇaṃ punā rūpaṃ naiva naivopapadyate |
tasmād rūpagatān kāṃścin na vikalpān vikalpayet ||5||

無因而有色 是事終不然
是故有智者 不應分別色

wú yīn ér yǒu sè shì shì zhōng bù rán
shì gù yǒu zhì zhě bù yīng fēn bié sè

།རྒྱུ་མེད་པ་ཡི་གཟུགས་དག་ནི།།འཐད་པར་མི་རུང་རུང་མིན་པ་ཉིད།
།དེ་ཕྱིར་གཟུགས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པར་རྟོག།འགའ་ཡང་རྣམ་པར་བརྟག་མི་བྱ།།

| rgyu med pa yi gzugs dag ni | | ’thad par mi ruṅ ruṅ min ñid |
| de phyir gzugs kyi rnam par rtog | | ’ga’ yaṅ rnam par brtag mi bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - Again, material form without a cause definitely is untenable. Therefore, any material form which has been thought of (i.e., becomes a concept) should not (become the basis of) further conceptualization.

JONES (Skt):
[5] However, a form without a cause does not occur. Therefore one should not generate thoughts of distinctions relating to form.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Furthermore, a material form without a cause is absolutely inappropriate. Therefore, one should not discriminatively think of anything confined to material form.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, material form without a cause does not occur.
Therefore, one should not conjecture about any false discriminations about material forms.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. The facts that what does not have any cause produces any kinds of things and phenomena again,
Do never, never, manifest themselves at all.
Therefore all things and phenomena have been produced a little bit already,
And so there is no possibility to be replaced with another contents, or to be desired to be replaced with others.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 An object without a material cause is not, repeat not, logically possible. Should not form any theories at all concerning objects.

STRENG (Skt):
5. Furthermore, it does not obtain that no visible form exists without a basic cause, One should not construe any constructs concerning the form.

BOCKING (Ch):
4v5 For form to exist and yet be uncaused –
This is altogether wrong
For this reason, one who has insight
Should not analyze forms.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Forms which do not have a cause are not at all tenable. Therefore, do not conceive the concept of form at all.

DOCTOR (Tb):
A form without a cause is impossible,
Utterly impossible.
Therefore, do not give rise
To any thoughts about form at all. [IV.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. Form itself without a cause
Is not possible or tenable.
Therefore, think about form, but
Do not construct theories about form.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. Form itself without a cause
Is neither possible nor tenable.
Therefore, never conceptualize
Ideas about form.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Furthermore, matter without a cause makes no sense. Therefore, refrain from making distinctions based on the assumption of matter.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

4/5 Whether the effect inheres in the cause, or whether no effect inheres in the cause: such matters remain inconceivable. How much more so the existence of form without cause? This is why it is said 'for form to exist and yet be uncaused – this is altogether wrong', and therefore one who has insight should not analyze form.

'Analyzer' is a name for the common man who, bound by ignorance, desire and attachment to form, consequently develops from his perverted views distinctions and vain arguments, speculating that the effect inheres or does not inhere in the cause, and so forth. If you search for form in this way, it is never attainable, and therefore a man of insight should not analyze.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

5ab *An object without a material cause is not, repeat not, logically possible.*

How it is that there is no material cause has been shown. But if there is no material cause, how could there be an object as an effect which has no cause? By the double rejection of the emphatic 'not, repeat not' Nagarjuna makes clear the harmfulness of the view that things can be without causes.

And thus, on being considered from every aspect, a perceptible material object (*rupa*) is not possible. Therefore the wise one (*yogi*), who sees things as they really are,

5cd *Should not form any theories at all concerning objects.*

The meaning is that he does not take objects to be the external base (*alambana*) to which are attributed such characteristics as penetrable or impenetrable, veridically perceivable or not veridically perceivable, past or future, light or dark.

Whether one thinks that matter as cause gives rise to an effect which is identical with or not identical with itself, neither alternative is logically possible. Nagarjuna says:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

A theory of an uncaused event, as reiterated, was clearly unacceptable to Nagarjuna. Indeed, it is emphasized by the repetition of the negation, naiva. Not accepting the epistemology that is generally and indiscriminately attributed to Nagarjuna, we have avoided translating the term vikalpa either as "conceptualization" or "conceptual construction" or even "discrimination," (see Introduction). The importance of the term rupagatan cannot be over-emphasized. The comments on the previous verses show to what extent speculation "confined" strictly to material form (rupa) led to all kinds of weird philosophical theories. The analysis of material form should be undertaken in relation to various other issues, especially language and epistemology. In the last few verses, Nagarjuna was engaged precisely in such an enterprise. Hence his advice in the present verse. The suffix -gata is better understood in the meaning in which it occurs in phrases like kaya-gata ("confined to the body"), hasta-gata ("confined to the hand"), etc.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. The moral of these arguments, Nāgārjuna concludes, is that we cannot think of form as such as an entity at all. Individual forms are entities - dependently arisen ones, hence, empty of inherent existence. But form itself is an abstraction, neither caused nor uncaused, but dependent upon the existence of material things with form. (Moreover, were one to argue that form itself exists as an entity, one would be faced with an uncomfortable dilemma: Its existence would be caused or uncaused. The latter alternative patently begs the question regarding the explanation of the existence of the material world. But the former issues in a further dilemma: The cause would either itself be material or immaterial. On the first horn, we have an infinite regress; on the second, the inexplicable causation of the material by the immaterial.) (fn 47. See also Kalupahana (1986), p. 38, for a similar analysis.) So, he advises, think carefully about what form is and about the nature of particular material objects. But do not construct theories that purport to describe the essence of material form. For there is no such thing. It is simply a characteristic of ·individual material objects and, hence, something that depends upon their existence, with no essence of its own.

Kārikā IV.6

न कारणस्य सदृशं कार्यमित्युपपद्यते।
न कारणस्यासदृशं कार्यमित्युपपद्यते॥६॥

na kāraṇasya sadṛśaṃ kāryam ity upapadyate |
na kāraṇasyāsadṛśaṃ kāryam ity upapadyate ||6||

若果似於因 是事則不然
果若不似因 是事亦不然

ruò guǒ sì yū;yú;wū yīn shì shì zé bù rán
guǒ ruò bù sì yīn shì shì yì bù rán

།འབྲས་བུ་རྒྱུ་དང་འདྲ་བ་ཞེས།།བྱ་བ་འཐད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།
།འབྲས་བུ་རྒྱུ་དང་མི་འདྲ་ཞེས།།བྱ་བ་འང་འཐད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| ’bras bu rgyu daṅ ’dra ba źes | | bya ba ’thad pa ma yin te |
| ’bras bu rgyu daṅ mi ’dra (7)źes | | bya ba’aṅ ’thad pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - It is untenable that the effect will resemble the efficient cause. Again, it is untenable that the effect will not resemble the efficient cause.

JONES (Skt):
[6] Identifying the cause with the effect is not appropriate. But not identifying the cause with the effect is also not appropriate.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The view that the effect is identical with the cause is not appropriate. The view that the effect is not identical with the cause is also not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The statement “the effect is similar to the cause” does not obtain.
The statement “the effect is not similar to the cause” does not obtain.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. It is not imitation of material stuff,
But it is just the work, which has been actually created.
It is not purely material substance itself,
But it is just the work, which has been actually created.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 It is not logically possible that an effect is identical with its cause. It is not logically possible that an effect is not identical with its cause.

STRENG (Skt):
6. Just as it does not obtain that the product is the same as the cause, So it does not obtain that product is not the same as the cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
4v6 If (you say that) the effect resembles the cause,
This is not correct.
If (you say that) the effect does not resemble the cause
This too is incorrect.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is untenable to say, “the fruit is like the cause.” It is also untenable to say, “the fruit is unlike the cause.”

DOCTOR (Tb):
It is not right to say
That effects resemble their causes.
It is not right to say
That effects do not resemble their causes, [IV.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. The assertion that the effect and cause are similar
Is not acceptable.
The assertion that they are not similar
Is also not acceptable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. The assertion that the cause and effect are similar
Makes no sense.
The assertion that they are not similar
Makes no sense.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
That effect and cause are one and the same makes no sense. That effect and cause are different makes no sense.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

4/6 If (you say that the effect and the cause resemble each other, this is not correct, because the cause is subtle, the effect gross. Cause and effect, form and function89 etc. are different from each other. Just as cloth is similar to thread, but we do not call thread 'cloth', for threads are many but cloth is one, so we cannot say that cause and effect resemble each other. To say that cause and effect do not resemble each other is also wrong, for just as hempen thread does not make thin silk, and coarse thread will not produce fine cloth, so we cannot say that cause and effect are dissimilar. Both ideas are wrong, so there is neither form, nor cause-of-form.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

It is commonly supposed that matter (*rupakarana*) is by its inherent nature solid, liquid, warm and mobile. Particular material objects (*bautika*), however, whether they are personal like the eye and the other sense faculties which are by nature of a subtle matter and are the base of visual and the other types of sense consciousness, or whether they are the external sense fields like the visible whose nature it is to be perceived in the various types of sense consciousness, do not possess the inherent nature of the four elements. It follows that, because they have different characteristics, cause, i.e. matter, and effect, i.e. material objects, are not identical, as in the case of *nirvāṇa* (fn 5 Candrakīrti seems to be saying that cause and effect, like *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are so different that no statement about their relationship is possible.). 'It is not logically possible that an effect is identical with its cause.'

Further, one never sees the real dependence in the relationship of cause to effect, even when they are identical like the rice seed and the ripe grain. 'It is not logically possible that an effect is identical with its cause.'

And again, 'It is not logically possible that an effect is not identical with its cause.' The meaning here is that it is so because they have different characteristics, as in the case of *nirvāṇa*.

So perceivable material objects, on being investigated, are not logically possible in any way at all. Nagarjuna extends this conclusion to feeling and the other constitutive factors of personal existence as well.

The same procedure holds for the other factors of personal existence

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Unlike IV.4 which states the inappropriateness of identity and non-identity theories of causation applied specifically to the subject matter under discussion, namely, material form (rupa), the present verse emphasizes the inappropriateness of identity and non-identity theories in general.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. We cannot say that nonmaterial things give rise to the existence of matter, for that would be an inexplicable miracle. Nor can we say that matter gives rise to matter, since that would beg the question. But there is no other possibility. So despite the reificationist's intuition that though individual material objects may be empty, the matter they are made of is nonempty, we see that we cannot even clearly conceive of the nature of matter as such independently of material objects. Matter, too, is hence dependent and empty of inherent existence. Nāgārjuna immediately generalizes this to the other aggregates:

Kārikā IV.7

वेदनाचित्तसंज्ञानां संस्कारणां च सर्वशः।
सर्वेषामेव भावानां रूपेणैव समः क्रमः ॥७॥

vedanācittasaṃjñānāṃ saṃskārāṇāṃ ca sarvaśaḥ |
sarveṣām eva bhāvānāṃ rūpeṇaiva samaḥ kramaḥ ||7||

受陰及想陰 行陰識陰等
其餘一切法 皆同於色陰

shòu yīn jí xiǎng yīn xíng;háng;xìng yīn shí yīn děng
qí yú yī qiè fǎ jiē tóng;tòng yū;yú;wū sè yīn

།ཚོར་དང་འདུ་ཤེས་འདུ་བྱེད་དང་།།སེམས་དང་དངོས་པོ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱང་།
།རྣམ་པ་དག་ནི་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ།།གཟུགས་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ནི་རིམ་པ་མཚུངས།།

| tshor daṅ ’du śes ’du byed daṅ | | sems daṅ dṅos po thams cad kyaṅ |
| rnam pa dag ni thams cad du | | gzugs ñid kyis ni rim pa mtshuṅs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - Feeling, mind, awareness, volitional plays, and all existential actions can each be discussed in the same manner as material form.

JONES (Skt):
[7] The same method of analysis applies to all the other aggregates of the body - feelings, consciousness, perceptions, and dispositions - and to all entities with form.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The method of treatment of all existents such as feeling, thought, perception and dispositions is in every way similar to that of material form.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and dispositions in general, as well as the totality of beings follow the same rule as material form.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Mental function to get something is always mutual understandings.
It is always an effort to include everything into one perfectly. Therefore the all kinds of researches are just belonging to miscellaneous existences,
And just relying upon all things and phenomena, everything is going on ahead.

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 The inquiry into material objects holds in every essential for feeling, consciousness, ideation and personal dispositions - for all the factors of personal existence.

STRENG (Skt):
7. Also, sensation, thought, mental conception, conditioned elements (samskara) and All "things" (bhava) are to be dealt with in the same way as visible form.

BOCKING (Ch):
4v7 The skandha of reception, the skandha of conception
the skandhas of predisposition and consciousness
And all remaining dharmas,
May be taken together with the skandha of form.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Feeling and perception, impulses and mind and all things are comparable in every aspect, at every stage with form.

DOCTOR (Tb):
With feeling, identification, formation,
Mind, and all things
The steps are, in all regards,
The same as in the case of form. [IV.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. Feelings, discriminations, and dispositions
And consciousness and all such things
Should be thought of
In the same way as material form.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. Feelings, discriminations, dispositions,
Consciousness and all such things
Should be thought of in every way
In the same way as form.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Sensation, conception, inclination, and perception can be thought of in the same manner as matter.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Feelings, discriminations, formations,
Minds, and all the things there are
Are susceptible to the same stages of analysis
That forms have been put through here. (7)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

4/7 The (other) four skandhas and all dharmas should also be contemplated and refuted in the same way. And now the author, wishing to extol the idea of emptiness, says in a verse;

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Feeling and all the constitutive factors of personal existence may suitably be considered in the same way as material objects have been (fn 6 That is, each factor appears to be dependent on appropriate causes; on being examined, however, it is found to be unintelligible either as caused or uncaused: it is devoid of being.). Precisely as the absence of being (*sunyata*), as conceived by Madhyamika, is expounded for one thing (*dharma*), precisely so is it to be expounded for all things. And so:

Any refutation of madhyamika must beg the question

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The previous comments on the contents of this chapter would indicate that Nagarjuna did not deny the reality of material form but only the method of explaining it. A similar treatment is requested of the other aggregates too. Note the use of the term bhava in the present context, which prompts Inada to render it as "existential actions" (compared with its usage at I.3 which Inada translated as "entities").

Kārikā IV.8

विग्रहे यः परीहारं कृते शून्यतया वदेत्।
सर्वं तस्यापरिहृतं समं साध्येन जायते॥८॥

vigrahe yaḥ parīhāraṃ kṛte śūnyatayā vadet |
sarvaṃ tasyāparihṛtaṃ samaṃ sādhyena jāyate ||8||

若人有問者 離空而欲答
是則不成答 俱同於彼疑

ruò rén yǒu wèn zhě lí kōng ér yù dā
shì zé bù chéng dā jù;jū tóng;tòng yū;yú;wū bǐ yí

།སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་བརྩད་བྱས་ཏེ།།གང་ཞིག་ལན་འདེབས་སྨྲ་བྱེད་པ།
།དེ་ཡི་ཐམས་ཅད་ལན་བཏབ་མིན།།བསྒྲུབ་པར་བྱ་དང་མཚུངས་པར་འགྱུར།།

| stoṅ pa ñid kyis brtsad byas te | | gaṅ źig lan ’debs smra byed pa |
| de yis thams cad (4a1)lan btab min | | bsgrub par bya daṅ mtshuṅs par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - When a refutation is based on sunyata and an opponent counter-refutes, he is not able to counter-refute everything since the counter-refutation will be the same (nature) as the contention (sadhya).

JONES (Skt):
[8] In a dispute, when one makes a refutation utilizing emptiness as the means, everything one says remains unrefuted and will be an equivalent to whatever is to be proved.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When an analysis is made in terms of emptiness, whosoever were to address a refutation, all that is left unrefuted by him will be equal to what is yet to be proved.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Whoever argues against openness for the sake of refuting an argument,
all his refutations do not refute for he is conquered by the same proof.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Everything, which is scattered separately at random, is prone to be avoided,
And the creations of the balanced and quiet states, might be talked.
Everything is belonging to the real world, which is not avoided from everything,
And everything is born relying upon the regulated conditions.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 If a counter-argument has been given in terms of the absence of being and someone would offer a refutation of it, he refutes nothing because everything he says presupposes what has to be proved.

STRENG (Skt):
8. Whoever argues against "emptiness" in order to refute an argument, For him everything, including the point of contention (sadhya) is known to be un-refuted.

BOCKING (Ch):
4v8 If a man has a question
And you try to answer it without emptiness,
You will be unable to make an answer
It will be wholly the same as the other's doubts.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When having argued by means of emptiness, everything of that one who objects is not an objection; it is similar to what is to be established .

DOCTOR (Tb):
When a critique is made using emptiness,
Whatever may be replied
Will not be a reply,
But the same as what is still to be proven. [IV.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. When an analysis is made through emptiness,
If someone were to offer a reply,
That reply will fail, since it will presuppose
Exactly what is to be proven.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. When an argument is advanced on the grounds of emptiness,
If someone were to offer a reply,
Any such reply will fail, since it will presuppose
Exactly what is to be proven.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When an analysis is made in regard to Emptiness, were someone to refute it, it would fail since it would presuppose what is yet to be proved.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
When emptiness comes up for debate,
Whatever answers try to prove true existence,
Those answers are unsound
Because they are equivalent to the very thesis to be proved. (8)

INADA FOOTNOTE

Note: This is an extremely subtle and cryptic verse which Candrakīrti clarifies as a play between with self-nature and without self-nature. The Madhyamika with its refutation based on sunyata always maintains the latter, nihsvabhava, of all entities.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Here 'counter-argument' means discrediting the view of another; 'in terms of the absence of being' (sunyataya) means by showing that objects are without a self-existent nature so the view that they have a self-existent nature is ruled out. If an opponent would offer a refutation of this, saying, 'but as feeling, ideas and so on are real, so objects must be real too', everything he says lacks the force of a refutation because the actual existence of feeling, ideas and so on must be known in the same way as the actual existence of objects: which is what has to be proved.

Even as material objects, on being thoroughly investigated, do not actually exist whether they are one with their material cause or different, so feeling, which is dependent on contact with objects, ideation which is simultaneous with consciousness, personal dispositions which are dependent on ignorance, and consciousness which is dependent on dispositions, on being thoroughly investigated, do not exist either as being one with their cause or different. They are like contact and the other factors of the death-birth cycle: all of these are just what has to be proved. And as feeling and so on are the same as what has to be proved, so attributes and the subject of attributes, effect and cause, whole and part and such concepts are things which, like material objects, are just what has to be proved. How could an opponent offer a refutation? His every assertion will be just what has to be proved. Throughout this treatise Nagarjuna teaches that for Madhyamika it is to be taken as a rule that refutations offered by opponents are instances of *petitio principia* (fn 7 A succinct restatement of Chapter I.).

Even as this is the invariable rule concerning the invalidation of the view of an opponent, so, concerning an expository statement, Nagarjuna says:

Kārikā IV.9

व्याख्याने य उपालम्भं कृते शून्यतया वदेत्।
सर्वं तस्यानुपालब्धं समं साध्येन जायते॥९॥

vyākhyāne ya upālambhaṃ kṛte śūnyatayā vadet |
sarvaṃ tasyānupālabdhaṃ samaṃ sādhyena jāyate ||9||

若人有難問 離空說其過
是不成難問 俱同於彼疑

ruò rén yǒu nàn wèn lí kōng shuì qí guò
shì bù chéng nàn wèn jù;jū tóng;tòng yū;yú;wū bǐ yí

།སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་བཤད་བྱས་ཚེ། །གང་ཞིག་སྐྱོན་འདོགས་སྨྲ་བྱེད་པ།
།དེ་ཡི་ཐམས་ཅད་སྐྱོན་བཏགས་མིན། །བསྒྲུབ་པར་བྱ་དང་མཚུངས་པར་འགྱུར།།

| stoṅ pa ñid kyis bśad byas tshe | | gaṅ źig skyon 'dogs smra byed pa |
| de yis thams cad skyon btags min | | bsgrub par bya daṅ mtshuṅs par 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - When an exposition is based on sunyata and an opponent censors, he is not able to censor everything since the censorship will be the same (nature) as the contention.

JONES (Skt):
[9] When one makes an explanation by means of emptiness, everything one says remains unopposed and will be an equivalent to whatever is to be proved.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When an explanation in terms of emptiness is given, whosoever were to address a censure, all that is left uncensored by him will be equal to what is yet to be proved.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Whoever explains by means of openness for the sake of ascertaining,
all his ascertainments do not ascertain for he is conquered by the same demonstration.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. With miscellaneous explanations in detail, many kinds of defaults have been indicated and explained,
And the creations of the balanced state in the autonomic nervous system, might be talked.
Everything, which belongs to reality, does not have any default to be criticized,
Therefore everything has been born similarly being in well-regulated situations actually.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 If, after an exposition has been made in terms of the absence of being, someone were to offer a criticism, nothing he says will be a criticism because it will be just what has to be proved.

STRENG (Skt):
9. Whoever argues by means of "emptiness" in order to explain an understanding, For him, everything including the point to be proved (sadhya) is known to be misunderstood.

BOCKING (Ch):
4v9 If a man makes a criticism
Explaining the other's errors without recourse to emptiness
He will not succeed in his criticism
It will be wholly the same as the other's doubts.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When having explained by means of emptiness, everything of that one who finds fault is not a fault; it is similar to what is to be established.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When an explanation is given using emptiness
Whatever flaws one may find
Will not be found to be flaws,
But the same as what is still to be proven. [IV.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. When an explanation is made through emptiness,
Whoever would find fault with it
Will find no fault, since the criticism will presuppose
Exactly what is to be proven.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. When an explanation is made through emptiness,
Whoever would find fault with it
Will find no fault, since any such criticism will presuppose
Exactly what is to be proven.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When an exposition is made in terms of Emptiness, no fault will be found that is not bound by what is yet to be proved.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
When explanations are given about emptiness,
Whoever would try to find faults in them
Will not be able to find any faults at all,
Because the faults are equivalent to the very thesis to be proved. (9)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

4/9 If, during a discussion, each party seizes on to a particular position and they debate without reference to the idea of emptiness they will never conclude the debate, and all will be together in doubt. For example, a man says 'a jug is impermanent'. His opponent says 'why is it impermanent'? and he replies: 'because it arises from an impermanent cause'. This is not what one would call an answer. Why not? Because there is still the uncertainty of not knowing whether the cause is permanent or impermanent.

(7a25) If, wishing to explain the other's erroneous views, he simply declares, without relying on emptiness, that all dharmas are impermanent, this is not what one would call a criticism, and why? Because you by your 'impermanence' have refuted my 'permanence' but I by my 'permanence' can refute your 'impermanence', saying that if things truly were impermanent there would be no karma and consequences, that the dharmas of eye and ear, etc., would cease every instant and that there would be no distinctions (between sin and merit etc.). Such fallacies as these will never succeed as criticisms, being at the same level as the opponent's doubts.

(7bl) However, if one relies on emptiness to refute permanence, no error is involved, and why? Because such a man does not cling to the mark of 'emptiness'. Therefore if one even wants to debate, he should rely upon the idea of emptiness; how much more so if he desires to seek the characteristic of release from affliction, and calm extinction.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If during an exposition some pseudo-disciple raises a critical objection, that very objection, it should be known, will be just what has to be proved, as in the case of a counter-argument.

To quote: 'Who sees one thing truly, it should be remembered, sees all things truly. The absence of being in one thing is the absence of being in all things.'

And from the *Gaganaganjasamadhi Sutra*: 'The one who by examining one putative element realizes that all putative elements are like a magical show, like a mirage: unintelligible, false, deceptive and perishable, he is the one who progresses directly to the haven of enlightenment.'

And from the *Samadhiraja Sutra* as well: 'Just as you have understood the concept of the self, so should you turn your mind to all things; all putative elements have the same nature as the self: they are as transparent as the heavens. The one who from one thing knows all things and from one thing sees all things, in him, whatever the paths of his thought, there will be no egomania.'

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

These two subtle and cryptic verses can best be understood in the context in which they appear. They are placed at the end of an extremely important analysis of the metaphysics relating to material form (rupa). As such they should be considered the conclusion of that analysis.

The basic theme of the chapter has been the rejection of any metaphysical substance (svabhava) as the cause of material form (rupa-karana). Indeed, there was no rejection of the cause of material form, only the criticism of the view that this cause is an invisible permanent entity distinct from the perceived material form. This criticism if referred to at IV.8 as "an analysis in terms of emptiness" (sunyataya vigrahe krte). Interestingly, the term "emptiness" (sunyata) never occurred in that analysis. The analysis was made on the basis of mutual "dependence" of material form (rupa) and the cause of material form (rupa-karana). Thus, material form and the cause are empty of substance because they are mutually dependent. At this stage, if someone were to present a refutation of Nagarjuna's view, that refutation would be intended as a refutation of the "mutual dependence" of the material form and its cause. However, such a refutation does not automatically prove the validity of the metaphysical idea, namely, svabhava that is being rejected by Nagarjuna on the basis of "dependence." The argument in favor of dependence is experience. Hence, the person presenting a refutation of this idea should be in a position not only to negate "mutual dependence" but also provide evidence for the establishment of a metaphysical substance (svabhava). This has not yet been achieved. Thus, according to Nagarjuna, what still remains to be proved (sadhya) is the thesis regarding "substance" rather than "mutual dependence."

These two verses are very significant in that they seem to admit that the Madhyamikas have a positive thesis,

namely, "dependent arising" which is accepted on the basis of experience. The "emptiness" (sunyata) they advocate is simply a challenge for the metaphysician to prove his own metaphysics. The two verses are identical except for the use of the two pairs of terms, vigraha and parihara in the former, and vyakhyana and upalambha in the latter. As is well known, Nagarjuna is also the author of a treatise called Vigrahavyavartani. The term vigraha means "analysis." On the basis of this work, modern interpreters of Nagarjuna have assumed that he was merely an analytical philosopher whose enterprise was confined solely to "analysis" (vigraha) of opposing views utilizing the conception of "emptiness" (sunyata). However, IV.9, cast in the same mould as IV.8, raises doubts about the validity of such an interpretation of the character of Nagarjuna's philosophical method. The use of the term vyakhyana meaning "explanation" seems to indicate that, in addition to "analysis in terms of emptiness," Nagarjuna was also providing an "explanation." That explanation is once again said to be based upon emptiness (sunyataya vyakhyane krte). But as mentioned above, the term "emptiness" did not occur at all in the chapter. Instead the explanation was provided on the basis of "dependent arising" (prati tyasamutpada). "Emptiness" being the counterpart of "dependent arising," "explanation in terms of dependent arising" would, therefore, be the same as "explanation in terms of emptiness."

Thus, Nagarjuna, even when presenting his positive theory of "dependent arising," need not worry about someone censuring him, for the theory of "dependence", like "emptiness," was intended to reject the metaphysics of substance, and the responsibility once again falls on his opponent to prove his own substancemetaphysics.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. In these last two oft-quoted verses, Nāgārjuna claims that once a demonstration of the emptiness of a phenomenon or class of phenomena has been produced, any reply will inevitably beg the question. And this is meant to have been demonstrated by the argument in this chapter in the following way: Once we have shown something to be empty of inherent existence, we have, ipso facto, shown it to be dependently arisen and merely conventionally real. Anything an opponent would want to demonstrate to be inherently existent would fall prey to the causal paradoxes developed in this chapter. That is, he must either assume that the thing is completely independent and causeless, which is, upon analysis, exactly equivalent to the conclusion he is out to prove, or that it arises from another inherently existent phenomenon. But then in order to demonstrate that fact, he must demonstrate the inherent existence of that second phenomenon (as well as the inherent dependence relation between them - a kind of relation we have seen to be internally contradictory). And this is true no matter to which ontological category the putatively inherently existent phenomenon belongs. That this is so should not be surprising, for the central thrust of Nāgārjuna's arguments thus far, and throughout *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā,* is not that inherent existence is a property some things might have had but by global accident is uninstantiated or that emptiness just happens to characterize all phenomena. Rather he is arguing that inherent existence is simply an incoherent notion and that emptiness is the only possible analysis of existence. It would follow straightforwardly that arguments for inherent existence will be question begging. (fn 48. Kalupahana (1986), p. 145, sees a different question being begged. He writes: "The argument in favor of dependence is experience. Hence, the person presenting a refutation of this idea should be in a position not only to negate 'mutual dependence' but also to provide evidence for the establishment of a metaphysical substance (svabhāva). This has not yet been achieved. Thus, according to Nāgārjuna, what still remains to be proved is the thesis regarding 'substance' rather than mutual dependence." While this analysis is consistent with Kalupahana's interpretation of Nāgārjuna as a pragmatically inclined empiricist, I do not see it as an accurate rendering of the argument here. In particular, it ignores the emphasis on emptiness in these verses.)

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Chapter V

धातुपरीक्षा पञ्चमं प्रकरणम्।

中論観六種品第五(八偈)

།ཁམས་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ལྔ་པའོ།།

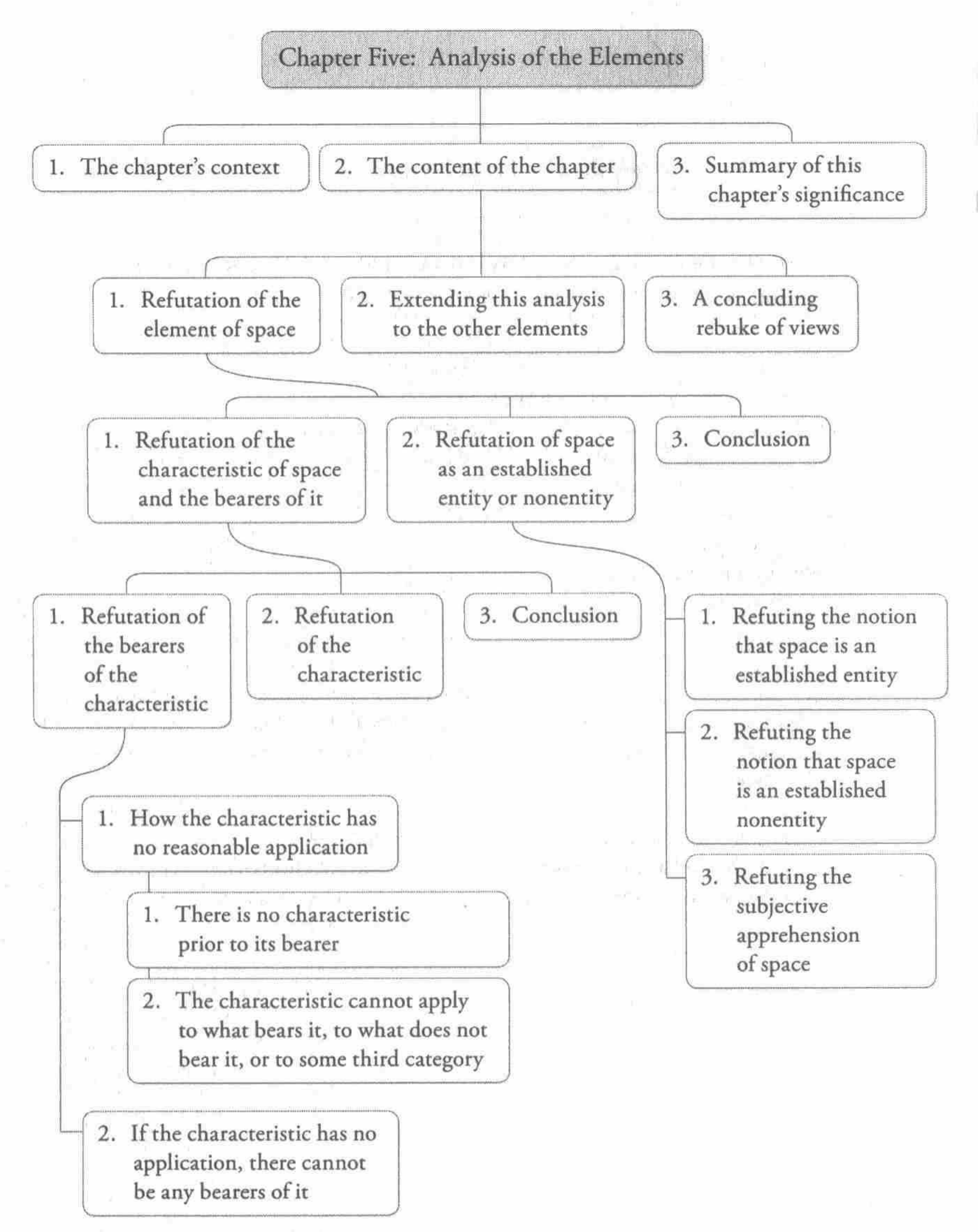
dhātuparīkṣā nāma pañcamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter V: Examination of Elements

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter V

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the section of the text explaining that the three kinds of phenomena are selfless. We have completed the first two parts—the refutation of the phenomenal self of the faculties and the refutation of the phenomenal self of the aggregates—and we now turn to the third part: the refutation of the self of phenomena with respect to the elements. **[134:5]** This chapter constitutes the third part.

EXPLANATION:

Here, one might say that since the elements have not been refuted, and since the Transcendent Lord has said, “Great Emperor, this person comprises six elements,” [*Pitaputrasamagama-sutra, dKon brtsegs* nga 127b], and thus demonstrated the six elements—earth, water, air, fire, space, and consciousness— and their characteristics— solidity, liquidity, mobility, heat, unobstructedness, and awareness—that without essence, the presentation of the characteristics does not make sense. Therefore, since the characteristics exist, the elements exist essentially. And so, just as do the elements, the senses and other faculties exist essentially.

If indeed the elements existed essentially, the other two could also exist in the same manner, but they do not exist essentially. In what way do they not? This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the six elements and condemning the extreme views of reification and nihilism.

SUMMARY:

One should ascertain the meaning established by these arguments to be that with respect to the elements, if characteristic and characterized and existence and nonexistence of entity as they are presented by the sutras existed inherently, instead of being merely posited through the force of nominal conventions, then characteristic and characterized cannot be posited. Having ascertained that meaning, one should then ascertain the meanings of the two truths in the following, completely adequate way: Only insofar as they are posited merely through nominal convention are characteristic and characterized and the existence and nonexistence of entities possible.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER V - Examination of the Dhatus

In this chapter Nagarjuna considers the nature of true knowledge of the six realms or "elements" (dhatus), i.e., bhu (earth), jala (water), tejas (fire), anila (wind), akasa (space) and vijnana (consciousness). As in previous chapters he treats only one of the elements, this time the akasa, and demonstrates how it cannot exist in four respects. That is to say, akasa cannot exist as (1) an entity or existence (bhava), (2) a non-entity or non-existence (abhava), (3) a characterization (laksya), and (4) a characteristic (laksana). These four aspects are applicable to the other five dhatus. In the last verse Nagarjuna comes out with the truth of things in the Madhyamika sense that one who indulges in the conceptualization of nature's elements, e.g., into existence and non-existence, will never arrive at their real perception or understanding.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

5. *Elements* (*dhatu*). In the early Buddhist tradition, the psychophysical personality was analysed into five aggregates (*skandha*) in order to show that there was no permanent spiritual entity or self (*atman*) as recognized by the traditional Indian philosophers. Therefore, the psychic pan of the personality was analysed in detail. In order to refute the view of the Materialists that the eternal entity is matter, not a spiritual or psychic entity, the Buddha once again analysed the human personality into six elements (*dhatu*) with a detailed examination of the physical pan of the personality. Thus we have the category of elements consisting of earth (*prthvi*), water (*apas*), fire (*tejas*), air (*vayu*), space (*akasa*) and consciousness (*vijnana).*

While the conception of a “unique cause” (*karana*) was introduced in the examination of the aggregates (*skandha*), the notion of “characteristics” (*laksana*) is brought into the analysis of elements (*dhatu*). Though the term ‘‘characteristic’’ (Pail *lakkhana*) occurs in the early discourses, there it is not used in the metaphysical sense in which it came to be employed by the Sarvastivada school. For the Sarvastivada, a characteristic *(laksana*) represented the changing aspect of an entity (*dharma*), while self-nature (*svabhava*) stood for the unchanging and eternal aspect. This particular notion of “characteristic” needs to be kept in mind when analysing the contents of Chapter V.

A “characteristic” is evaluated here in relation to an existent (*bhava*) which possesses self-nature (*svabhava*). For the Sarvastivadins, this existent was a *dharma.* Hence, very often we find Kumarajiva utilizing the term *fa* (= *dharma*), in its restricted sense, to render *bhava* (*yu*), which is an indication that he too was aware of the nature of the concept analysed by Nagarjuna. Nagarjuna’s major endeavor here is to demonstrate the difficulties that arise when speaking of characteristics (*laksana*) in relation to eternal or absolute existence (*bhava*) as well as nihilistic non-existence (*abhava).*

This analysis becomes all the more important because of the way *bhava* and *abhava* are treated here. Nagarjuna’s conclusion is significant: “Those people of little intelligence who perceive the existence (*astitva*) as well as the nonexistence (*nastitva*) of existents (*bhava*) do not perceive the peaceful appeasement of the object (*drastavya*)”(V.8).

In the Buddhist texts, including the *Karika*, we read more often about the appeasement of obsession

(*prapancopasama*). However, for the first time, Nagarjuna introduces the notion of the appeasement of the "object" (*drastavyopasama*). Why?

It was mentioned earlier that the Buddha's discourse on the aggregates (*skandha*) was intended to refute the notion of a spiritual self (*atman*) and the discourse on elements (*dhatu*) was meant to reject the notion of a material self or eternal matter. If this supposition is correct, we have no difficulty in understanding the reasons for Nagarjuna's introduction of the idea of appeasing the object. The objects of perception associated with the first five sense faculties are material. If the Materialists were looking for a self (*atman*) in matter and the Sarvastivadins were looking for a self-nature (*svabhava*) in the same, the best advice a non-substantialist like Nagarjuna could give such people is to "vaporize or liquify" the object, and avoid grasping after it. For Nagarjuna, there was no difference between self (*atman*) and self-nature (*svabhava*). While they carry the same philosophical implications, their practical consequences are also similar, in that both lead to grasping and, therefore, suffering. Abandoning grasping (*upadana*) for the object, one eliminates the metaphysical beliefs pertaining to eternal existence (*astitva*) and nihilistic nonexistence (*nastatva*). Hence the emphasis on the appeasement of the object. Indeed, "the appeasement of the object" (*drastavyopasama*) is the means by which one can realize the "non-substantiality of phenomena" (*dharma-nairatmya*) and it does not mean the elimination of the object.

Unless one were to keep in mind this particular context in which Nagarjuna was emphasizing the "appeasement of the object," it would be easy to assume that here Nagarjuna was justifying idealism (*vijnanavada*). Candrakirti's comments, unfortunately, lead to such unwarranted conclusions.75

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Space

No trace of space
Is there before
The absence of obstruction
Which describes it.

With no obstruction,
How can there be
Absence of obstruction?
Who distinguishes between them?

Space is not obstruction
Or an absence of it,
Nor is it a description
Or something to describe.

Fluidity and heat,
Energy and gravity
Are just like space.

In seeing things
To be or not to be
Fools fail to see
A world at ease.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

5. The Five Elements

Buddhists adopted the traditional Indic "physics" of earth, water, fire, and wind (e.g. Samyutta Nikaya II.94), adding space as a fifth element later (Sakadata 1997: 21-25). These four elements are not the earth, water, fire, and air we actually *experience* in the everyday world: they are *invisible elements* constituting all that we see. Akira Sakadata likens them to energy (ibid., 21-22). In traditional Buddhist metaphysics, space and nirvana are considered unconditioned and cannot affect anything. Nagarjuna does not directly tackle that issue. He instead applies his standard analysis in terms of self-existent entities and properties. Nothing suggests that he saw space as in any way different from the other elements.

The "defining characteristic *(lakshana)"* is not any possible characteristic, but the one essential to a phenomenon. Of course, this depends on how something is defined: what is the essential characteristic of ice - its hardness or that it is composed of water? Nothing exists without a defining characteristic (v. 2). So if we think of the characteristic as something existing distinct from the entity that embodies it, where could it exist? The entity already has the characteristic. Verse 5 draws the conclusion that no real (self-existent) entity or real characteristic is found.

In verse 6, "nonexistence *(abhava)"* does not mean nonexistence or nothingness in the usual sense. Rather it is the *absence of an existing entity (bhava).* Thus, without *bhavas,* there can be no *abhavas,* and if *bhavas* are not real (self-existent) than neither are *abhavas.*

Nagarjuna concludes in verse 8 that those "who *see* in terms of the 'is-ness' and 'not-is-ness' of entities, do not

perceive the peaceful stilling of what can be seen." It is not merely a matter of adopting a new metaphysical claim, but of actually *seeing things differently.* When we are free of a sense of eternal, permanent self-existent entities, there is the "stilling of what can be seen" in the sense that we no longer project our conceptual categories onto reality; thereby, we no longer create a false world of discrete, self-existent entities. But this does not mean that sense-awareness goes blank or that the phenomenal world disappears. It is a "stilling" of a sense of distinct objects, not of what is really there *(tattva).* The idea that whatever is dependently arisen is "still" or "peaceful" and thus free of any multiplicity suggested by our conceptualizing occurs throughout the *Karikas* (e.g., 7.16).

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

5

An Examination of the Elements

In the Prajnaparamita Sutras, the Buddha taught:

The element of earth has no nature of its own.

THIS is THE ONLY LINE that Mipham Rinpoche quotes in the commentary; in the sutras the Buddha made similar statements about the other elements (dhatus)—water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness—and thus he explained the emptiness of the elements in a vast way. In this chapter, Nagarjuna proves the validity of these teachings with logical reasoning.

Those who believed that things actually exist claimed that since the Buddha taught about the elements and their characteristics, they must in fact exist. Furthermore, since the sources of consciousness and the aggregates are all included within the elements, then they must exist as well. Since the reason these people had for believing in the reality of things was that they believed in the true existence of the elements, it was therefore necessary for Nagarjuna to examine the elements and demonstrate that they are not truly existent at all.

The first verse from this chapter reads:

Space can in no way exist
Prior to its defining characteristics.
If space existed prior to its defining characteristics,
It would follow that space could exist without defining characteristics.

When Nagarjuna analyzed the sources of consciousness, he refuted their existence from the perspective of the relationship between perceiving subjects and perceived objects. When he examined the aggregates, he refuted their existence from the perspective of the relationship between causes and results. Here, when he analyzes the elements, it is from the perspective of the relationship between the defining characteristics of something, or the basis to which a particular name is given, and the definiendum, that which is defined by those characteristics, the name that is given to that basis. This chapter will show that this relationship too cannot be a truly existent one.

Here Nagarjuna examines space, which except for consciousness is the subtlest element. Space is the name, the definiendum, that which is defined. Space's defining characteristics are that it does not obscure or obstruct, meaning that it is a complete absence of existence; it is thoroughly intangible. That is how space is defined.

If space and its defining characteristics truly existed, they would have to exist either sequentially or simultaneously. If they existed sequentially, then the first possibility would be that space, the definiendum, existed before the characteristics that define it. That would be impossible, however, because how could the thing that is being defined exist before there are any characteristics to define it? If it did, then space would exist without its defining characteristics. There would be space without any qualities of unobstructedness or lack of obscuration.

[t would also be impossible for the defining characteristics to exist before the definiendum did, for how could there be defining characteristics if there was nothing that they defined? Defining characteristics have to be the defining characteristics of something in order to exist, and therefore the defining characteristics cannot exist before the phenomenon that they define does.

Nor can the defining characteristics and the definiendum exist simultaneously. If they did, and they truly existed independently, then there would be no connection between them. They would be like a cow and a horse: They would be independent entities that would not have any relationship with each other. This is not how it is with the defining characteristics and the definiendum, however. There has to be some connection between them, because each one depends upon the other for its existence. If they existed simultaneously as independent entities, then they would not be dependent upon each other, and therefore each would exist without a cause.

We need to understand what it means to say that something truly exists. What characteristics would something need to have in order to be truly existent? It would have to exist independently, with its own inherent nature; it would have to exist without depending on anything else and be impervious to causes and conditions acting upon it. If it were like that, then we could say it was real.

However, for there to be characteristics of something depends upon there being something to have those characteristics, and vice versa; for there to be defining

characteristics there must be a definiendum, and vice versa. In this case the characteristics of space exist in dependence upon there being some space to possess the characteristics; but also, the space can exist only when it has some characteristics to define it. Since each of them has to depend upon the other to exist, they have no nature of their own; they do not truly exist.

This is the logical reasoning that dispels any belief that space and its defining characteristics are truly existent. Does that mean, though, that they are completely nonexistent? No, it does not. There still is a dependently arisen appearance of space and of all of the elements, just like when they appear in dreams, just like the appearance of a water-moon. So we have no need to worry or be frightened, because the conclusion is not that the elements are completely nonexistent. It would be a big problem if space were nonexistent, because then we could not fly in airplanes! There is, in fact, a mere appearance of space that is the union of dependent arising and emptiness.

There are many reasonings in this chapter, but the verse that sums them all up is the seventh:

Therefore, space is not something, it is not nothing,
It is not a basis for characteristics, its defining characteristics do not exist,
And the other five elements are precisely the same.

We should examine all the other elements and their respective characteristics in the same way that we have examined space. This will be easy, because we apply the same analysis we have used before. It is just like when a new style of clothes comes out: Once someone has made the clothes in white, it is easy to copy the same pattern in red, blue, green, or any other color! So, in the same way that we have looked at space, we should look at earth and its characteristics of being hard and obstructing; fire and its characteristics of being hot and burning; water and its characteristics of being wet and moistening; wind and its characteristics of being light and moving; and consciousness and its characteristics of being clear and aware. By analyzing them in that way, we will see that none of them truly exists. In every case, it is impossible for either the defining characteristics or the definiendum to exist before the other; it is impossible for them to exist simultaneously; and there is no other alternative for how they could be. Therefore, they are all empty of their own essence; they all lack true existence.

At the level of thorough analysis, the true nature of space and its defining characteristics is found to be the freedom from all conceptual fabrications. We cannot say that they are something, because when we analyze we cannot find anything there; nor can we say that they are nothing, because there is the mere appearance of them that arises due to causes and conditions. Therefore, they are the union of appearance and emptiness, whose nature is beyond all of our concepts of what it might be. The same is true for all the other elements as well.

In the eighth and last verse in the chapter, Nagarjuna comments on this further:

Those with little intelligence
View things as being existent or nonexistent.
They do not see that what is to be seen
Is perfect and utter peace.

When we do not have much understanding of reality, we either think that things exist, meaning that they are real, or we think they do not exist, that there is absolutely nothing, not even a mere appearance. These views of existence and nonexistence obscure our realization of the true nature of reality. The true nature of reality is peace, in the sense that no conceptual fabrication can accurately describe it. It cannot be said to be either existent or nonexistent. Within it, all conceptual fabrications are perfectly at peace.

If we put this in the form of a logical reasoning, we would say: Those with little intelligence do not see pure reality free from the fabrications of existence and nonexistence, because they think either that things exist or that they do not. They think either that there is something truly there or that there is nothing there at all. They do not realize that appearances are mere dependently arisen appearances, and so they cannot see the true nature of reality beyond fabrication.

On the other hand, those who have great intelligence are able to transcend the fabrications of existence and nonexistence and see pure reality. They do not have the view of existence—they do not think things are real—nor do they have the view of nonexistence, which would be to think that there is absolutely nothing. They perfectly understand the union of appearance and emptiness, of dependent arising and emptiness, and this frees them from extreme views. They would not even claim to abide in the “middle” in between the extremes, because if the extremes do not exist, how could there be any middle in between them?

As the Buddha said in the King of Samadhi Sutra:

”Existence” and “nonexistence” are both extremes,
”Pure” and “impure” are the same.
Therefore, abandoning all extremes,
The wise do not even abide in the middle.

The wise are completely free from all concepts about the true nature of reality, including concepts of the extremes and even concepts of some middle ground in between the extremes.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter V

धातुपरीक्षा पञ्चमं प्रकरणम्। dhātuparīkṣā nāma pañcamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀六種品第五(八偈) **zhōng lùn guān liù zhǒng pǐn dì wǔ(bā jié;jì)**

|ཁམས་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ལྔ་པའོ|| | khams brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa lṅa pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER V - Examination of the Dhatus

JONES (Skt):
5. The Five Elements

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The Examination of Elements

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
5. Analysis of the Elements

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[5] Examination of Physical Substances (8 verse)

SPRUNG (Skt):
The Primal Elements or Character and Characteristic

STRENG (Skt):
Section 5 - An Analysis of the "Irreductible Elements" (the elements) In 8 Verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
5. the six dhatus (quality and substance).

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 5 Contemplation of the six elements 8 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of the Elements

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER V - Analysis of the Elements

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter V: Examination of Elements

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER V - Examination of the Elements

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Five - Examination of Elements

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 5: AN EXAMINATION OF THE ELEMENTS

PINGALA COMMENTARY

5/0 Question: The six elements all have their fixed characteristics. It is because they have these fixed characteristics that they are the six elements.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter VII]

Someone may object that the primal elements (*dhatu*) exist because they have not been disproved. And the illustrious one said, 'The individual person, o great king, consists of the six primal elements.' Therefore, because of this scriptural pronouncement, even as the primal elements exist, so do the constitutive factors of personal existence and the bases of cognition (*ayatana*).

We reply that the factors of personal existence and the bases of cognition would exist if the primal elements did. Nagarjuna explains how that is.

Character and characteristic unintelligible

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Five The Examination of Elements (Dhatu-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter V Examination of Elements

This chapter examines the ontological status of characteristics and the characterized, or in more familiar terms, properties and individuals. The question, as always, is this: Does it make sense to think of either as existing independently, substantially, or fundamentally? Or, on the other hand, are they mutually interdependent and therefore empty? The example Nāgārjuna .chooses to focus on is space since it is one of the six primal elements according to classical Buddhist cosmology.(fn 49. The others are earth, water, fire, air, and consciousness.) If he can show that these elements must be understood as neither inherently existing entities nor as inherently existing characteristics of entities, he will have shown . that no ontological decomposition of phenomena into their primary constituents yields inherently existing constituents. Moreover, according to some early Buddhist schools, each of the primal elements has a distinguishing characteristic and, hence, an essence. So, Nāgārjuna is addressing his opponent on the opponent's home turf. If any entities or characteristics have essences, these do.

Kārikā V.1

नाकाशं विद्यते किंचित्पूर्वमाकाशलक्षणात्।
अलक्षणं प्रसज्येत स्यात्पूर्वं यदि लक्षणात्॥१॥

LVP 129,6-7 - LVP 136,4-5
nākāśaṃ vidyate kiṃcit pūrvam ākāśalakṣaṇāt |
alakṣaṇaṃ prasajyeta syāt pūrvaṃ yadi lakṣaṇāt ||1||

空相未有時 則無虛空法
若先有虛空 即為是無相

T1564: vol 30, pg 7b5
kōng xiàng;xiāng wèi yǒu shí zé wú xū kōng fǎ
ruò xiān yǒu xū kōng jí wéi shì wú xiàng;xiāng

།ནམ་མཁའི་མཚན་ཉིད་སྔ་རོལ་ན། །ནམ་མཁའ་ཅུང་ཟད་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།གལ་ཏེ་མཚན་ལས་སྔ་གྱུར་ན། །མཚན་ཉིད་མེད་པར་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

Tg tsa 4a2 - Tg tsa 4a6
|| nam mkha'i mtshan ñid sṅa rol na | | nam mkha' cuṅ zad yod ma yin |
| gal te mtshan las sṅa gyur na | | mtshan ñid med par thal bar 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - Prior to any spatial characteristics, space cannot exist. If it can exist prior to any characteristics, then, necessarily, it falls into the error of (imputing) a space without characteristics.

JONES (Skt):
[1] No space is seen prior to the defining characteristics of space - if space existed prior to its characteristics, then it would follow that it exists without its characteristics.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
No space is evident prior to the spatial characteristics. If it exists prior to the characteristics, then it would follow that it is without characteristics.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Space does not occur prior to some characteristic of space.
If it would exist prior to having a characteristic, it follows that there would be space without a characteristic.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. The space hasn't been recognized at first.
And before that time, the space has been seen as it was looked at.
Therefore without knowing the characteristics, the common scenery might have been passing.
Before that time the characteristics of the space might not be seen before its original condition.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 There is no space which exists prior to its distinguishing characteristic; if it existed prior to its distinguishing characteristic it would follow that it was without character.

STRENG (Skt):
1. Space does not exist at all before the defining characteristic of space (akasalaksana). If it would exist before the defining characteristic, then one must falsely conclude that there would be something without a defining characteristic.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
V.1 No space is evident prior to the characteristic (*laksana*) of space. If it existed prior to the characteristic, it would follow that it was without the characteristic.

ROBINSON (Skt):
No space occurs previous to the mark of space; if it were previous to its mark, the absurdity would ensue that It is markless.

BOCKING (Ch):
5v1 Before there was the characteristic of space
There was no dharma of space
If space had been pre-existent
Then it would have been without characteristics.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Not the slightest bit of space exists prior to the characteristics of space. If [space] existed prior to its characteristics, it would follow that it would be without characteristics.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Before the characteristics of space,
There is no space whatsoever.
If it existed before its characteristics,
It would follow that it has no characteristics. [V.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Prior to a characteristic of space
There is not the slightest space.
If it arose prior to the characteristic
Then it would, absurdly, arise without a characteristic.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Prior to a characteristic of space
There is not the slightest space.
If it existed prior to the characteristic
Then it would, absurdly, exist without a characteristic.

HAGEN (paraphrase):

5.1 Space is not evident prior to the characteristics of space. If space existed before spatial characteristics, then it would be without characteristics.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):

Space can in no way exist
Prior to its defining characteristics.
If space existed prior to its defining characteristics,
It would follow that space could exist without defining characteristics. (1)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

5/1 If the dharma of space had existed before there were the characteristics of space, space would have been without characteristics, and why? What we mean by the characteristic of space is 'a place without form'. Form is something created and impermanent. Before forms arise, not yet having arisen they do not cease, thus at that time there is no characteristic of space. It is only because there is form that there are places without form. To be a place without form is what is meant by the characteristic of space.

Question: What is wrong in saying that there is space without characteristics?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The six primal elements referred to in the scriptural quotation are: earth, water, fire, air, space (*akasa*) and consciousness. The stanza, using space as a paradigm, shows the vitiating difficulty of understanding them as self-existent natures. Openness (*anavarana*) is commonly taken to be the distinguishing characteristic (*laksana*) (fn 1 The problem is both logical and ontological. Some Buddhists, specifically the Vaibhasika school, held that the elements of existence were a small number of irreducible reals, dharmas, which persisted through all time in their proper natures, even when they were not actual.) of space. Prior to its characteristic, openness, space could not be something characterized (*laksya*) because it could not be such before its characteristic was actual: before openness characterized it.

If it is so that, 'There is no space which exists prior to its distinguishing characteristic; if it existed prior to its distinguishing characteristic it would follow that it was without character' then let space be actual without its distinguishing characteristic. But such a thing, like a flower in the sky, cannot be. 'There is no space .. .' Nagarjuna says:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As pointed out earlier, the categories of aggregates, spheres, and elements constituted an important part of the Buddha's teachings as well as of the Abhidharma analysis (III. 1). This early classification was intended to account for the human personality (skandha), its experience (12 ayatanas = 6 indriyas and 6 visayas) and finally the elements to which this whole experience can be analysed (18 elements = 6 ayatanas, 6 visayas and 6 forms of consciousness). However, Nagarjuna does not take them in that particular order. This is because of the problems created by the interpreters of the Abhidharma. They were more concerned with defining each one of the elements in each of the categories without considering them in the light of other elements within the category to which it belongs or in terms of other categories outside of themselves. This led to a wide range of metaphysical speculations. For example, one of the elements (dhatu) that caused much misunderstanding and led to many metaphysical ideas is the conception of "space" (akasa). Although "space" is not an item included among either the aggregates, spheres or elements (in the earlier classification), it indeed was part of an analysis of the human personality comparable to the analysis into five aggregates (skandha). The counterpart of the skandha-classification is the explanation of the human personality in terms of six elements (cha-dhatu or sad dhatu), one of which was "space" (akasa) (M 3.239). At S 2.150, the Buddha specifically recognized the interdependence of material form and "the sphere of space" (Yayam . . . akasancayatanadhatu ayam dhatu rupam paticca pannayati). However, the Buddhist metaphysicians, treating each one of the categories and items independently, assumed that "space" is "unconditioned" (asamskrtam , Akb), the latter being understood as "independence" (see Sakv ; DhsA). Thus, space came to possess the unique nature of "non-

obstruction" (anavarana-svabhavam akasam) where material form finds its locale (yatra rupasya gatih, Akb).

This, indeed, was a very absolutistic conception of space, a conception that muddled up the entire Buddhist epistemology. It posed the most significant challenge for Nagarjuna. In order to eliminate such metaphysics, Nagarjuna adopted the ingenious method of analysing the source of knowledge (i.e., seeing, darsana, Chapter III), the object of knowledge (i.e., material form, rupa, Chapter IV) and its locale (i.e, space, akasa, Chapter V) and this he did on the pretext of examining the Buddha's own categories of aggregates, spheres and elements (skandha-ayatana-dhatu). Thus, the present chapter on the examination of elements comes to be devoted not to the traditional category of elements, but rather to the conception of space, highlighting its relativity, especially to material form, discussed in the previous chapter. With these three chapters, Nagarjuna was thus able to give a rather comprehensive account of the problem of knowledge.

Here there is no denial of space, but only the rejection of a particular way of understanding or conceiving it. If space were to be understood as the ultimately real pure entity, a substance to which various characteristics are attributed, in which case space precedes the characteristics, then Nagarjuna finds no epistemological justification for it. This is a criticism of the first aspect of the metaphysical explanation of space referred to above, namely, that space has the character of non-obstructon (anavarana-svabhava). The obstruction, in this case, refers to material form (i.e., pratigha).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. ("Prior to a characteristic" fn 50. The sense of "characteristic" *(misan nyid)* is that of a distinguishing characteristic, or a characteristic mark or signature of a thing. 1 therefore use the singular here. (I owe this suggestion to the Yen. Gareth Sparham.) But the points that Nāgārjuna makes are perfectly general and could as well be made using "characteristics," as Inada (1970) and Kalupahana (1986) do.)

Space cannot exist as a completely uncharacterized entity that then somehow acquires characteristics. Anything that exists has some properties and cannot be identified or characterized independently of them.

Kārikā V.2

अलक्षणो न कश्चिच्च भावः संविद्यते क्वचित्।
असत्यलक्षणे भावे क्रमतां कुह लक्षणम्॥२॥

alakṣaṇo na kaścic ca bhāvaḥ saṃvidyate kva cit |
asaty alakṣaṇe bhāve kramatāṃ kuha lakṣaṇam ||2||

是無相之法 一切處無有
於無相法中 相則無所相

shì wú xiàng;xiāng zhī fǎ yī qiè chǔ wú yǒu
yū;yú;wū wú xiàng;xiāng fǎ zhōng xiàng;xiāng zé wú suǒ xiàng;xiāng

།མཚན་ཉིད་མེད་པའི་དངོས་པོ་ནི།།འགའ་ཡང་གང་ནའང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།མཚན་ཉིད་མེད་པའི་དངོས་མེད་ན།།མཚན་ཉིད་གང་དུ་འཇུག་པར་འགྱུར།།

| mtshan ñid med pa’i dṅos po ni | | ’ga’ yaṅ gaṅ na’aṅ yod ma yin |
| mtshan ñid med pa’i dṅos med na | | mtshan (3)ñid gaṅ du ’jug par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - Nowhere is there any entity without characteristics. When there is no entity without characteristics, where could the characteristics appear?

JONES (Skt):
[2] And there is no entity anywhere at all without characteristics. When an entity without characteristics does not exist, where can characteristics appear?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
An existent that is without characteristics is nowhere evident. When an existent without characteristics does not exist, where can characteristics appear?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Not any existent without a characteristic is found anywhere. Where a being without a characteristic does not exist, where does that characteristic appear?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. When there is no phenomenon at all,
A concept of existence can be recognized a little.
When there is nothing in phenomenon, and when there is nothing in existence,
Just to go ahead is the aim of going, and where the aim itself is?

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 No thing whatsoever can be actual anywhere lacking its distinguishing characteristic. As a thing lacking a distinguishing characteristic does not exist to what would a distinguishing characteristic be applied?

STRENG (Skt):
2. In no case has anything existed without a defining characteristic. If an entity without a defining characteristic does not exist, to what does the defining characteristic apply?

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
V.2a An object without characteristics is not to be found anywhere…

ROBINSON (Skt):
No markless existent occurs anywhere; when no markless existent exists, to what could the mark go?

BOCKING (Ch):
5v2 Such a dharma without characteristics
Is nowhere to be found
In a dharma without characteristics
Characteristics would have nothing to characterize.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
A thing without characteristics does not exist anywhere at all. If a thing without characteristics does not exist, to what do characteristics extend?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Something without characteristics
Does not exist anywhere at all.
Since there is no thing without characteristics,
To what do the characteristics apply? [V.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. A thing without a characteristic
Has never existed.
If nothing lacks a characteristic,
Where do characteristics come to be?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. A thing without a characteristic
Has never existed.
If nothing lacks a characteristic,
What do characteristics characterize?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
5.2 Things are never found to be without characteristics. And since they are not, where would characteristics come from?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

5/2 If you search for dharmas without characteristics amongst either permanent or impermanent dharmas you will not find any. It is as the authors93 say; "How do we know that 'This exists' and 'This does not exist'? Because each entity has its own characteristics". Arising, abiding and ceasing are the characteristics of active (things) and non-arising, nonabiding and non-ceasing are the characteristics of the inactive. If space had no characteristics, it would not be space. Nor is it correct to say that it previously had no characteristics, but subsequently its characteristics manifested as characteristics. If it had no characteristics before, then there was no dharma to be characterized, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

2ab *No thing whatsoever can be actual anywhere lacking its distinguishing characteristic.*

You may interject that a distinguishing characteristic could be actual (*pravrtti*) only in something characterized and as this actual characteristic is a fact (*sadbhavat*) what is characterized must exist as well. But this is not so either. Because

2cd *As a thing lacking a distinguishing characteristic does not exist to what would a distinguishing characteristic be applied?*

It was said that no thing (*bhava*) (fn 2 This discussion can be read as an attack on the possibility of eternal dharmas unrealized in time and space; or as an attack on the realist (common sense) conception of the nature of 'things' in time and space.) lacking a distinguishing characteristic can exist prior to its distinguishing characteristic. It follows that the distinguishing characteristic cannot be actualized. How can a distinguishing characteristic become actual in something which is not, which in no way at all exists, which is without distinguishing characteristic, which is quite lacking in distinguishing characteristic? Further, this actualized distinguishing characteristic would be actual either in something with or in something without a distinguishing characteristic. Nagarjuna says that neither alternative is intelligible:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The denial of pure "space" at V. 1 is here extended to all elements or entities (bhava). The question that follows next is: If there were to be no pure entity or a tabula rasa, then one also cannot account for adventitious elements through which something comes to be known. This represents the second aspect of the metaphysical definition mentioned earlier, namely, the "unobstructed space" serving as the locale for the appearance of material form (yatra rupasya gatih = rupasyaa kramatam).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. So we can conclude that everything has characteristics. But maybe these characteristics exist inherently, independently of the things, and then come to be associated with them. On such a view, while individuals would not have inherent existence, properties would.

———

Kārikā V.3

नालक्षणे लक्षणस्य प्रवृत्तिर्न सलक्षणे।
सलक्षणालक्षणाभ्यां नाप्यन्यत्र प्रवर्तते॥३॥

nālakṣaṇe lakṣaṇasya pravṛttir na salakṣaṇe |
salakṣaṇālakṣaṇābhyāṃ nāpy anyatra pravartate ||3||

有相無相中 相則無所住
離有相無相 餘處亦不住

yǒu xiàng;xiāng wú xiāng zhòng xiàng;xiāng zé wú suǒ zhù
lí yǒu xiàng;xiāng wú xiàng;xiāng yú chǔ yì bù zhù

།མཚན་ཉིད་མེད་ལ་མཚན་ཉིད་ནི།།མི་འཇུག་མཚན་ཉིད་བཅས་ལ་མིན།
།མཚན་བཅས་མཚན་ཉིད་མེད་པ་ལས།།གཞན་ལའང་འཇུག་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།།

| mtshan ñid med la mtshan ñid ni | | mi ’jug mtshan ñid bcas la min |
| mtshan bcas mtshan ñid med pa las | | gźan la’aṅ ’jug par mi ’gyur ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - In instances of either with or without characteristics, there is no production of characteristics. Again, there is no production in another place other than the two (i.e., with and without characteristics).

JONES (Skt):
[3] Characteristics do not appear in what is without characteristics, nor in what already has characteristics, nor in anything other than what is either with or without characteristics.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The occurrence of a characteristic does not take place either in something without characteristic or in something with characteristic. Nor does it proceed from something other than those with or without characteristic.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
A characteristic appears not in what has a characteristic nor in what does not have a characteristic.
Nor is it set in motion from any (existent) other than what neither has nor does not have a characteristic.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Not in the place, where there is no good indication, or belonging to a good selection,
A behavior only to go ahead without good selection, does not belong to a real omen itself.
Even in the case of good selection, or bad selection,
It is not completely different from a selection, which you are selecting now.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 A distinguishing characteristic can be actualized neither in something without that distinguishing characteristic nor in something with it. Nor does the characteristic become actual otherwise than in something which either has or does not have it.

STRENG (Skt):
3. There is no functioning of a defining characteristic in a case where there is already a defining characteristic or where there is not a defining characteristic. And it can function in nothing except where there is a defining characteristic or where there is not a defining characteristic.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
V.3 The occurrence of a characteristic is neither in the uncharacterized nor in the characterized. It does not proceed from something other than those with or without characteristics.

ROBINSON (Skt):
There is no emergence of the mark in the markless or in the markful; neither does it emerge anywhere other than in the markless and in the markful.

BOCKING (Ch):
5v3 Whether 'having characteristics' or 'not having characteristics'
No characteristic has any place in which to reside.
Nor does it reside in any other place
Apart from 'having characteristics' or 'not having characteristics'.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Characteristics do not extend to that which has no characteristics; nor to what possesses characteristics. They also cannot extend to something other than what either possesses or does not have characteristics.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Characteristics do not apply to what has them,
Nor do they apply to what does not.
Neither do characteristics apply to something
Other than what does or does not have them. [V.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. Neither in the uncharacterized nor in the characterized
Does a characteristic arise.
Nor does it arise
In something different from these two.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. Characteristics do not characterize the uncharacterized.
Nor do they characterize the characterized.
Nor do they characterize anything other
Than the characterized and the uncharacterized.

HAGEN (paraphrase):

5.3 Characteristics occur neither in things with characteristics, in things without characteristics, nor in something other than these two.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

5/3 For example, having a hump, horns, hair at the end of the tail and a dewlap hanging below the neck, are called the characteristics of a cow, and apart from these characteristics there is no cow. If there were no cow, there would be nowhere for these various attributes to reside. This is why we say that characteristics have nowhere to manifest in an entity with no characteristics. In things which have characteristics, too, there is nowhere for (further) characteristics to reside, because the characteristics are already existent. As an example, the characteristics of fire do not reside in the characteristics of water, because water already has its own characteristics.

Moreover, if characteristics were to abide in (a thing) without characteristics, then it would be uncaused, and something which is uncaused is not regarded as a dharma. That which has characteristics, the characteristics, and characterization, are always mutually interdependent, and there is no further third state of characterization apart from a dharma either having characteristics or not having characteristics. This is why it says in the verse (v3) "nor does it reside in any other place apart from having characteristics or not having characteristics".

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In the one case no distinguishing characteristic can be actualized in something lacking that distinguishing characteristic, as it would be like a donkey's horns. In the other case the actualizing of a distinguishing characteristic is something which is already so characterized is unintelligible because pointless. What would be the purpose of a characteristic becoming actual once more in something known to possess that characteristic? That would lead to an infinite regress. But such a thing would never be without a distinguishing characteristic, from which it would follow that the actualized characteristic was permanent, but this is not desirable. Hence it is unintelligible that a distinguishing characteristic should become actual in something which possesses that characteristic: it would be pointless.

Again there could be the view that the characteristic becomes actual otherwise than in something which either has or does not have the characteristic already. Nagarjuna says, 'Nor does the characteristic become actual otherwise than in something which either has or does not have it.'

Why is this? Because such a thing does not exist. If something possesses a characteristic it is not without it and if it is without a characteristic it does not possess it. So, to 'possess a characteristic' and 'not to possess it' are contradictory (*vipra-tisiddha*). But what is contradictory cannot be (*na sambhavati*). For this reason, precisely because it is simply impossible, Nagarjuna says it is unintelligible that a characteristic could become actual either in something that possesses it or in something that does not.

Again one might think that, even though characteristics cannot be actual, none the less the subject of characterization (*laksya*) exists. But this cannot be either because

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here again, it seems inappropriate to assume that Nagarjuna was denying either space or material form, but only the manner in which they were explained by the metaphysicians. It is the sharp dichotomy between a thing and its properties that cannot account for either of them. The substantialist mode of speaking about entities (bhava) leads to two extremist views, namely, identity or difference. The second statement rejects the view that the problem of identity and difference can be solved by transcending both. The reasoning seems to be that, rather than attempting to solve the problem of identity and difference by following the method of transcendence, it is more appropriatge not to create such a sharp distinction in the first place.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. But there is a problem. If a characteristic were inherently existent, it would have to become instantiated in either a characterized or an uncharacterized object. But there are no uncharacterized objects, and if the object already is characterized, there is no need for the characteristic to become instantiated. So to think of individuals and properties as existing independently and then somehow coming together to constitute particulars makes no sense.

Kārikā V.4

लक्षणासंप्रवृत्तौ च न लक्ष्यमुपपद्यते।
लक्ष्यस्यानुपपत्तौ च लक्षणस्याप्यसंभवः॥४॥

lakṣaṇāsaṃpravṛttau ca na lakṣyam upapadyate |
lakṣyasyānupapattau ca lakṣaṇasyāpy asaṃbhavaḥ ||4||

相法無有故 可相法亦無
可相法無故 相法亦復無

xiàng;xiāng fǎ wú yǒu gù kě xiàng;xiāng fǎ yì wú
kě xiàng;xiāng fǎ wú gù xiàng;xiāng fǎ yì fù wú

།མཚན་ཉིད་འཇུག་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།མཚན་གཞི་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
།མཚན་གཞི་འཐད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།མཚན་ཉིད་ཀྱང་ནི་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| mtshan ñid ’jug pa ma yin na | | mtshan gźi ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |
| mtshan gźi (4)’thad pa ma yin na | | mtshan ñid kyaṅ ni yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - Where characteristics do not arise, there can be no characterization. And where characterization is not possible, characteristics will not arise.

JONES (Skt):
[4] And where no characteristics occur, no entity with characteristics occurs. And where there is no occurrence of an entity with characteristics, no characteristics can arise.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When the characteristic does not occur, the characterized is not appropriate. In the absence of the characterized, there is no occurrence of the characteristic.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If neither characteristic is present, the characterized does not occur.
If there is no occurrence of the characterized, there is no occurrence of the characteristic.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. When some characteristics haven't appeared yet,
Then the characteristics have never been recognized.
When the image of characteristic is not yet recognized,
The characteristic itself never exists in this world at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 A subject of characterization is unintelligible without actual characteristics. If the subject of characterization is not established characteristics become impossible as well.

STRENG (Skt):
4. When there is no related function (sampravrtti) (i.e. defining process), it is not possible to have "that to which a defining characteristic applies." And if "that to which a defining characteristic applies" is not possible, then a defining characteristic cannot come into existence.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
V.4b In the absence of the characterized, the characteristic does also not exist.

ROBINSON (Skt):
When the mark does not emerge, the marked is not a fact; when the marked is not a fact, the mark too is impossible.

BOCKING (Ch):
5v4 Because the dharma of 'characteristic' does not exist
There is likewise no dharma of 'characterization'.
And because no dharma of characterization exists,
No dharma of 'characteristic' exists either.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If characteristics do not extend [to something], something characterized would be impossible. If something characterized is impossible, characteristics too would not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If characteristics have no application,
It makes no sense that there should be bearers of them.
If the bearers of characteristics are unreasonable,
Their characteristics cannot exist either. [V.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. If characteristics do not appear,
Then it is not tenable to posit the characterized object.
If the characterized object is not posited,
There will be no characteristic either.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. When there is no characterization
The basis of characteristics makes no sense.
Since the basis of characteristics makes no sense,
There is no characteristic either.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
5.4 Without any characteristics, no characterized thing can occur. When no characterized thing occurs, no characteristic occurs.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

5/4 Since there is nowhere for a characteristic to reside, there is no dharma of 'characterization'. Since there is no dharma of characterization, there is no dharma of characteristic. Why is this? Because characterization exists by virtue of characteristics, and characteristics exist by virtue of characterization: the two are causally interdependent.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

4ab *A subject of characterization is unintelligible without actual characteristics.*

So long as there are no actualized characteristics how could there be something characterized? Nagarjuna means that that is completely impossible. If you interject that we have rejected as false the actualization of distinguishing characteristics but not distinguishing characteristics themselves and that therefore the subject of characterization does exist because the characteristic is a fact, Nagarjuna replies:

4cd *If the subject of characterization is not established characteristics become impossible as well.*

It was shown that: 'A subject of characterization is unintelligible without actual characteristics.' So it follows: if the subject of characterization is not established characteristics become impossible as well', because they would have no substrate (*asraya*). In so far as, thus, characteristics do not exist, the argument given, namely that the subject of characterization does exist because the characteristic is a fact, does not hold. This being the case, therefore

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The relativity of concepts, or more specifically the contextual meaning of concepts, is here underscored. Definitions may be useful in clarifying the meaning of terms. Yet these meanings are not derived independently; they occur in contexts and, as such, any reference to substance and attribute should not be taken to imply distinct or pure referents. What are denied here are not the concepts of the characterized or of the characteristics, but merely their independent existence.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. But if we were to go completely eliminativist with respect to characteristics, we would lose the ability to posit both actual objects with characteristics and characteristics that actual objects share.

Kārikā V.5

तस्मान्न विद्यते लक्ष्यं लक्षणं नैव विद्यते।
लक्ष्यलक्षणनिर्मुक्तो नैव भावोऽपि विद्यते॥५॥

tasmān na vidyate lakṣyaṃ lakṣaṇaṃ naiva vidyate |
lakṣyalakṣaṇanirmukto naiva bhāvo ’pi vidyate ||5||

是故今無相 亦無有可相
離相可相已 更亦無有物

shì gù jīn wú xiàng;xiāng yì wú yǒu kě xiàng;xiāng
lí xiàng;xiāng kě xiàng;xiāng yǐ gèng;gēng yì wú yǒu wù

།དེ་ཕྱིར་མཚན་གཞི་ཡོད་མིན་ཏེ།།མཚན་ཉིད་ཡོད་པ་ཉིད་མ་ཡིན།
།མཚན་གཞི་མཚན་ཉིད་མ་གཏོགས་པའི།།དངོས་པོ་ཡང་ནི་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| de phyir mtshan gźi yod min te | | mtshan ñid yod pa ñid ma yin |
| mtshan gźi mtshan ñid ma gtogs pa’i | | dṅos po yaṅ ni yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - Therefore, characterization as well as characteristics cannot exist. Again, an entity devoid of both characterization and characteristics cannot exist.

JONES (Skt):
[5] Therefore, an entity with characteristics is not found, nor are any characteristics found. In addition, no entity is seen distinct from an entity with characteristics, nor are any characteristics seen without an entity.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Therefore, the characterized is not evident. Neither is the characteristic evident. Distinct from the characterized and the characteristic, an existent is certainly not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Therefore the characterized does not occur nor does the characteristic occur.
Separate from the characteristic and the characterized. no existent occurs.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Therefore it is impossible for us to recognize a characteristic itself,
And it is impossible for us even to know whether any kind of characteristic really has been given, or not.
About the characteristic itself, it is not clear whether it has any kind of characteristic, or not,
And it is completely impossible for the characteristic to be known whether it is really existing, or not.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 It follows that neither the subject of characterization nor distinguishing characteristics exist. Nor can anything exist except as characteristic or what is characterized.

STRENG (Skt):
5. Therefore, "that to which a defining characteristic applies" does not exist (i.e. independently); and certainly a defining characteristic itself does not exist (i.e. independently). Now, something does not exist without "that to which a defining characteristic applies" and the defining characteristic.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Therefore the marked does not occur, the mark does not occur, and neither does any existent occur apart from marked and mark.

BOCKING (Ch):
5v5 Therefore, there are no characteristics,
Neither is there any characterization.
And apart from characteristics and characterization,
No other entity exists.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Therefore, something characterized does not exist and characteristics do not exist. There also does not exist a thing which is apart from being something characterized or a characteristic.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Therefore, the bearers of characteristics do not exist,
And characteristics themselves have no existence either.
Yet aside from bearers and characteristics
There are no entities. [V.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. From this it follows that there is no characterized
And no existing characteristic.
Nor is there any entity
Other than the characterized and the characteristic.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. Therefore there is no basis of characteristic
Because there is no characteristic.
Nor is there any entity
Other than the basis of characteristic and the characteristic.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
5.5 Thus neither characterized nor characteristic are evident. Nor is any entity apart from these evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

5/5 If you make a thorough investigation of causality from beginning to end, you will not be able to find a fixed nature for characteristics and characterization. Since neither of these two can be discovered, all dharmas are completely inexistent. All dharmas are completely comprised in these two dharmas of characteristic and characterization, with either the characteristic bringing about the characterization, or the characterization bringing about the characteristic. For example, smoke is regarded as a characteristic of fire, but on the other hand fire may be considered a characteristic of smoke.

Question: If there is no existence, then there must surely be non-existence?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

5ab It follows that neither the subject of characterization nor distinguishing characteristics exist.

Space neither entity nor non-entity

This is the conclusion. Someone may interject that even though the subject of characterization and characteristics do not exist, none the less space does. As it exists as something real it must be either the subject of characterization or a characteristic. Hence, the subject of characterization and characteristics do exist. But Nagarjuna says that this makes no sense either.

5cd *Nor can anything exist except as characteristic or what is characterized.*

That characteristics and what is characterized do not exist, was established previously. If these two do not exist there can be no space lacking both characteristics and something characterized as it would be like a flower in the sky.

If space does not exist as an entity (*bhava*) let it exist as a non-entity (*abhava*). But this does not hold either. Because

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is not a blanket denial of the characterized and the characteristic. Rather it is a denial of these two elements as explained at V.4, namely, as substance and attribute constituting independent entities. Therefore, one cannot find any event, any entity, any existence that is separated from the characterized and the characteristic. An existent separated from the characterized as well as the characteristic could turn out to be a "pure entity," an idea clearly unacceptable to Nagarjuna.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. In the first two lines of this verse, Nāgārjuna draws the conclusion that there are no inherently existent characteristics and no inherently existent characterized entities. Entities and their properties are mutually dependent and, hence, empty of inherent existence. But this does not mean, he emphasizes in the final two lines, that there is some other ontology of inherently existent basic types that could replace them. Indeed particulars can be thought of as characterized entities, with characteristics; but this does not entail the independent existence of entities of either of those types.

Kārikā V.6

अविद्यमाने भावे च कस्याभावो भविष्यति।
भावाभावविधर्मा च भावाभावमवैति कः॥६॥

avidyamāne bhāve ca kasyābhāvo bhaviṣyati |
bhāvābhāvavidharmā ca bhāvābhāvāv avaiti kaḥ ||6||

若使無有有 云何當有無
有無既已無 知有無者誰

ruò shǐ wú yǒu yǒu yún hé dāng yǒu wú
yǒu wú jì yǐ wú zhī yǒu wú zhě shuí

།དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།དངོས་མེད་གང་གི་ཡིན་པར་འགྱུར།
།དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་མི་མཐུན་ཆོས།།གང་གིས་དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་ཤེས།།

| dṅos po yod pa ma yin na | | dṅos med gaṅ gi yin par 'gyur | (5)dṅos daṅ dṅos med mi mthun chos | | gaṅ gis dṅos daṅ dṅos med śes |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - Where an entity is non-existent, how can any non-entity exist? Moreover, destitute of either entity or non-entity, who can ever know anything apart from these?

JONES (Skt):
[6] When an existing entity is not found, of what can there be the "absence of an entity"? And without the realities of an "entity" and an "absence of an entity," who could be aware of an "entity-and-absence-of-an entity"?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When an existent is not evident, whose non-existence can there be? Who could comprehend the distinct things: existent and non-existent as well as existence and non-existence?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How will there be a being where a being is not occuring?
And who favors the statement "existents and nonexistents are beings and nonbeings devoid of attributes"?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. In the situation that it is not clear whether something exists really, or not,
How is it possible for us to decide that it does not exist decisively?
Discussion between existence and non-existence might be opposite to the Universal Rule.
What is the meaning that existence and non-existence are a kind of favor?

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 If something is not at all, of what will there be nonexistence? Who would it be who enquires into existence and nonexistence contrary to the logic of existence and nonexistence?

STRENG (Skt):
6. If the existing thing (1) (bhava) does not exist, how then would the non-existing thing (2) (abhava) come into existence? And who holds: the existing-and-non-existing (3) thing which does not have the properties of an existing-and-non-existing thing (4)?

ROBINSON (Skt):
When the existent does not occur, to what would the in-existent belong? Who apart from existent and inexistent knows the existent and inexistent?

BOCKING (Ch):
5v6 If we allow that there is no existence
Then how could there be non-existence?
And since there would be neither existence nor non-existence,
Who would be the knower of existence or non-existence?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there is not a thing, of what can there be a non-thing? By whom are the opposites thing and non-thing known [as] a thing and a non-thing?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there is no entity,
Of what would there be no entity?
What entity, nonentity, or otherwise
Would be the knower of entity and nonentity? [V.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If there is no existent thing,
Of what will there be nonexistence?
Apart from existent and nonexistent things
Who knows existence and nonexistence?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If no entity exists,
Of what entity would an absence be?
Entities and nonentities are mutually exclusive.
Who knows entities and nonentities?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
5.6 When even existents are not evident, what non-existents are evident? Apart from these where are either existence or non-existence to be found?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

5/6 When ordinary things either decay of themselves or are destroyed by others, they are termed non-existent. Nonexistence does not exist in itself but derives its being from existence. This is why it is said, 'if we allow that there is no existence, then how could there be non-existence? ' If even eyes' seeing and the ears' hearing cannot be found, how much more so 'inexistent entities'?

Question: (Granted that because existence does not exist, non-existence does not exist either, yet surely there must be a knower of existence and non existence?

Reply: If there were such a knower, either he would have to reside in existence, or he would have to reside in nonexistence. Since existence and non-existence have already been refuted, such a knower is equally refuted.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

6ab *If something is not at all, of what will there be nonexistence?*

In so far as space does not exist as an entity, that is, there is no such thing, of what is there supposed to be non-existence? Nagarjuna will say later (XV.5) 'If existence is not accepted, nonexistence cannot be established. Because people say that nonexistence is being other than existence.' Hence, because it is not a something, space cannot possibly be a non-entity either.

Space is the total absence of external form (*rupa*) thus it is defined. Now if form existed then space could be the total absence of form. But as, according to the line of thought already developed (Chapter VI), form does not exist itself, of what would space be the absence?

Nor does the enquirer exist

Someone may interject that there is existence and non-existence as the one enquiring into them exists in fact. 'You yourself, he might say, 'are the one enquiring into existence and nonexistence. You are the one who says, "If something is not at all, of what will there be non-existence?" Hence, as the one enquiring into existence and non-existence is a living fact, existence and non-existence too as the subject of the enquiry, must be real.' Our reply is that this makes no sense either. Because

6cd *Who would it be who enquires into existence and nonexistence contrary to the logic of existence and nonexistence?*

If it is accepted that there is both existence and nonexistence, then the one who inquires would be either existent or non-existent. If he is thought of as existing, the crippling difficulty already given holds: 'Nor can anything exist except as characteristic or as what is characterized.' If, on the other hand, he is thought of as non-existent, in this case the crippling difficulty already given is, 'If something is not at all of what will there be non-existence?' There is no third kind of entity which, contrary to the logic of existence and nonexistence, would be the one grasping these two. There is no enquirer into existence and non-existence.

That is why the illustrious one said, 'Whoever comprehends things as non-things in no way clings to anything at all; whoever clings in no way to anything at all attains that state where there are no causes.'

And again: 'Whoever thinks the elements of existence are merely empty is foolish and walks a dangerous path. Imperishable are the empty elements and yet not imperishable are the imperishable elements said to be.'

'To think the elements of existence are at peace, utterly at peace, such a thought can never be true. The entire manifest world arises from discriminative thinking; the elements should be realized to be subtle and beyond the reach of thought.' And so on.

Being, non-being and nirvāṇa

Now Nagarjuna, with a view to summing up what has been established, states

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here again, if we are to understand "existent" (bhava) without taking into consideration the sort of "existent" referred to at V.5, we would be left with a universal statement regarding all "existents" (bhava). Yet, it is not meant to be taken that way. The "existent" referred to here is already defined at V. 5. It is an "existent" that is separated from either the characterised or the characteristic or both. It is a "pure existent." Such a pure existent could then be contrasted with a pure non-existent, and it is this sharp distinction or dichotomy that is being questioned by Nagarjuna. Indeed, it is significant to note the use of the term vi-dharma (whose occurrence in any other text is not known to the present author) in the sense of "distinct things."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. Here Nāgārjuna generalizes the conclusion and indicates its larger ontological implications. Having shown that there are no inherently existent things, it might seem that it follows that all things are inherently nonexistent. But existence and nonexistence, after all, are characteristics. So it follows that neither existence nor nonexistence can be said to exist independently and hence to characterize, inherently, anything. Moreover, since no particulars can be said inherently to exist, and thereby characterized as inherently existing things, none can be said to be inherently nonexistent. Existence and nonexistence are hence themselves dependent, relative characteristics. It is, of course, important to recall that this entire dialectic is aimed at nonrelative understandings of existence and nonexistence. Nāgārjuna is not arguing that nothing exists in any sense and that nothing fails to exist in any sense. Rather, he is arguing that nothing exists in virtue of instantiating an independently existent property of existence. Similarly, things do not fail to exist in virtue of instantiating the property nonexistence.

Kārikā V.7

तस्मान्न भावो नाभावो न लक्ष्यं नापि लक्षणम्।
आकाशम् आकाशसमा धातवः पञ्च ये परे॥७॥

tasmān na bhāvo nābhāvo na lakṣyaṃ nāpi lakṣaṇam |
ākāśam ākāśasamā dhātavaḥ pañca ye ’pare ||7||

是故知虛空 非有亦非無
非相非可相 餘五同虛空

shì gù zhī xū kōng fēi yǒu yì fēi wú
fēi xiàng;xiāng fēi kě xiàng;xiāng yú wǔ tóng;tòng xū kōng

།དེ་ཕྱིར་ནམ་མཁའ་དངོས་པོ་མིན། །དངོས་མེད་མ་ཡིན་མཚན་གཞི་མིན།
།མཚན་ཉིད་མ་ཡིན་ཁམས་ལྔ་པོ། །གཞན་གང་དག་ཀྱང་ནམ་མཁའ་མཚུངས། །

| de phyir nam mkha’ dṅos po min | | dṅos med ma yin mtshan gźi min |
| mtshan ñid ma yin khams lṅa po | | gźan gaṅ dag kyaṅ nam mkha’ mtshuṅs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - Therefore, space is not an entity, non-entity, characterization or characteristics. The rest of the other five dhatus can be treated in the same manner as space.

JONES (Skt):
[7] Therefore, space is neither an entity, the absence of an entity, an entity with characteristics, nor indeed the characteristics themselves. The remaining four elements - earth, water, fire, and air - are to be treated like space.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Therefore, there is neither an existent nor a non-existent, neither the characterized nor the characteristic, neither space nor the other five elements similar to space.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Therefore space is neither an existent nor a nonexistent, neither the characterized nor a characteristic.
The other five elements are the same as space.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Therefore it is not existence, or not non-existence.
It is not a mark, or never characteristics.
Being in the air, or similar to being in the air.
The miscellaneous matters are 5, and they are having nothing beyond, or after.

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 Space is neither existent nor non-existent, nor is it something characterized nor yet a characteristic. The other five primal elements are exactly like space.

STRENG (Skt):
7. Therefore space is neither an existing thing nor a non-existing thing, neither something to which a defining characteristic applies (i.e. separate from a defining characteristic) nor a defining characteristic. (i.e. the same as a defining characteristic) Also, the other five irreducible elements can be considered in the same way as space.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Therefore space is not an existent, not an inexistent, not something marked, and not a mark. The other five dhatus are [to be] the same as space.

BOCKING (Ch):
5v7 Know therefore that space
Is neither existent nor non–existent
Neither a characteristic nor character sable
And that the other five are the same as space.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Therefore, space is not a thing; it is not a non-thing; it is not something characterized; it is not a characteristic. The other five elements too are similar to space.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Space, therefore, is not an entity, not a nonentity,
Not a bearer of characteristics, not a characteristic.
As for the other five elements,
The case is the same as with space. [V.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. Therefore, space is not an entity.
it is not a nonentity.
Not characterized, not without character.
The same is true of the other five elements.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. Therefore space is neither an entity.
Nor is it a nonentity.
It is neither characterized nor characteristic.
The same is true of the other five elements.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
5.7 Thus space neither exists nor does it not exist, nor is it with or without characteristics. The same applies to the other five elements.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Therefore, space is not something, it is not nothing,
It is not a basis for characteristics, its defining characteristics do not exist,
And the other five elements are precisely the same. (7)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

5/7 Just as one may search for the characteristic of space in various ways but cannot find it, so the other five elements are also the same.

Question: Space is neither the first nor the last (of the six elements), so why do you refute it first?

Reply: Earth, water, fire and wind are causally combined, and therefore easily refuted, and because consciousness is the cause of pain and pleasure it is recognized to be impermanent and changeable and thus is easily refuted. Space does not possess such characteristics, but the ordinary man imagines it to be existent, so this is why we refute it first. Moreover, space has the function of supporting the four great (elements, fire, etc.), and consciousness exists by virtue of the four great elements. Therefore we first refute the basic thing, and the others are automatically refuted.

Question: Ordinary people all see things as existent or nonexistent. Why do you alone, in contradiction to the world, say that what is seen does not exist?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

7ab *Space is neither existent nor non-existent, nor is it something characterized nor yet a characteristic.*

And

7cd *The other five primal elements are exactly like space.*

Earth, air, fire, water and consciousness are the remaining five primal elements. This means that they are to be clearly known as lacking, as space does, existence, non-existence, character and characteristics — a nature which is merely imputed (parikalpa) to them. Even though the true nature (*svabhava*) of things has thus been established, there are some who, because their mind's vision has succumbed to the optical defect of ignorance from entanglement in the beginningless cycle of birth and death, view things falsely as existing or not existing and so on. These have fallen away from the true path of seeing things unerringly as not self-existent, the path which leads to *nirvāṇa*.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Thus, neither existence nor non-existence, the characterized nor the characteristic as envisaged by the metaphysicians exist. The five elementsearth, water, fire, air and consciousness, which together with space constitute the personality (cha-dhaturoyam puriso)do not exist if these elements are conceived of in the same way as space. This does not mean that the way in which the metaphysicians conceive of the six elements is the only way in which they can be understood and explained.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. Nāgārjuna now returns to the example at hand to sum up the conclusions of the chapter. Things cannot be analyzed ontologically as particulars existing independently of their properties. But this does not mean that individual things do not exist. They do not possess independently existing properties. But this does not mean that things are all propertyless.

Kārikā V.8

अस्तित्वं ये तु पश्यन्ति नास्तित्वं चाल्पबुद्धयः।
भावानां ते न पश्यन्ति द्रष्टव्योपशमं शिवम्॥८॥

astitvaṃ ye tu paśyanti nāstitvaṃ cālpabuddhayaḥ |
bhāvānāṃ te na paśyanti draṣṭavyopaśamaṃ śivam ||8||

淺智見諸法 若有若無相
是則不能見 滅見安隱法

qiǎn zhì jiàn zhū fǎ ruò yǒu ruò wú xiàng;xiāng
shì zé bù néng jiàn miè jiàn ān yǐn fǎ

|བློ་ཆུང་གང་དག་དངོས་རྣམས་ལ། །ཡོད་པ་ཉིད་དང་མེད་ཉིད་དུ།
།བལྟ་བ་དེས་ནི་བལྟ་བྱ་བ། །ཉེ་བར་ཞི་བ་ཞི་མི་མཐོང་།།

| blo chuṅ gaṅ dag dṅos rnams la | | yod pa (6)ñid daṅ med ñid du |
| lta ba de ni blta bya ba | | ñe bar źi ba źi mi mthoṅ |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - Those of low intelligence (i.e., inferior insight) who see only the existence and non-existence of things cannot perceive the wonderful quiescence of things

JONES (Skt):
[8] Those of little intelligence, who see in terms of the "is-ness" and "not is-ness" of entities, do not perceive the peaceful stilling of what can be seen.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Those who ate of little intelligence, who perceive the existence as well as the non-existence of existents, do not perceive the appeasement of the object, the auspicious.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
But those of inferior insight who see only the existence and nonexistence of beings
do not see the emancipating cessation of appearances.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Reality, or those things and phenomena, are just possible to be seen by ourselves.
And people, who do not affirm the real existence of this world, might have a little unclever mind in their thoughts.
All things, which exist, can never be seen without fail.
But what can be seen are becoming quiet, and including everything.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 Those who see being and non-being in things are of small mind; they do not comprehend the beatific coming to rest of the manifest world.

STRENG (Skt):
8. But those unenlightened people who either affirm reality or non-reality Do not perceive the blessed cessation-of-appearance of existing things.

BOCKING (Ch):
5v8 The superficial see dharmas
As having the characteristics of existence or non-existence.
And thus are unable to perceive
The calm serenity of the cessation of views.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Those of small minds see things as existent and non-existent. They do not behold the utter pacification of what is seen.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The feebleminded who see
Things in terms of existence and nonexistence
Fail to see what is to be seen—
The peace of complete pacification. [V.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. Fools and reificationists who perceive
The existence and nonexistence
Of objects
Do not see the pacification of objectification.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Those fools who see entities
As existent or as nonexistent
Do not see that which is to be seen
As pacified and peaceful.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
5.8 The unenlightened, who see both existence and non-existence in things, do not see the coming to rest of the manifest world.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Those with little intelligence
View things as being existent or nonexistent.
They do not see that what is to be seen
Is perfect and utter peace. (8)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

5/8 When a person has not yet attained the Way, he is unable to perceive the true character of dharmas, and because of his desires and false perceptions he generates all kinds of vain arguments. Seeing a dharma as it comes into being he asserts that it is 'existent'. Clinging to its characteristics he says it exists. Seeing a dharma ceasing to exist he asserts that it is cut off, and clinging to this characteristic he says that it is inexistent. The man of insight, seeing that dharmas arise, extinguishes the view that they are nonexistent, and seeing that they cease extinguishes the view that they exist. Consequently, although there is something in regard to dharmas which he sees, it is like an illusion or a dream, so that he ceases even to hold a view of 'a Way free of outflows'. How much more so other views?

Therefore, someone who does not perceive the calm tranquility of the cessation of views, will only see things as existing or see them as not existing.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The coming to rest of the visible world (*drastavyopasama*), which is of the nature of beatitude is free of the entire network of conceptual thinking (*sarvakalpanajala*); its very nature is the cessation of knowing and the known; its very nature is the beatitude of the higher truth. Those who, because of weak mind are rooted in the prejudices of being (*astitva*) and non-being (*nastitva*), cannot understand a *nirvāṇa* of the higher truth which does not age nor die, which is not of the realm of named-things, and whose quintessence is the absence of both being and non-being (*sunyata*).

As it is said in the *Ratnavali*, 'The one who thinks "it is not" walks a difficult path; the one who does not think "it is not" walks a favourable path. The one who is freed from both attains liberation from a clear grasp of the way things really are.'

In the *Samadhiraja Sutra* the illustrious one says, ' "It is", "It is not" are two dogmas; "purity", "impurity" are two dogmas; and so the wise man abandons both dogmas without taking up a position in the middle. "It is", "It is not" is mere disputation; "purity", "impurity" is mere disputation; afflicted existence is not terminated by engaging in disputation; afflicted existence is brought to an end by not engaging in disputation.'

It follows that it is utterly impossible to attain *nirvāṇa* by any path based on the everyday world.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The "appeasement of the object" (drastavyopasama) is, no doubt, a synonym for the "appeasement of dispositions" (samskaropasama) or the "appeasement of obsessions" (prapancopasama). It is indeed not the elimination of the object (drastavya-ksaya), implying the abandoning of both subject and object. It is merely the appeasement of the object. What is implied by the appeasement of the object is its non-reification. The conception of the non-existence of the object will emerge only if its existence is understood in a substantial way. Existence (astitva) and non-existence (nastitva) are correlative. Assertion or denial of one involves the assertion or denial of the other respectively. Asserting existence in a metaphysical way one is led to the denial of existence. Denying existence in the same way one is led to the assertion of non-existence. Instead of eliminating both existence and non-existence and looking for a transcendent reality, a reality that is beyond both existence and non-existence, it is possible to appease, calm, or pacify one's dispositions (samskara) or obsessions (prapanca). Dispositions or obsessions, when followed to their positive extreme, lead to the belief in a permanent existence (astitva); when completely negated they contribute toward the belief in non-existence (nastitva). Hence the emphasis on their appeasement rather than their promotion or elimination.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. This is the soteriological import of this discussion of fundamental ontology: If one reifies phenomena - including such things as one's own self, characteristics (prominently including one's own), or external objects - and if one thinks that things either fail to exist or exist absolutely, one will be unable to attain any peace. For one will thereby be subject to egoism, the overvaluing of oneself and one's achievements and of material things. One will not appreciate the possibility of change, of the impermanence and nonsubstantiality of oneself and one's possessions. These are the seeds of grasping and craving and, hence, of suffering. The alternative, Nāgārjuna suggests, and the path to pacification, is to see oneself and other entities as non-substantial, impermanent, and subject to change and not as appropriate objects of such passionate craving.

Chapter VI

राागरक्तपरीक्षा षष्ठं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀染染者品第六(十偈)

།འདོད་ཆགས་དང་ཆགས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་དྲུག་པའོ།།

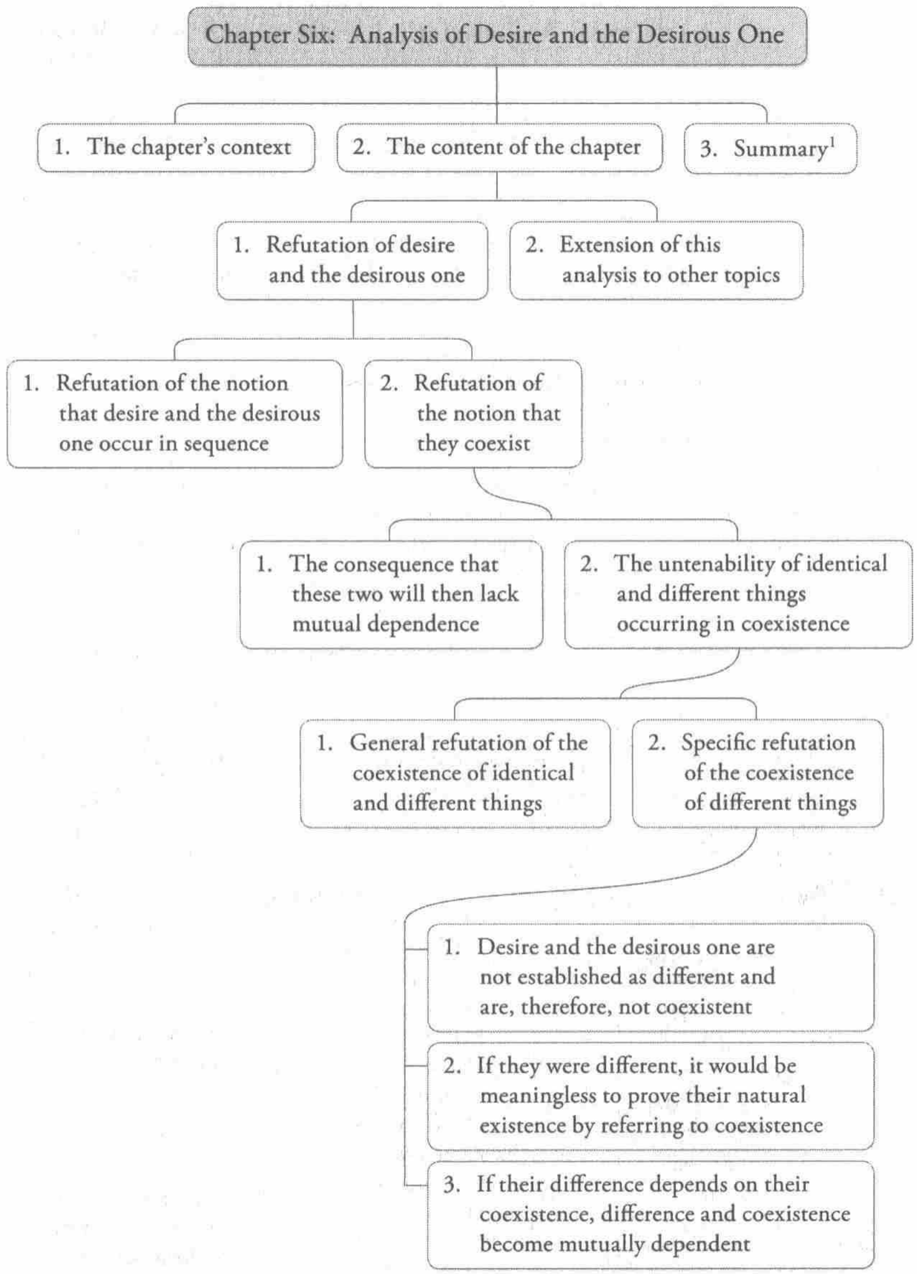
rāgasaktiparīkṣā nāma ṣaṣṭaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter VI: Examination of Desire and the Desirous

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter VI

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are in the section of the text explaining the selflessness of phenomena, and having completed the first part of that section, which was the demonstration of selflessness in three phenomena, we now turn to the second part, of that section which is the refutation of the argument that there is a self in phenomena. **[144:11]** This section has three parts: refutation of the defilements—that which depends on the basis; refutation of the existence of the characteristics: arising, ceasing, and enduring; and refutation of the existence of the cause— agent and action. The present chapter is the first of these.

EXPLANATION:

Here someone might say that the aggregates, the elements, and the faculties exist essentially because the defilements, which depend on them, exist; and this is because the Tathagata has said, “Oh monks, when some childish, uneducated person, fallen into the extreme of reification, has seen material forms with his eyes, the mind becomes obsessed with them as the locus of pleasure. Having developed that obsession, desire arises. Having become desirous, body speech and mind act out of desire” [*Pitaputrasamagama-Sutra*, *mDo sde* nga 13b]. **[145]** Thus it is said that afflictive emotions such as desire— the causes of the afflictions—exist. If such things as desire existed essentially, such things as the aggregates would also exist essentially. However, this is not the case!

This section has three parts: the refutation of the essential existence of desire and the desirous, drawing conclusions from these arguments, the application of these arguments to other phenomena.

SUMMARY:

It should be ascertained that if the three phenomena pertaining to affliction— the agent of desire, the object of desire, the instrument of desire—and the three phenomena pertaining to purification—the agent of confident reliance, the object of confident reliance, and the instrument of confident reliance— existed in the way they are grasped, as existing inherently, then as we have established through arguments, their conventional status would make no sense. Thereafter, dependent origination should be ascertained by realizing that since—while it is necessary to accord with convention—that would not be possible if phenomena existed inherently, their ontological status makes sense only as empty of essence. We could also accept this rearrangement: “The desirous one depends on desire.”

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER VI - Examination of Passion and the Impassioned Self

This chapter is concerned with the concepts of passion (raga, affection) and the impassioned self (rakta, the one who is impassioned and thereby "defiled"). Nagarjuna carries out the discussion on the basis of differing temporal movements. He first inquires into whether the impassioned self can exist apart from the passion and, should it be so, then the passion, in turn, must depend on it. Next, he considers simultaneous occurrence but the idea of simultaneity or concomitance of two entities is an illusion and, surely, a confusion of terms. He clearly demonstrates the fact that as one wishes for concomitance, one still desires to maintain the diversity of elements; and vice versa, as one seeks for diversity one also wishes to assert concomitance at the same time. In short, Nagarjuna indicates that diversity and unity are two different concepts which cannot be confused with reference to reality. Similarly, the concepts of passion and the impassioned self must be viewed aright, never to be spoken of together nor separately. The intimations here are towards the Madhyamika idea of the sunyata of dharmas (the "emptiness" of all factors of experience).

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

6. *Lust* (*raga*). The Buddha considered lust (*raga*) to be the cause of most of the ills of life, the worst of these being bondage. Freedom (*nirvana*) was thus defined as absence of lust (*vairagya*). Not only did he speak of lust and absence of lust, he also often spoke of people who are lustful (*rakta*) and free from lust (*virakta*). Yet, all such statements were made with no assumption of a concealed substance (*svabhava*) or of a mysterious spiritual or material personality. The analyses of faculties (*indriya*), aggregates (*skandha*), and elements (*dhatu*) were intended to demonstrate the futility of such assumptions. However, the Sarvastivadins conceived of a substance in every element, while the Sautrantikas posited a mysterious personality. Therefore, it became necessary for Nagarjuna to examine the concepts of lust (*raga*) as well as the lustful (*rakta*). A variety of unsatisfactory implications that arise out of the Sarvastivada and Sautrantika interpretations is clearly presented in Chapter VI, with the conclusion: “Thus, with or without the lustful, lust is not established. Like lust, all things, with or without [accompaniments], are not established.”

Once again, we should not forget the fact that the *dharmas* referred to here are those that were recognized by the Buddhist metaphysicians, not the empirical phenomena as defined by the Buddha and the early Buddhists.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Addiction

If an unaddicted addict
Preceded his addiction,
Addiction would depend
On someone unaddicted.

Addicts and addictions go together.

Were addicts and addictions one,
They could not go together;
Were addicts and addictions two,
How would you ever know
They were together?
If they go together,
How can they not be different?

For only different things
Can be together things.
Without differences
Nothing goes together.

Addicts and addictions
Are neither together nor untogether,
Just as all things
Are neither together nor untogether.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

6. Passion and the Impassioned

If the impassioned person existed prior to the passion, then passion could only exist dependent upon someone who is *already* impassioned (v. 1). And, if the impassioned person does *not exist,* there could be no passion (v. 2). Again, the problem is the interdependence of concepts. Passion cannot occur without someone who is passionate, and if we try to conceive of passion as a distinct reality, we then would have to accept that it could exist independent of the impassioned - since it cannot, we have to give up the idea of passion and the impassioned as being self-existent, discrete realties. This means that because the concepts are interrelated, what they refer to are also *ontologically interrelated.*

If passion and the impassioned person arose at the same time, they would not be mutually connected (v. 3): if they existed only together, they would be two parts of the same thing and not two realities co-existing. Nor could they be identical because something cannot be identical to itself (since identity is of two *different* things) (v. 4). Moreover, the co-existence *(sahabhava)* of two things is not possible: if they are different, then they are not identical and cannot occur in the same place (v. 4). If they are either identical or distinct, we could imagine one without the other, but we cannot imagine passion without someone who has it or vice versa (v. 5). In addition, if they are distinct, why would they always occur together (v. 7)? Verse 10 expands this analysis to all entities and their properties.

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

6

An Examination of Desire and the Desirous One

In the Sutra of the Great Mother, the Buddha taught:

Desire is perfectly pure, and therefore forms are perfectly pure.

THE BUDDHA EXPLAINED perfect purity in a vast way. The reason desire is perfectly pure is that desire and the one who experiences it do not truly exist; they are not real. Therefore, there is no flaw in having desire; there is no flaw in the desire itself because it has no inherent nature. Its nature is therefore said to be perfectly pure.

The desire itself is perfectly pure, and therefore the desirous one—the one who has the desire—is perfectly pure, and the object of desire is perfectly pure. In brief, that is the way it is.

If the essence of desire were in fact impure, then the desirous one would be impure and the object of the desire would be impure as well. However, since the essential nature of desire in a dream is perfectly pure, since it is free from any stain, the nature of the one who is feeling that desire is perfect purity without any stain, and the nature of the object of the desire is perfect purity free from stain. In the Sutra of the Great Mother, there is one chapter called Perfect Purity, comprising several volumes, and in one passage from this chapter the Buddha states, "Desire is perfectly pure, and therefore forms are perfectly pure. Forms are perfectly pure, and therefore transcendent generosity is perfectly pure. Transcendent generosity is perfectly pure, and therefore the omniscience of the Buddha is perfectly pure." It would be good for you to read the chapter called Perfect Purity, because it is easy to understand and those who read it like it very much.

The reason Nagarjuna composed this chapter examining desire and the desirous one was that even after he presented the analyses of the sources of consciousness, aggregates, and elements that demonstrate that none of these truly exist,

those who asserted the true existence of things claimed that these things do in fact exist because the mental afflictions that arise in dependence upon them exist. For example, desire exists, and this proves that the objects that desire focuses upon exist as well, because desire could not exist in their absence. Since the reason they used to try to prove that things exist is that desire exists, it was necessary for Nagarjuna to analyze and refute the true existence of desire and the desirous one.

The Vajrayana explains that the mental afflictions—the five poisons of anger, desire, stupidity, pride, and jealousy—are all perfectly pure, and so this chapter that analyzes this very point is very important to Vajrayana practice. The analysis in this chapter is applicable to all of the mental afflictions. It starts out with desire, but it can then be applied to anger, pride, jealousy, and stupidity. The reason the focus is explicitly on desire is that we are all inhabitants of the desire realm, and all of the beings in the desire realm, from the tiniest insects up to the mightiest gods and goddesses, have a lot of desire (fn There are three realms inhabited by the sentient beings in samsara: the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm. The latter two are more subtle and are the exclusive domain of certain gods who have spent a long time cultivating specific meditative states of absorption. The desire realm is populated by all six classes of sentient beings: beings in the hell realms, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, and certain types of gods.). That is why it is important for us to examine desire and determine that its nature is in fact perfectly pure. Gendun Chopel composed the following verse:

Blind ants run in pursuit of happiness,
Legless worms crawl in pursuit of happiness,
In short, all beings think nothing of climbing over one another in their pursuit of happiness—
All beings strive only to be happy.

The crux of this is that all beings in the desire realm have a lot of desire, which is why it is essential for us to determine that desire is perfectly pure.

The first verse in this chapter that helps us determine the purity of desire and the desirous one reads:

If before desire existed,
If without any desire there existed a desirous one,
In dependence upon that, there would in fact be desire,
For when there is a desirous one, there is also desire.

Here we are looking at the desirous one—which could refer either to the desirous individual or to the mind that experiences desire— and the desire itself. We can ask, if these things truly exist, how do they exist in terms of their sequence? Does one happen before the other, or do they occur simultaneously? We cannot say that the desire exists before the desirous one, because if it did, there would be disembodied desire floating around out there without anyone to experience it, and that would not make any sense. On the other hand, it cannot be that the one who experiences the desire, the desirous being, exists before the desire itself, because if that were the case, then there would be a desirous individual without any desire. It would necessarily follow that arhats (fn An arhat is one who has attained the highest fruition, the nirvana of either the Shravakayana or Pratyekabuddhayana. By cultivating strong revulsion for and renunciation of samsara, and by perfecting their realization of the selflessness of the individual, the arhats completely free themselves from the mental afflictions and gain liberation from samsara. At a certain point, however, the buddhas wake them up from the peace of their meditative state, reveal to them that they have not yet attained the fruition of Buddhahood itself, and exhort them to practice the Mahayana teachings for the benefit of all sentient beings. Doing so, they eventually attain the complete and perfect enlightenment of the buddhas.) and buddhas would be desirous individuals, because in order to fit the definition of a desirous individual, it would not matter if the being had desire or not. That would not make sense either. Neither can desire and the desirous one exist simultaneously, because if they came into existence at the same time, each with its own inherent nature, there would not be any connection between them. They would be two independent things, existing separately, that could each go its own separate way. One could cease and the other could still remain. That is clearly not the case with desire and the desirous one—they can exist only in mutual dependence. Since they cannot exist sequentially and they cannot exist simultaneously, desire and the desirous one are not real; they are just like appearances in a dream.

We need to apply the same reasoning to anger and the angry one, to jealousy and the jealous one, to pride and the proud one, and to stupidity and the stupid one. We can apply the same analysis to all of these, and we should. The Vajrayana instructs us to bring the five poisons to the path, and the reasons that is possible are explained here in this chapter—in fact there are no other reasons than these.

We can look at anger and see that before the anger arises there is no angry person. It would be impossible for there to be an angry individual before the anger itself. For example, while someone is meditating on loving-kindness, there is no angry person, but if anger should arise later, there will be an angry person. So the angry person cannot exist before the anger itself. Nor can the anger exist before the one who is angry, nor can they exist simultaneously. Therefore, they cannot truly exist.

We can apply the same analysis to suffering. We need to examine suffering and the one who suffers to see which one comes first, and we see that whatever way we posit the relationship between them, it is logically impossible. Therefore, neither suffering nor the one who suffers is real.

We can look in the same way at sickness and the one who is sick: Which one comes first, the sick individual or the sickness itself? If the sick individual existed before the sickness itself, all healthy sentient beings would also be sick. In fact, sickness depends upon there being a sick individual, and vice versa, and therefore neither of them inherently exists. This is important for us to know. The great siddha

Gotsangpa sang in his vajra song of realization called The Eight Cases of Basic Goodness that sickness is not to be shunned because it is basically good; mental afflictions are not to be shunned because they are basically good; and suffering is not to be shunned because it is basically good, and we need to know the reasons that this is true (fn Gyalwa Gotsangpa was an emanation of Milarepa and a great early master of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage, four generations removed from Lord Gampopa, Milarepa's greatest disciple.).

The same can be applied to the expectations of difficulties in the future and the problems those expectations create for us. When we expect to experience difficulties in the future, we should examine which exists first—the one who is going to experience these problems or the future problems themselves? If the causes of future suffering do not exist, then the future suffering itself does not exist. If the future suffering itself does not exist, then the individual who will suffer in the future cannot be said to exist either. Therefore, the true nature of future suffering is perfect purity, and the experience of the realization of that is open, spacious, and relaxed.

In this way, beginning with desire, we find that whatever we analyze, its nature is perfect purity. Furthermore, we can examine more and more things and see that they are all also perfectly pure by their very nature, and this allows us to experience more and more openness, spaciousness, and relaxation.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter VI

रागरक्तपरीक्षा षष्ठं प्रकरणम्।   rāgasaktiparīkṣā nāma ṣaṣṭaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀染染者品第六(十偈)   zhōng lùn guān rǎn rǎn zhě pǐn dì liù(shí jié;jì)

།འདོད་ཆགས་དང་ཆགས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་དྲུག་པའོ།། | 'dod chags daṅ chags pa brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa drug pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER VI - Examination of Passion and the Impassioned Self

JONES (Skt):
6. Passion and the Impassioned

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The Examination of Lust and the Lustful

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
6. Analysis of Passion and the Impassioned

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[6] Examination of the Fusion between Excitement and the Exited (10 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Desire and the Other Afflictions

STRENG (Skt):
Section 6 - An Analysis of Desire and One Who Desires in the Context of Their Separateness and Concomitance (affection and the person affected) In 10 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
6. the passion and the impassioned.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 6 Contemplation of passion and the impassioned one 10 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Desire and the Desirous One

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER VI - Analysis of Desire and the Desirous One

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter VI: Examination of Desire and the Desirous

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER VI - Examination of Desire and the Desirous One

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Six - Examination of Desire and the Desirous

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 6: AN EXAMINATION OF DESIRE AND THE DESIROUS ONE

PINGALA COMMENTARY

6/0 Question: The sutras say that desire, hatred and delusion are the foundation of the world. Desire has various names. It is called love, or attachment, or passion, or lust, or desire, and there are other such names as these. Such obsessions depend upon living beings, and these living beings are 'impassioned'. Desire means the dharma of passion. Because of the dharma of passion and the impassioned one, there is desire. It is the same with the other two passions; where there is anger, there is an angry being, and where there is delusion, there is a deluded being. It is because of these three poisons that the three forms of karmic activity arise and it is because of the three karmic activities that the three realms arise, and all dharmas consequently have their existence.

Reply:

(8a22) Even although the sutras mention the names of the 'three poisons', if you seek for their reality you will not find them, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter VIII]

Some hold that the factors of personal existence, the bases of cognition and the primal elements exist in fact. On what grounds? Because of the direct perception of the state of affliction (*samklesa*) which is based on these. The reasoning here is that there can be no direct perception of a state of affliction based on something which does not exist, as, for example there is no perception of the daughter of a barren woman by the son of a barren woman. So desire (*raga*) and the other afflictions (*klesa*) (fn 1 These are the structures of everyday existence; sometimes ten are given, sometimes six; Madhyamika can accept any number but invariably takes three as basic: desire (*raga*), aversion (*dvesa*), and illusion (*moha*). Cf. Chapter XVII.) exist because they are the necessary basis of the state of affliction.

As the illustrious one said, 'The ordinary, unsophisticated man, o monks, succumbing to the everyday world of names and having beheld things with the eye, cleaves to those things which promise happiness. From so cleaving desire is born; seized by desire he carries out - in deed, thought and word - karmic acts born of the three afflictions, desire, aversion and illusion. . . .'

Desire presupposes one desiring

In reply we say that the factors of personal existence, the bases of cognition and the primal elements would exist if desire and the other afflictions themselves existed. The reasoning here would be that desire, conceived of as real by unsophisticated, ordinary people, would presuppose a person who desires and that he would either exist or not exist. Nagarjuna says that neither alternative makes sense.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Six The Examination of Lust and the Lustful (Raga-rakta-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter VI Examination of Desire and the Desirous

This chapter represents a continuation of the discussion begun in the previous one. That is, while the chapter is nominally about desire, an example chosen for its obvious soteriological significance, it is in a larger sense a further discussion of the relation between entities and their properties, with specific attention to the relation between human beings and their psychological characteristics. Locating the discussion at this point is consonant with a tradition of Mahayana discussions of emptiness in which one first addresses external phenomena, which are both easier to analyze and less susceptible of reification than the self, and then generalizes the discussion to human psychological phenomena. (fn 51. See, e.g., the *Heart Sutra*, with its famous discussion of the emptiness of the aggregates that begins with form and then moves to the psychological aggregates.) The chapter opens with an echo of the discussion of space:

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Kārikā VI.1

रागाद्यदि भवेत्पूर्वं रक्तो रागतिरस्कृतः।
तं प्रतीत्य भवेद्रागो रक्ते रागो भवेत्सति॥१॥

LVP 138,4-5 - LVP 144,3-4
| rāgād yadi bhavet pūrvaṃ rakto rāgatiraskṛtaḥ |
taṃ pratītya bhaved rāgo rakte rāgo bhavet sati ||1||

|若離於染法 先自有染者
因是染欲者 應生於染法

T1564: vol 30, pg 8a14
|ruò lí yū;yú;wū rǎn fǎ xiān zì yǒu rǎn zhě
yīn shì rǎn yù zhě yīng shēng yū;yú;wū rǎn fǎ

|གལ་ཏེ་འདོད་ཆགས་སྔ་རོལ་ན||འདོད་ཆགས་མེད་པའི་ཆགས་ཡོད་ན|
|དེ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་འདོད་ཆགས་ཡོད||ཆགས་ཡོད་འདོད་ཆགས་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར||

Tg tsa 4a6-7 - Tg tsa 4b4
| || gal te ’dod chags sṅa rol na | | ’dod chags med pa’i chags yod na |
| de la brten nas ’dod chags yod | | chags yod ’dod chags (7)yod par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - If prior to and separated from the passion the impassioned self is admitted to exist, then the passion will be contingent on the impassioned self. Thus the passion exists only from the fact of the existence of the impassioned self.

JONES (Skt):
[1] If the impassioned person existed prior to having passion and thus apart from passion, then passion would be dependent upon the impassioned person - there would be passion only when there is the already impassioned.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If a lustful one, separated from lust, were to exist prior to lust, then depending upon him there will be lust. Lint exists when there is a lustful one.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If an impassioned one would exist prior to passion and separate from passion,
then passion would depend on him ana passion would exist only where there is an impassioned one.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. Before leaving from Excitement,
The excited have been clearly included in the excitement,
Something concrete clearly exists as the excitement,
And in the excited the excitement might exist in front of us.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 If the one desiring were to exist prior to his desire, that is, quite apart from desire, desire would depend on the one desiring; given one desiring there would be desire.

STRENG (Skt):
1. If the "one who desires" would exist before desire itself, then desire may be regarded. When desire becomes related to "one who desires," then desire comes into existence.

BOCKING (Ch):
6v1 If, separate from the (dharma of) passion
The impassioned being pre-existed independently,
Then surely the passion should arise
On account of this impassioned one.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
|If a desirous one without desire exists before desire, desire would exist dependent on that [desirous one]. [When] a desirous one exists, desire exists.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If before the presence of desire,
The desirous one exists without desire,
Based on that, there would be desire.
When the desirous one exists, so does desire. [VI.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. If prior to desire
And without desire there were a desirous one,
Desire would depend on him.
Desire would exist when there is a desirous one.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. If prior to desire
There were a desirous one without desire,
Depending on that, desire would exist.
Desire would exist when there is a desirous one.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
6.1 If the desirous one were to exist prior to desiring, then desire would depend on the desirous. Desire exists only if there is a desirous one.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
If before desire existed,
If without any desire there existed a desirous one,
In dependence upon that, there would in fact be desire,
For when there is a desirous one, there is also desire. (1)

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Here 'desire' embraces being attached, the effort of desiring, cupidity and devotion. Desire has its base in the one desiring (*rakta*). If the one desiring exists prior to his desire, that is, quite apart from it, he would be devoid (*rahita*) of desire; in such case desire would be based on a desiring person who was quite separate from desire. In this way it makes sense to say that desire could arise in an existing person who desires. But this cannot possibly be — a desiring person devoid of desire — and it would necessarily follow that even the wise ones could have desires.

If, in this way, there can be no desire in a desiring person who exists, then let there be desire even if the desiring person does not exist (fn 2 i.e., if there is no person prior to the act of desiring). But this makes no sense either, Nagarjuna says:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

So far Nagarjuna was considering the basic elements (dharma) involved in an explanation of the problem of perception, namely, the "faculties" (indriya), the "aggregates" (skandha), and "elements" (dhatu>). However, the analysis of perceptual experience, and therefore of the elements (dharma) involved in such experience, is not confined to these. In the Buddhist view, lust (raga) is an important constituent of perception, primarily because in Buddhism the analysis of perception was not undertaken for its own sake, but for the sake of discovering the cause of bondage and freedom.

We have already referred to the confusions created by Candrakīrti, especially in regard to the interpretation of the most crucial Chapter I where he fails to recognize the significance even of the order in which Nagarjuna takes up the variety of ideas for examination, let alone the ideas themselves.

Another unfortunate misinterpretation emerges when Candrakīrti assumes that every initial verse in every chapter represents a statement of the opponent's view which is to be repudiated. While this may be true in some chapters, there is no need to universalize it. There is no reason why Nagarjuna could not take up his or the Buddha's views first and then go on to repudiate what are considered to be inappropriate ideas. In the Buddha's own analysis of perception, obsessions (prapañca) appears in a personality that is already smeared with lust. The Buddha consistently avoided any speculation regarding absolute origins. As such, he was not willing to assume either a pure personality, a tabula rasa which comes to be defiled by adventitious elements (see A 1.254) or the existence of an element called lust (raga) in the external world independent of a conscious person who generates lust on the basis of external objects (see S 1.22). For him, objects can be classified as pleasurable (subha), loathsome (asubha), or neutral only in relation to a perceiving individual who is prone to make such distinctions. A person who is prone to make such distinctions is one who is either dominated by lust (raga) or aversion (dosa) or indifference.

Thus, Nagarjuna is able to assert that if any object were to cause any lust (raga), then there must be a lustful one (rakta), not simply a "pure person" who is untained by lust. For him, there is no difficulty in speaking of lust, so long as that lust is not distinguished as an entity which is then supposed to infect a person who is pure and undefiled by lust. It is the same sort of relation that is exemplified by a compassionate one (maitra) and the recipient of compassion (upagrahaka), a very apt example given by Candrakīrti to illustrate the conception of "otherness" (paratva), but which has been misunderstood by many a translator [Sprung, Lucid Exposition who was probably following Stcherbatsky's earlier translation]. There is no sense in speaking of a compassionate one or even compassion in a vacuum. A compassionate one or compassion becomes meaningful only in the context of people who are recipients of such compassion. The same sort of relationship exists among the lustful (rakta), lust (raga), and the objects that generate lust in the individuals. The present verse, therefore, is a clear statement of Nagarjuna's own position, not the statement of an opponent that is to be rejected.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. One possibility for the relationship between the subject of desire and the desire is that the desirous one exists qua desirous one independently of the desire, which is then adventitious and dependent. That is, on this view the desirous one is inherently desirous, but the desire is merely dependent. This, however, is problematic, for then there is a real contrast in the mode of existence of the desirous one and the desire: The desirous one truly exists, but the desire does not truly exist. But if there is no real desire, in virtue of what is there a desirous one?

Kārikā VI.2

रक्तेऽसति पुना रागः कुत एव भविष्यति।
सति वासति वा रागे रक्तेऽप्येष समः क्रमः॥२॥

rakte ’sati punā rāgaḥ kuta eva bhaviṣyati |
sati vāsati vā rāge rakte ’py eṣa samaḥ kramaḥ ||2||

若無有染者 云何當有染
若有若無染 染者亦如是

ruò wú yǒu rǎn zhě yún hé dāng yǒu rǎn
ruò yǒu ruò wú rǎn rǎn zhě yì rú shì

།ཆགས་པ་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར་ན་འང*།།འདོད་ཆགས་ཡོད་པར་ག་ལ་འགྱུར།
།ཆགས་པ་ལ་ཡང་འདོད་ཆགས་ནི།།ཡོད་དམ་མེད་ཀྱང་རིམ་པ་མཚུངས།།

| chags pa yod par ’gyur na’aṅ | | ’dod chags yod par ga la ’gyur |
| chags pa la yaṅ ’dod chags ni | | yod dam med kyaṅ rim pa mtshuṅs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - Again, from the non-existence of the impassioned self, where can the passion be? Whether the passion exists or does not, (once again), the impassioned self can be treated in the same manner.

JONES (Skt):
[2] On the other hand, when the impassioned person does not exist, how can there be passion? Whether or not passion or the impassioned exist, the analysis would be the same.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When a lustful one does not exist, whence can there be lust? Whether lust exists or not, the method (of analysis) even of the lustful one would be comparable.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, where an impassioned one does not exist, where will there be passion?
The passion neither exists nor does not exist in the impassioned and vice versa.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. Because it is perfectly impossible for excitement to exists in the excited again,
How is it possible for everyone to know where the excitement can exist actually?
However, it is not clear whether excitement exists in the excitement itself, or in the excited,
And so the real facts in front of us are going on naturally and smoothly.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 If the desiring one does not exist, how, precisely, will desire arise? If the desiring one himself exists the consequence is the same whether desire exists or not.

STRENG (Skt):
2. If there is no one who desires, how then will desire come into being? And the question whether desire exists or does not exist likewise holds true for the one who desires.

BOCKING (Ch):
6v2 If there were no impassioned one,
How could there be passion?
When passion exists or does not exist
It will be the same for the impassioned.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there were no desirous one, how could there be desire? The same follows for the desirous one too: [it depends on] whether desire exists or not.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Yet if the desirous one does not exist,
How could there possibly be desire?
Given the presence or absence of desire,
This follows also in the case of the desirous one. [VI.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. Were there no desirous one, moreover,
Where would desire occur?
Whether or not desire or the desirous one exist,
The analysis would be the same.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. Were there no desirous one, moreover,
Where would desire occur?
With respect to the desirous one, whether or not desire exists,
The analysis would be the same.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
6.2 If the desirous one were to exist apart from desire, desire would exist only if a desirous one existed. But if desire were not inherently existent, how could there be one who desires?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

6/2 If there really is an established impassioned one beforehand, then there is no need for any further passion, because the impassioned one already has passion. If no impassioned one exists beforehand, in this case too no passion should arise, for there must first be an impassioned one for passion to arise subsequently. If there were no impassioned one beforehand, there would be no one to receive the passion. It is the same with passion itself. If passion really pre-existed apart from the individual it would be without a cause, so how could it arise? It would be like a fire without fuel. If no fixed passion existed beforehand, there would be no impassioned one. For this reason it says in the verse, 'when passion exists or does not exist, it will be the same for the impassioned'.

Question: If it is impossible for passion and the impassioned one to arise one after the other in reciprocal dependence, what is wrong with them arising simultaneously?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

2ab *If the desiring one does not exist, how, precisely, will desire arise?*

As there can be no desire if the desiring person exists, how can there be if the desiring person does not exist? Will a desire, which is without a basis, be conceded existence? For a fruit which does not exist cannot possibly ripen.

One desiring presupposes desire

Someone may interject: 'Even though you repudiate desire none the less the one who desires exists as he has not been repudiated; but one who desires does not make sense in the absence of desire; therefore desire exists as well.' Our rejoinder is that desire would exist if the one desiring existed. That is, if one postulates a person who desires then one must suppose either that desire exists or that it does not. But Nagarjuna says that neither alternative is intelligible.

2cd *If the desiring one himself exists the consequence is the same whether desire exists or not.*

If one postulates a desiring one on the supposition of an existing desire, it will follow that in this case too desire is unintelligible, paralleling the argument just given where the one desiring was supposed to exist. 'If desire were to exist prior to the one desiring, that is, quite apart from anyone desiring . . ,' (MMK VI.1 The argument is now applied to desire instead of to the one desiring) and so on. Or one can consider the one desiring on the supposition that the desire does not exist. But this makes no sense either. Because if the desire does not exist, how can there be one who desires?' (fn 3 This adapts *kārikā* 2ab) It follows that the one desiring does not exist. As then neither desire nor the one desiring exist, the factors of personal existence, the bases of cognition and the primal elements do not exist.

Simultaneity or conjunction of desire and the one desiring

Someone may interject that desire and the one desiring do not arise one after the other as our attack supposes. Rather, the desire and the one desiring arise simultaneously (*sahaiva*) (fn 4 Or, 'in conjunction'; the temporal factor predominates.). It is by a desire arising simultaneously with a state of mind that the latter is desirous, and that is the 'one desiring'. So both desire and the one desiring exist in fact. Nagarjuna replies that here too

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Thus, Nagarjuna raises the question as to how there could be lust in the absence of a lustful one. This avoids the theory of a tabula rasa and the adventitious impressions. Let alone the existence or the non-existence of lust, even the lustful one has to be analysed in terms of dependence, not in terms of pure entities having their own self-nature (svabhava).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. But if there is no desirous one, there is no ontological basis for the desire. So whether we posit an inherently existent desirous one or no desirous one at all, we cannot identify desire as existing. And, of course, this goes for any characteristic or psychological attribute and for any subject of any such attribute identified under any description. Moreover, the converse is also true: Whether or not we posit inherently existent desire, we cannot thereby establish the existence of a substantially existent desirous one. If the desire does not exist inherently but only dependently, that dependence in no way presupposes an independent basis. If on the other hand desire is posited as inherently existent, there would be no need for a basis in a desirous one at all. In neither case would the substantial existence of the entity in question (subject or attitude) have any import for the reality of the correlative entity (attitude or subject). And the reason for this is simply that inherent existence is not relational existence. Since desire and the desirous one must be understood as interrelated, they must be understood as mutually dependent.

Kārikā VI.3

सहैव पुनरुद्भूतिर्न युक्ता रागरक्तयोः।
भवेतां रागरक्तौ हि निरपेक्षौ परस्परम्॥३॥

sahaiva punar udbhūtir na yuktā rāgaraktayoḥ |
bhavetāṃ rāgaraktau hi nirapekṣau parasparam ||3||

染者及染法 俱成則不然
染者染法俱 則無有相待

rǎn zhě jí rǎn fǎ jù;jū chéng zé bù rán
rǎn zhě rǎn fǎ jù;jū zé wú yǒu xiàng;xiāng dāi

།འདོད་ཆགས་དང་ནི་ཆགས་པ་དག།ལྷན་ཅིག་ཉིད་དུ་སྐྱེ་མི་རིགས།
།འདི་ལྟར་འདོད་ཆགས་ཆགས་པ་དག།ཕན་ཚུན་ལྟོས་པ་མེད་པར་འགྱུར།།

| ’dod chags daṅ ni chags pa dag | | lhan cig ñid du skye mi rigs |
| ’di ltar ’dod chags chags pa dag | |(4b1)phan tshun ltos pa med par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - Again, simultaneous occurrence of the passion and the impassioned self is inconceivable because, surely, both of them are not mutually dependent on each other for existence.

JONES (Skt):
[3] The simultaneous arising of passion and the impassioned cannot occur because they would then be mutually independent.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Again, the simultaneous occurrences of lust and the lustful one is not proper. Lust and the lustful one would then be mutually non-contingent.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, the conjunction of the passion along with the impassioned does not exist.
Indeed, that would make passion and the impassioned independent of one another.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Something, which is very enduring, will appear again,
And that does never explain the fusion between the excited and the excitement at all.
Because what is hopeful is the co-existence of the excitement and the excited,
The reason why the excitement and the excited might not be recognized with each other, comes from the facts that the excitement and the exited are independent mutually.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 The simultaneous arising of desire and the one desiring does not make sense; Desire and the one desiring would arise independently of one another.

STRENG (Skt):
3. Further, it is not possible for both desire and the one who desires to be produced concomitantly. Indeed, desire and the one who desires come into being independent of each other.

BOCKING (Ch):
6v3 For the impassioned one and the passions
To be established both together is not correct,
For if the impassioned and the passions could combine
They would not be mutually dependent.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is not reasonable for desire and the desirous one to arise as co-existent. In this way desire and the desirous one would not be mutually contingent.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Desire and the desirous one
Cannot reasonably arise together.
In this case, desire and the desirous one
Would not depend on one another. [VI.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. Desire and the desirous one
Cannot arise together.
In that case, desire and the desirous one
Would not be mutually contingent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. Desire and the desirous one
Cannot arise simultaneously.
In that case desire and the desirous one
Would not be mutually dependent.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
6.3 Desire and the desirous one cannot occur concomitantly since, in that case, they'd arise independently of each other.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

6/3 If passion and the impassioned were established simultaneously, they would not be reciprocally dependent. There would be passion independent of the impassioned and there would be the impassioned independent of passion, and these two would be permanencies, being already established and without any causes. Once permanence is admitted many errors follow, but no liberation. Furthermore, we will now refute passion and the impassioned in terms of unity118 and difference. ; '.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

3ab *The simultaneous arising of desire and the one desiring does not make sense;*

that is the simultaneous origination of desire and the one desiring does not make sense; because,

3cd *Desire and the one desiring would arise independently of one another.*

Because of their being simultaneous, like the right and left horns of a cow, is the meaning.

Now the simultaneity (*sahahhava*) of these two, desire and the one desiring, would have to be conceived either as resting on their identity (*ekatva*) or on their difference (*prthaktva*) (fn 5 Or, 'separateness'). The first case, that they are identical, does not make sense. Because

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

To conceive of lust or the lustful one in vacuity and then proceeding to explain their simultaneous arising (sahaiva udbhutir) is not the purpose of "dependent arising." In such a case, what is found is independent existence of lust as well as the lustful one, each having its own nature. This, once again, represents Nagarjuna's rejection of the substance/attribute relationship. "Cow-ness" implies the fact of having "four legs;" the latter is not an independent attribute of the former. The dangers inherent in carrying out the analytical process initiated by the Buddha to its extreme is here indicated. Analysis is useful in eliminating metaphysics, but useless when its leads to further metaphysics.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. Another possibility the opponent might suggest is this: Desire and the desirous one come into inherent existence at the same time. It is very important in following this argument to remember Nāgārjuna's dialectical task. The opponent against whom his reductios are aimed is one who attributes inherent existence either to the desirous one, to desire, or both. Nāgārjuna is only attempting to show that attributing to them that kind of existence is incoherent not that there is no desire and that there are no desirous people at all. That would be crazy. Fundamental to the Buddhist conception of the predicament of human existence is the centrality of craving to the arising of suffering. But also fundamental is the conviction that there can be a release from craving. That is only possible, however, if craving is dependently originated since only then could the conditions that determine its arising be eliminated. So it is critically important from a Buddhist perspective to come to a complete understanding of the nature of desire,. and the mode of its existence, and it would be inconceivable to deny its existence completely. But Nāgārjuna is emphasizing here that that understanding must reveal them as mutually dependent in order to avoid the absurd conclusion that either could exist without the other. That precludes the assertion that while they in fact always co-occur, that co-occurrence is not through interdependence, but through contingent simultaneity of independent phenomena. Nāgārjuna's claim in VI: 3 is also the conclusion of the argument that is about to follow. It proceeds by means of a destructive dilemma. Given that the opponent must have desire and the desirous one arising simultaneously, they must be either identical or different. Nāgārjuna will show that neither alternative is coherent; VI: 4 spells out this strategy:

Kārikā VI.4

नैकत्वे सहभावोऽस्ति न तेनैव हि तत्सह।
पृथक्त्वे सहभावोऽथ कुत एव भविष्यति॥४॥

naikatve sahabhāvo ’sti na tenaiva hi tat saha |
pṛthaktve sahabhāvo ’tha kuta eva bhaviṣyati ||4||

染者染法一 一法云何合
染者染法異 異法云何合

rǎn zhě rǎn fǎ yī yī fǎ yún hé hé;gé
rǎn zhě rǎn fǎ yì yì fǎ yún hé hé;gé

།གཅིག་ཉིད་ལྷན་ཅིག་ཉིད་མེད་དེ།།དེ་ཉིད་དེ་དང་ལྷན་ཅིག་མིན།
།ཅི་སྟེ་ཐ་དད་ཉིད་ཡིན་ན།།ལྷན་ཅིག་ཉིད་དུ་ཇི་ལྟར་འགྱུར།།

| gcig ñid lhan cig ñid med de | | de ñid de daṅ lhan cig min |
| ci ste tha dad ñid yin na | | lhan cig ñid du ji ltar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - In a unity (of passion and impassioned self), there is no concomitance because a thing does not come together with another. In a diversity, on the other hand, how does such a concomitance arise?

JONES (Skt):
[4] Nor is there coexistence in what is one, for nothing arises simultanously with itself. But how can what is separate exist together (i.e., co-exist)?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
In identity, there is no co-existence. That which is associated does not arise together. In discreteness, how can there be co-existence?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
There exists no concomitance in identity because one is not with the other.
Moreover, in difference where will there be comcomitance?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. All things and phenomena are not only one,
Therefore they have to exist at one place together.
Because they are being there separately, therefore they can exist there just now,
Where is it possible for them to live in future for ever?

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 There can be no simultaneity in identity; There can be no simultaneity of something with itself. Again, how can there be simultaneity of what is entirely separate?

STRENG (Skt):
4. Concomitance does not exist in that which is only one thing, for certainly something which is only one thing cannot be concomitant. But yet, how will concomitance come into being if there are separate (prthak) things?

BOCKING (Ch):
6v4 If the impassioned and passion are one,
How can one dharma combine?
If the impassioned and passion are different,
How can different dharmas combine?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Identity has no co-existence: something cannot be co-existent with itself. If there were difference, how could there be co-existence?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Identical things are not coexistent,
As nothing is coexistent with itself.
Yet if they are different,
How could they be coexistent? [VI.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. In identity there is no simultaneity.
A thing is not simultaneous with itself.
But if there is difference,
Then how would there be simultaneity?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. In identity there is no simultaneity.
A thing is not simultaneous with itself.
But if there is difference,
Then how could there be simultaneity?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
6.4 There is no concomitance in a unitary thing. But how can there be concomitance if there is difference?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

6/4 Either passion and the impassioned combine as one dharma, or they combine as different dharmas. If they are one then they do not combine, and why? How can one dharma combine with itself? It is like a fingertip which cannot touch itself. As for them combining as different dharmas, this too is impossible, and why? Because they are different. If each dharma is already complete then there is absolutely no need for further combination, for even though combined, they will still remain different.

Moreover, unity and difference are both impossible, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

4a *There can be no simultaneity in identity;*

Nagarjuna explains why that is:

4b *There can be no simultaneity of something with itself.*

The essential nature of a desire, which cannot be distinguished from the desire, cannot be held to be simultaneous with the desire.

Concerning the second case, Nagarjuna says there is no simultaneity of what is separate.

4cd *Again, how can there be simultaneity of what is entirely separate?*

Indeed one never observes the simultaneity of things each of which exists separately like light and darkness or *saṃsāra*, the death-birth cycle, and *nirvāṇa*.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The philosophical problems created by an over-extended analytical process cannot be resolved by either a conception of identity or of discreteness. The relationship of co-existence (sahabhava) cannot be established once the analysis leads to a sharp dichotomy between substance and attribute.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. In the first line of this verse, Nāgārjuna points out the relational character of simultaneity. If simultaneity is predicated, it must be predicated of two distinct things that arise at the same time. We don't say that a thing arises simultaneously with itself. But if things are completely distinct in nature, they cannot co-occur in the same place, that is, if desire and the desirous one had distinct essences, they could not be in the same place at the same time.

———

Kārikā VI.5

एकत्वे सहभावश्चेत्स्यात्सहायं विनापि सः।
पृथक्त्वे सहभावश्चेत्स्यात्सहायं विनापि सः॥५॥

若一有合者 離伴應有合
若異有合者 離伴亦應合

།གལ་ཏེ་གཅིག་པུ་ལྷན་ཅིག་ན།།གྲོགས་ ་མེད་པར་ཡང་དེར་འགྱུར་རོ།
།གལ་ཏེ་ཐ་དད་ལྷན་ཅིག་ན།།གྲོགས་མེད་པར་ཡང་དེར་འགྱུར་རོ།།

ekatve sahabhāvaś cet syāt sahāyaṃ vināpi saḥ |
pṛthaktve sahabhāvaś cet syāt sahāyaṃ vināpi saḥ ||5||

ruò yī yǒu hé;gé zhě lí bàn yīng yǒu hé;gé
ruò yì yǒu hé;gé zhě lí bàn yì yīng hé;gé

| gal te gcig pu lhan cig na | | grogs med pa yaṅ de ’gyur ro |
| gal te tha dad lhan cig na | | gogs (2)med par yaṅ der ’gyur ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - If (it is admitted that) there is concomitance in a unity, then concomitance may also occur without a coming together. If (it is admitted that) there is concomitance in a diversity, then concomitance may also occur without a coming together.

JONES (Skt):
[5] If co-existence were a unity, it would exist with-out the association of passion and the impassion-ed. On the other hand, if co-existence were not a unity but instead there were separate and distinct parts, it would also exist without any association.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If, in identity, there were to be co-existence, it could occur even without association. If, in discreteness, there were to be co-existence, it could occur even without association.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Would identity be with as well as without this concomitance?
Would difference be with as well as without this concomitance?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Even at one time if the enduring existence can exist,
Then even the enduring world does not need any kind of enduring.
But the enduring existence exists in the separated situations,
The enduring world does not need even any endurance at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 If there could be simultaneity in identity, then there would be simultaneity even without the second component; if there could be simultaneity based on separate existence there would be simultaneity even without the second component.

STRENG (Skt):
5. If concomitance applied to that which is only one thing, then that one "with concomitance" would be that one "without concomitance." If concomitance applied to separate things, then that one "with concomitance" would be that one "without concomitance."

ROBINSON (Skt):
If there were co-being in oneness, then X would exist even without companion. If there were co-being in separateness, then X would exist even without companion.

BOCKING (Ch):
6v5 If there is combination of one thing.
It should be combination without any associating
If there is combination of different things
This too should be combination without any associating.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the identical were co-existent, [co-existence] would also occur between the unrelated; if the different were co-existent, [co-existence] would also occur between the unrelated.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If, a single thing were coexistent,
This would occur in isolation as well.
If the different were coexistent,
This would occur in isolation as well. [VI.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. If in identity there were simultaneity,
Then it could occur without association.
If in difference there were simultaneity,
It could occur without association.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. If a single thing were simultaneous
Then that could occur without accompaniment.
If different things were simultaneous,
Then that could occur without accompaniment.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
6.5 If concomitance occurred in unity, then it would occur without association. If concomitance occurred in difference, then it would occur without association.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

6/5 If passions and the impassioned were one, this would perforce be called a combination, and the passions and the impassioned ought to be separate from any other causes. Moreover, if they were one, there ought not to be the two names, 'the passions' and he impassioned'. Passion is a dharma, the impassioned one is an individual. For an individual and a dharma to be regarded as a unity, is a great confusion. If passion and the impassioned one are different from each other, and yet you claim they are a combination, then they should not need any further causes and conditions to be a combination. And if they are different and yet combined, then they ought to combine even though remote from each other.

Question: That one thing does not combine may be granted, but we see with our eyes that different dharmas unite.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If there were simultaneity in identity, then one could say 'wherever there is identity there is simultaneity' and then there would be simultaneity of even one of the two components. Again, if simultaneity is thought to rest in separateness on the principle 'wherever there is separateness there is simultaneity', then there would be simultaneity in one component which had been defined as different from the other as a cow is different than a horse and other animals.' Further,

Reciprocality of simultaneity or conjunction and separateness or difference

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Sarvastivada conception of identity in terms of substantial existence (svabhava), each substance being a part of a larger and more pervading substance (like Plato's "forms") did not need a conception of association. Coexistence comes to be overshadowed by identity (just as much as the three Platonic formstruth, beauty, and goodnesscould be found in a more comprehensive form, i.e., Good). The Sautrantika analysis of reality into discrete momentary entities (comparable to the Humean impressions) led to an explanation of co-existence in terms of "associaiton." In fact, such co-existence did not need any "association." Things could co-exist even without association. Thus, association is not a viable solution to problems either of identity or of discreteness.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. The first claim is meant to be a reductio on the view that simultaneous things can be identical. For suppose that there was an apparent pair of events whose simultaneity was in question, say William Clinton's uttering of the oath of office of the presidency and the inauguration of the first .president from Arkansas. If there is every reason to believe that these events are distinct but occur at the same time, it is then appropriate to say that they are simultaneous. But if we know that there is in fact only one event, it is at best a joke to assert its simultaneity with itself. The proper thing to say then would be not that the oath taking was simultaneous with the inauguration but that it was identical to the inauguration. The term translated as "association" here *(grogspa)* can also mean friendship, or companionship - the idea is of something distinct but accompanying. For the inauguration and the oath taking to be associated would be for them to be, say, accompanying rituals that could in principle occur independently. But if they could occur independently, they cannot be identical. Simultaneity requires association of some kind. But identity is incompatible with association.

The second claim is meant to be a reductio on the view that simultaneous and associated things could be different in nature. Difference, like identity, is incompatible with association, though for a different reason. The kind of difference at issue here is essential difference. Nāgārjuna's claim is that things that are completely different from one another, that are completely independent, ipso facto, stand in no relation to one another and so are not associated. This is another application of the Humean (and Tractarian) argument Nāgārjuna has mobilized above: If phenomena are distinct - indeed, being simultaneous, they are not even argued to be causally related - they can be imagined to be separate. So they are then logically independent. But that would then entail that if desire and the desirous one were different in this strong sense, we could imagine a desirous one without desire, and vice versa. But that is of course absurd. So if desire and the desirous one are supposed to arise simultaneously, they can neither be identical nor different. Of course, since any inherently different entities, in virtue of having determinate natures, are either identical or different, it follows that desire or the desirous one are either nonsimultaneous or empty of inherent existence.

Kārikā VI.6

पृथक्त्वे सहभावश्च यदि किं रागरक्तयोः।
सिद्धः पृथक्पृथग्भावः सहभावो यतस्तयोः॥६॥

pṛthaktve sahabhāvaś ca yadi kiṃ rāgaraktayoḥ |
siddhaḥ pṛthakpṛthagbhāvaḥ sahabhāvo yatas tayoḥ ||6||

若異而有合 染染者何事
是二相先異 然後說合相

ruò yì ér yǒu hé;gé rǎn rǎn zhě hé shì
shì èr xiàng;xiāng xiān yì rán hòu shuì hé;gé xiàng;xiāng

|གལ་ཏེ་ཐ་དད་ལྷན་ཅིག་ན||ཅི་གོ་འདོད་ཆགས་ཆགས་པ་དག|
|ཐ་དད་ཉིད་དུ་གྲུབ་འགྱུར་རམ||དེས་ན་དེ་གཉིས་ལྷན་ཅིག་འགྱུར||

| gal te tha dad lhan cig na | | ci go 'dod chags chags pa dag |
| tha dad ñid du grub 'gyur ram | | des na de gñis lhan cig 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - If there is concomitance in a diversity, in what manner does the passion and the impassioned self exist together? For then concomitance arises when there is a completion of the two separate entities.

JONES (Skt):
[6] However, if there were co-existence in the separateness, how can the separate existence of both passion and the impassioned be established? Only from that could "existing together" be established.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If there were to be co-existence in discreteness, is it the case that lust and the lustful one are completely separated, as a result of which their coexistence is also established.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If there is concomitance of the passion and the impassioned in the difference,
what is distinct and how is their concomitance established in it?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. When enduring existence has been separated,
Then what are the two independent between the excitement and the excided?
Accomplished articles are existences, which are separated from each other one by one.
Enduring existences are things that and this, which are independent and concrete.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 If there is simultaneity in separateness, how will the separateness of a desire and of the one desiring be established, on the basis of which they would be simultaneous?

STRENG (Skt):
6. And if concomitance applied to separate things, what is the proof for the separation of both desire and the one who desires, Since that which is non-separate is concomitant.

BOCKING (Ch):
6v6 If being different they nevertheless combine
What kind of things are passions and the impassioned?
For these two, having different characteristics before,
Are subsequently said to have the characteristic of combining.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the different were co-existent, how would desire and the desirous one be established as different or, if that were so, [how would] those two be co-existent?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If they are different and coexistent,
How could desire and the desirous one
Be established as two different things
That would then be present together? [VI.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If in difference there were simultaneity,
How could desire and the desirous one,
Being different, be established?
If they were, they would be simultaneous.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If different things were simultaneous,
How could desire and the desirous one,
Be established as different?
If they were, they would be simultaneous.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
6.6 If there were concomitance in discreteness, how could desire and the desirous one co-exist? They would have to be one to establish their difference,

PINGALA COMMENTARY

6/6 If passion and the impassioned one initially have different, fixed characteristics, and then afterwards unite, this is no unity, and why? Because their two characteristics, being previously different, are then later arbitrarily spoken of as a unity. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The simultaneity (fn 6 In this passage the sense of conjunction becomes more prominent) of a desire and the one desiring is imagined to rest on their separateness. How will their separate existence be established (*siddhi*)? How can the one desiring be established apart from dependence on the desire so that there could be simultaneity of both? After all, the simultaneity of cow and horse, which have been established as separate, is a matter of direct observation. But desire and the one desiring have not been established in this way; so there is no simultaneity of the pair.

Again, on the other hand it is clear that there is no simultaneity of two things established as separate.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The problem of "association" arises more with the conception of "discreteness," than with the notion of identity. "Association" was not much of a concern for the Sarvastivadins. However, it was indeed a major problem for the Sautrantikas. Hence their emphasis on the conception of "immediate contiguity" (samanantara). For Hume, with a similar atomic analysis of experience, "association" was the glue that bound together the discrete impressions. The present question of Nagarjuna was a challenge to that Sautrantika (/Humean) theory of the "ideas of association."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. This last verse emphasizes and spells out the point scouted above: We are left with a hard choice once we conceive of desire and the desirous one as entities. If desire and the desirous one are conceived as substantially different but simultaneous, we would have to be able to establish the nature and existence of each independent of the other. That is no easy task. If we could accomplish it, simultaneity would be a satisfactory solution to the dilemma. But of course we cannot. Moreover, Nāgārjuna argues in the next verse, if they are completely different, we are left with the peculiar task of explaining why they always go together. And asserting their simultaneity forces this problem:

Kārikā VI.7

सिद्धः पृथक्पृथग्भावो यदि वा रागरक्तयोः।
सहभावं किमर्थं तु परिकल्पयसे तयोः॥७॥

siddhaḥ pṛthakpṛthagbhāvo yadi vā rāgaraktayoḥ |
sahabhāvaṃ kim artham tu parikalpayase tayoḥ ||7||

若染及染者 先各成異相
既已成異相 云何而言合

ruò rǎn jí rǎn zhě xiān gè;gě chéng yì xiàng;xiāng
jì yǐ chéng yì xiàng;xiāng yún hé ér yán hé;gé

|གལ་ཏེ་འདོད་ཆགས་ཆགས་པ་དག།ཐ་དད་ཉིད་དུ་གྲུབ་གྱུར་ན།
|དེ་དག་ལྷན་ཅིག་ཉིད་དུ་ནི།།ཅི་ཡི་ཕྱིར་ན་ཡོངས་སུ་རྟོག།

| gal te ’dod chags chags pa dag | | tha dad ñid du grub gyur na |
| de dag lhan cig ñid du ni | | ci yi phyir (3)na yoṅs su rtog |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - Moreover, if there is an establishment of the diverse (nature of) passion and the impassioned self, then what is the purpose of your contriving a concomitance of the two?

JONES (Skt):
[7] But if passion and the impassioned are established as distinct entities, why do you think they exist together?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If complete separation between lust and the lustful one is established, for what purpose do you conceive of their co-existence?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the individuality of passion and the impassioned is established,
for what purpose do you determine their concomitance?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Things, which have been accomplished, are usually, each of them is independent and separate.
Then in that case the excitement and the excited might belong to the oneness between the excitement and the excited.
How is it possible for enduring existence to become the aim?
But now you are very diligent to become successful for you to rely upon Reality.

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 Again, if the total separateness of desire and the one desiring is established, What purpose will you suppose the simultaneity of these two to have?

STRENG (Skt):
7. Or, if the separateness of desire and the one who desires really were proved, Why do you imagine the concomitance of them both?

BOCKING (Ch):
6v7 If passion and the impassioned one
Pre-existed, each with different characteristics,
Since they already had different characteristics,
How can you say that they area unity?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If desire and the desirous were established as different, because of what could one understand them as co-existent?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If desire and the desirous one
Are established as different,
Then why would you think of them
As being coexistent? [VI.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. If desire and the desirous one
Are established as different,
Then why would you think
That they are simultaneous?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. If desire and the desirous one
Were established as different,
Then why would you imagine
Their simultaneity?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
6.7 If desire and the desirous one were different, in what way can they be thought of as concomitant?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

6/7 If passion and the impassioned one each previously had its own distinct characteristics, how can you now arbitrarily speak of them as a unity? Again :

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

7ab *Again, if the total separateness of desire and the one desiring is established,*

If the opponent supposes this, what then, Nagarjuna asks, of this supposed, ineffective simultaneity?

7cd *What purpose will you suppose the simultaneity of these two to have?*

Simultaneity is conceived to serve the purpose of establishing desire and the one desiring. But there can be no simultaneity of two things if each is not established as separate, and the opponent is assuming that each has been established as separate. But if this is so what is to be achieved by establishing their simultaneity? That is,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The usefulness of appealing to co-existence after analysing events into discrete entities is here questioned. Nagarjuna's approach here is to resolve the very idea that gave rise to the problem rather than solving it, namely, to avoid creating sharp distinctions instead of trying to find solutions to problems generated by such distinctions.

Kārikā VI.8

पृथङ् न सिध्यतीत्येवं सहभावं विकाङ्क्षसि।
सहभावप्रसिद्ध्यर्थं पृथक्त्वं भूय इच्छसि॥८॥

pṛthag na sidhyatīty evaṃ sahabhāvaṃ vikāṅkṣasi |
sahabhāvaprasiddhyarthaṃ pṛthaktvaṃ bhūya icchasi ||8||

異相無有成 是故汝欲合
合相竟無成 而復說異相

yì xiàng;xiāng wú yǒu chéng shì gù rǔ yù hé;gé
hé;gé xiàng;xiāng jìng wú chéng ér fù shuì yì xiàng;xiāng

།ཐ་དད་གྲུབ་པར་མ་གྱུར་པས།།དེ་ཕྱིར་ལྷན་ཅིག་འདོད་བྱེད་ན།
།ལྷན་ཅིག་རབ་ཏུ་གྲུབ་པའི་ཕྱིར།།ཐ་དད་ཉིད་དུ་ཡང་འདོད་དམ།།

| tha dad grub par ma gyur pas | | de phyir lhan cig 'dod byed na |
| lhan cig rab tu grub pa'i phyir | | tha dad ñid du yaṅ 'dod dam |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - You say that there is no establishment of the diversity (of entities) and, at the same time, you seek for concomitance. On the other hand, while projecting the establishment of concomitance, once again, you are desirous of diversity.

JONES (Skt):
[8] Since separateness is not established, you desire co-existence - but for the sake of establishing co-existence, you desire separateness.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
You fancy co-existence assuming that the discrete is not established. You, again, look for discreteness for the purpose of establishing co-existence.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
You aim at concomitance and thus difference is not "established."
You look for the existence of difference for the purpose of explaining concomitance.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Things, which are separated one by one, are not called what has been accomplished.
Therefore, enduring existences are expected so strongly by you.
Enduring existence might be becoming successful in the aim,
And so you are expecting eagerly to become enduring one by one.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 You suppose simultaneity even though separate existence is not established. And yet you seize on separateness for the sake of establishing simultaneity.

STRENG (Skt):
8. You postulate concomitance by saying: neither is proved separate from the other. And you postulate separateness even more to prove concomitance.

BOCKING (Ch):
6v8 Having different characteristics does not work
So you want unity.
Unity of characteristics does not work at all,
So you again assert that there are differences.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If one asserts them to be co-existent because they are not established as different, then because they would be very much established as co-existent, would one not also have to assert them to be different?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If they are asserted to be coexistent
Because their difference lacks establishment,
Would you also assert their difference
To prove their coexistence? [VI.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. Since difference is not established,
If you assert that they are simultaneous,
Since they are established as simultaneous,
Do you also assert that they are different?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Since they are not established as different,
If you assert that they are simultaneous,
In order to establish their simultaneity,
Do you also assert their difference?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
6.8 You assert concomitance though difference has not been established, yet you assert difference to establish concomitance.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

6/8 Having failed to establish the relationship between passion and the impassioned one in terms of different characteristics, you then say that they have a unity of characteristics. But there is a flaw in this unity of characteristics and it does not establish (the relationship between) passion and the impassioned one. So then, in order to establish their unity of characteristics you again assert their difference in characteristics. You yourself have fixed (concepts) but what you assert, is unfixed, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

8ab *You suppose simultaneity even though separate existence is not established.*

It is obvious that desire and the one desiring cannot be established separately if you consider only their simultaneity. And there can be no simultaneity unless these have been established separately.

8cd *And yet you seize on separateness for the sake of establishing simultaneity.*

It being thus clear that the opponent's proof is established on a reciprocal relationship, which of the two is the basis of proof and which is the proven? That is to say

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

No better explanation of the dilemma of an analytical philosopher who recognizes discreteness can be found than in the present statement of Nagarjuna. The vicious circle in which one gets involved when, after analysing things into discrete entities, one tries to put things together is clearly explained here.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. We have not established - nor could we - that desire and the desirous one are substantially different. But the opponent wishes to assert their simultaneity. Given the entailment of difference by simultaneity as per the argument above, this would force the opponent to assume the impossible burden of demonstrating this substantial difference. The whole quandary is summed up in VI: 9. Since we can't establish their difference in entity, we can't establish the claim that desire and the desirous one arise as distinct, simultaneous phenomena. We don't even have two phenomena to serve as the relata of difference:

Kārikā VI.9

पृथग्भावाप्रसिद्धेश्च सहभावो न सिध्यति।
कतमस्मिन् पृथग्भावे सहभावं सतीच्छसि॥९॥

pṛthagbhāvāprasiddheś ca sahabhāvo na sidhyati |
katamasmin pṛthagbhāve sahabhāvaṃ satīcchasi ||9||

異相不成故 合相則不成
於何異相中 而欲說合相

yì xiàng;xiāng bù chéng gù hé;gé xiàng;xiāng zé bù chéng
yū;yú;wū hé yì xiāng zhòng ér yù shuì hé;gé xiàng;xiāng

།ཐ་དད་དངོས་པོ་མ་གྲུབ་པས།།ལྷན་ཅིག་དངོས་པོ་འགྲུབ་མི་འགྱུར།
།ཐ་དད་དངོས་པོ་གང་ཡོད་ན།།ལྷན་ཅིག་དངོས་པོར་འདོད་པར་བྱེད།།

| tha dad dṅos po ma grub pas | | lhan cig dṅos po ’grub mi ’gyur |
| tha dad dṅos po gaṅ yod na | | lhan cig dṅos (4)por ’dod par byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - Without the establishment of diverse entities, there is no concomitance. In what kind of diversity (of entities) are you desirous of establishing concomitance?

JONES (Skt):
[9] Because separateness is not established, co-existence is also not established - from what separate entities, do you expect co-existence?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When discreteness is not established, co-existence is not established. In the presence of what kind of discreteness would you expect co-existence.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Concomitance is not established and individuality is not explained.
You are looking to which, individuality or difference?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. Being one by one is never be successful,
And so enduring existence does never mean accomplishment.
Being the better one might be the existence between the two,
Therefore actually you are so anxious to endure existence.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 If separateness does not exist, simultaneity cannot establish it; but if separateness does exist then what simultaneity can you have in mind?

STRENG (Skt):
9. Because separateness is not proved, concomitance is not proved. What kind of separateness must exist for you to establish concomitance?

BOCKING (Ch):
6v9 Since you have not established differences in characteristics
Their unity of characteristics remains unestablished.
Within what kind of difference, then
Do you wish to speak of a unity?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Since different things are not established, co-existent things are not established. If there existed any different things, one could assert them as co-existent things.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When things are not established as different,
Neither are they established as coexistent.
When there is a thing that is different,
It may be claimed that it is coexistent. [VI.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. Since nothing different has been established,
If one is asserting simultaneity,
Which different thing
Do you want to say is simultaneous?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. Since the nature of difference has not been established,
The nature of simultaneity cannot be established.
In virtue of what nature of difference,
Do you say that there is a nature of simultaneity?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
6.9 Since difference is not established, concomitance is not established. What kind of difference can there be that would establish concomitance?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

6/9 Since a difference in characteristics between the passions and the impassioned one has not been established, their unity of characteristics is not established either. In terms of what kind of difference do you want to speak of a unity of characteristics?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

There can be no separateness existing as such and unrelated to simultaneity, in which simultaneity could be established. Nagarjuna says it is simply impossible: 'if separateness does exist then what simultaneity can you have in mind?' Thus, concluding the analysis carried out, Nagarjuna says, insisting that desire and the one desiring have not been established,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna's question here is specifically on the nature of discreteness. If discreteness is absolute, then association of co-existent entities is not acceptable. If there is no such discreteness, then there is no need for coexistence, for the lack of complete discreteness implies "dependence" (prati tyasamutpada). Hence, the question pertains to the kind of discreteness envisaged.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. The conclusion, as stated in the special case in the preceding verse, is generalized in the final verse of the chapter. Once we think of entities and their properties - in particular, ourselves and our characteristics - as independently characterized things, we can make no sense of how they fit together temporally, logically, or ontologically. It is important that objects and their characteristics, persons and their states, be unified. But if we introduce essence and entity into our ontology, this will be impossible:

Kārikā VI.10

एवं रक्तेन रागस्य सिद्धिर्न सह नासह।
रागवत्सर्वधर्माणां सिद्धिर्न सह नासह॥१०॥

evaṃ raktena rāgasya siddhir na saha nāsaha |
rāgavat sarvadharmāṇāṃ siddhir na saha nāsaha ||10||

如是染染者 非合不合成
諸法亦如是 非合不合成

rú shì rǎn rǎn zhě fēi hé;gé bù hé chéng
zhū fǎ yì rú shì fēi hé;gé bù hé chéng

།དེ་ལྟར་འདོད་ཆགས་ཆགས་པ་དག།ལྷན་ཅིག་ལྷན་ཅིག་མིན་མི་འགྲུབ།
།འདོད་ཆགས་བཞིན་དུ་ཆོས་རྣམས་ཀུན།།ལྷན་ཅིག་ལྷན་ཅིག་མིན་མི་འགྲུབ།།

| de ltar ’dod chags chags pa dag | | lhan cig lhan cig min mi ’grub |
| ’dod chags bźin du chos rnams kun | | lhan cig lhan cig min mi ’grub |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - Consequently, there is no establishment of passion with or without the accompaniment of the impassioned self. Similar to passion, there is no establishment of the dharmas (i.e., factors of existence) with or without the accompaniment (of the dharmaic self).

JONES (Skt):
[10] Therefore, passion and the impassioned cannot be established either as existing together or as not existing together. As with passion, there is no establishing of any basic phenomenon as existing together with another or as not existing together.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Thus, with or without the lustful one, there is no establishment of lust. Like lust, there is no establishment of anything with or without [accompaniments].

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Thus nothing is established about passion with or without the impassioned.
Like passion, nothing is established about events with or without a others.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. In this method, relying upon the excited, or being included by the excitement,
The real accomplishment is sometimes following situations, and sometimes it is not following to the situations.
What is similar to the Excitement , seems to be the whole Universal Situations,
And so the accomplishment of the Universe is not so following to us sometimes, and not so unsuitable for us sometimes.

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 Thus desire cannot be established either in conjunction with or independently of the one desiring. As in the case of desire, none of the elements of existence can be established either as simultaneous or as not simultaneous.

STRENG (Skt):
10. Thus there is no proof that the desire is concomitant with or not concomitant with one who desires. From this analysis of desire it can be shown that for every fundamental element (dharma) there is no proof of concomitance or non-concomitance.

BOCKING (Ch):
6v10 Just as in the passions and the impassioned one
Neither combination nor non-combination is found,
So all dharmas are the same;
Neither combination nor non-combination is found.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
In that way, desire and the desirous one are not established as co-existent or not co-existent. Like desire, all phenomena are not established as co-existent or not co-existent.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Therefore, desire and the desirous one
Are not established as coexistent or otherwise.
As is the case with desire and the desirous one,
No phenomena are established as coexistent or otherwise. [VI.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. Thus desire and the desirous one
Cannot be established as simultaneous or not simultaneous.
So, like desire, nothing whatever
Can be established either as simultaneous or as nonsimultaneous.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. Thus desire and the desirous one
Cannot be established as simultaneous or as not simultaneous.
So, like desire, no phenomena whatever
Can be established as simultaneous or as nonsimultaneous.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
6.10 Thus desire is not established either with or without the desirous one. Like so, no element of existence can be established as either concomitant with or different from another.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

6/10 As with passion, so it is with hatred and delusion. As with the three poisons, so it is with all the afflictions and all dharmas, which neither precede nor succeed each other and are neither combined nor separate, but are wholly established through causality.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

10ab *Thus desire cannot be established either in conjunction with or independently of the one desiring.*

Even as desire and the one desiring cannot be established either one after the other or simultaneously, so, extending this conclusion to all things, Nagarjuna says

10cd *As in the case of desire, none of the elements of existence can be established either as simultaneous or as not simultaneous.*

That is, one proceeds, as with desire and the one desiring, to show the non-existence of aversion and the one averse, delusion and the one deluded and so on for the other afflictions.

Precisely for these reasons the illustrious one said, 'Something which would be desire, either as the seat or the object of desire; something which would be aversion, either as the seat or the object of aversion, something which would be deludedness either as the seat or the object of delusion; such an element of existence one never discerns directly nor perceives in any way. The one who does not discern such an element directly nor perceive it in any way is said to be without desire, without aversion, without delusion, to have a mind free from false belief: to be a realized man. He is said to have crossed to the other shore; to have attained peace ... to have done away with all harmful influences. He is said to be free of the afflictions, master of himself, one whose everyday thinking is perfectly liberated and whose insight is perfectly liberated; one of noble origins, a mighty serpent, one who has done what is to be done, who has done what he had to do, who has done away with his burden, has fulfilled his own duty, has achieved the complete annihilation of the thirst for existence, whose mind is perfectly liberated by right practice, who has attained complete mastery over all thought. Such is called a sramana.'(*Samadhiraja Sutra*) And so on.

Then there is this verse: 'Those who have understood that the nature of desire, aversion, infatuation and delusion springs from a will engendered by falsity give up vain imaginings; for such there is not even renunciation in this world; they have fully realized the nature of all things.'

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

On the basis of the kind of discreteness referred to above, one cannot explain either the association or the nonassociation of lust and the lustful one. Avoid the sharp distinction, the problems are not there to solve. The same can be said in regard to all phenomena (dharma). For this reason, neither absolute identity nor absolute discreteness can establish the nature of phenomena.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. As always, however, we must remind ourselves of the sense of the conclusion and of its dialectical context. There is no denial here of the possibility of simultaneity, of the existence of desire, or 'of the possibility of desirous persons. Rather, there is a denial that any of these things make sense in the context of inherent existence.

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Chapter VII

संस्कृतपरीक्षा सप्तमं प्रकरणम्।

觀三相品第七(三十五偈)

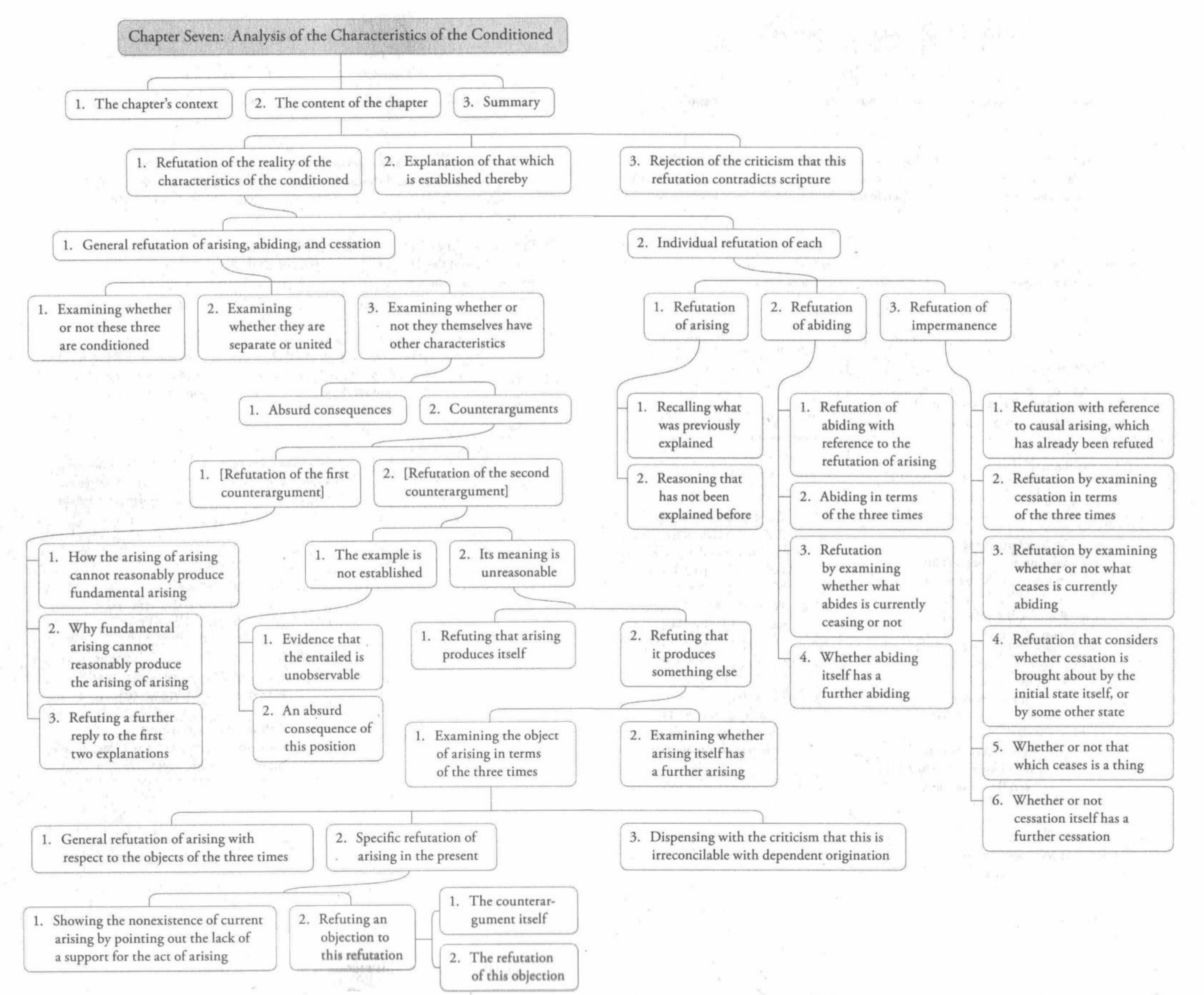
|སྐྱེ་བ་དང་གནས་པ་དང་འཇིག་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བདུན་པའོ།།

saṃskṛtaparīkṣā nāma saptamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter VII: Examination of the Conditioned

Chapter VII

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are in the section of the text explaining the refutation of the proof that there is a self of phenomena, and, having completed the first part of that section, which was the demonstration of selflessness in three phenomena, we are now in the second part of that section, which is the refutation of the argument that there is a self in phenomena. **[154:12]** This has three parts: We have finished the first part, which is the refutation of the defilements; and we now turn to the second part which is the refutation of the existence of the characteristics: arising, ceasing, and enduring; the third will be the refutation of the existence of the cause—agent and action.

EXPLANATION:

This section has two parts: the presentation of the opponent's view and its refutation.

SUMMARY:

It should be ascertained through argument that if arising, enduring and ceasing existed as they are grasped—that is, inherently, without being merely posited through nominal convention—the three could not be posited in any way. Thereafter one should practice as follows: They are completely tenable insofar as they are merely posited by nominal convention, and although all of the produced things are empty of inherent existence, their appearance in their respective guises should be taken like illusions and like dreams.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER VII - Examination of the Created Realm of Existence

This is one of the more comprehensive chapters dealing with the interesting topic of the so-called compounded nature or created realm of existence. The Chinese title refers to this chapter as the examination of the three characteristics, i.e., origination (utpada), duration (sthiti) and cessation (bhanga), and thereby presents a clearer picture as to what the chapter discusses.The argument for the impossibility of maintaining the created realm is carried through by means of the three characteristics and with the same type of logic we have seen employed in Chapter II, i.e., with respect to the analysis of gamyamana, gata, and agata. Here again, each moment of the created realm, for example, the characteristic of origination, is taken up and the question is raised whether something prior or previous to it can be its cause. The advancement of a cause invariably breaks down because what has arisen does not require a cause nor does what has not arisen. This analysis is carried through with the other two characteristics of duration and cessation. The breaking up of entities into different moments is an impossibility and thus Nagarjuna states finally that the establishment of origination, duration and cessation is not possible at all and that there is no such thing as a created realm. His central position is clearly expressed in Verse 16: "Any thing (i.e., factor of existence) which exists by virtue of relational dependence is quiescence in itself. Therefore, presently arising and origination per se are likewise in the nature of quiescence."

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

7. *Conditioned* (*samskrta*). The early discourses referred to three characteristics of the conditioned (*samskrta*).76 These were arising (*utpada*), change of what has come to endure (*sthitasya anyathatva*), and ceasing (*vyaya*). In a similiar discourse, a definition of the "unconditioned" (*asamskrta*) is provided and, in this case, it is said that the three characteristics mentioned above are not evident. It was, therefore, easy for some of the later Buddhists to leap to the conclusion that the "unconditioned" is also uncaused or independent (*apratityasamutpanna*). This, evidently, was the intention of the Sarvastivada commentator, Yasomitra, when he stated that the terms "conditioned" (*samskrta*) and "dependent" (*pratityasamutpanna*) are synonyms.77 Yet, from other statements in the discourses, it is clear that this was not the case. For example, while the three terms *anicca* (impermanent), *samskrta* (conditioned), and *pratityasamutpanna* (dependent) occur together (though not as synonyms), to explain the nature of the world,78 of their negative forms only *abhuta and asamskrta* (together with *ajata*, and *akrta 79*) are used to characterize nirvana. The negative form of *pratityasamutpanna* does not occur. For this reason, it can he maintained that the term *samskrta* has the specific meaning of "dispositionally conditioned,'' and is not identical in meaning with the term *pratityasamutpanna* (''dependent").

Not only did the Buddhist metaphysicians ignore this subtle distinction and considered the concepts of "conditioned" and "dependent" as being identical, they also explained the "conditioned" in terms of their metaphysical notions of substance and their speculative notion of temporality referred to earlier. Nagarjuna's lengthy chapter on the subject of "The Conditioned" (*Samskrta*, VII) draws out all the implications of such metaphysics.

After rejecting the metaphysically conceived notions of arising (*utpada*) and along with it all other related concepts such as "the present arising" (*utpadyamana*) and "non-arising" (*anutpada*), comparing all of them to the notions of "the moved" (*gata*), "the not moved" (*agata*) and "the present moving" (*gamyamana*)(VII.14) which he had previously criticized. Nagarjuna makes a very significant statement at VII. 16: "Whatever that comes to be dependently, that is inherently peaceful. Therefore, that which is presently arising as well as arising itself are peaceful." In the first place, here there is no denial of arising (*utpada*) or that which is presently arising (*utpadyamana*). By implication, there is no denial of cessation (*vyaya*) either. Secondly, there is no denial of "dependent arising" (*pratiyasamutpada*) or that which is dependently arisen (*pratitya yad yad bhavati*). On the contrary, there is a very significant assertion: "Whatever is dependently arisen is inherently peaceful." Explaining the "elements" (*dhatu*) in a

previous chapter (V), Nagarjuna has shown how the belief in eternal existence (*astitva*, *bhava*) and nihilistic non-existence (*nastitva*, *abhava*) lead to the unfortunate consequences such as grasping (*upadana*) and, therefore, suffering (*duhkha*). The avoidance of such perspectives and the adoption of the view that things arise and pass away dependently (*pratitya*) were considered by the Buddha and the early Buddhists as well as Nagarjuna as being ''inherently peaceful" (*svabhavatah santam).*

The significance of the use of the term *svabhava* in the above context should not go unnoticed. The term *svabhava* as well as its adverbial use, *svabhato asti,* especially when qualifying existence, was condemned by Nagarjuna throughout the work. However, in the present verse he was willing to use this very same term in an adjectival sense, qualifying *santa* (peaceful).

The concepts of "the conditioned" and "the unconditioned", perceived in terms of substantial existence, are rejected here, and the notions of arising, duration, and ceasing, similarly conceived, are also abandoned as being illusory.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Birth

Were birth conditioned
It would be born and live and die
Like all conditioned things.
Were it unconditioned,
How could it describe
Conditioned things?

Does birth give birth
To itself and something else
Like light illuminates
Itself and something else?

Light illuminates
By shedding darkness;
Can light dispel
A dark it never meets?

Were darkness shed
By light it never meets,
A single lamp could lift
The darkness of a galaxy.

If light illuminates
Itself and other things,
Does the dark obscure
Itself and other things?

How can a child
That's not yet born
Give birth to itself?

What has been born,
What's not yet born
And what is being born
Do not give birth.

Everything contingent
Is naturally at ease.

When everyone is dying,
Can I be born and live?
Could I live,
But neither age nor die?

The living are not the dying
Nor the unliving the dying.
Neither milk nor butter
Causes milk to cease.

Something real would never die:
Something can't be nothing.
Nothing too would never die:
You can't behead a person twice.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

7. The Conditioned

In Buddhist metaphysics, space and nirvana are considered "unconditioned." Space in Indic cosmology is basically simply the absence of anything and so is unconditioned. Nirvana is considered unconditioned (25.9), even though attaining enlightenment requires our action because the final insight of enlightenment cannot be forced. All other phenomena depend upon conditions and arise dependently. All conditioned things also have three characteristics: being impermanent, without a self, and open to suffering. But here Nagarjuna focuses on the fact that all conditioned things are constantly changing and that there are no entities that could arise, endure, and then cease. Real (self-existent) entities are unchanging and thus neither arise nor change to an enduring state nor cease from it - they exist

eternally and without change. But what is dependently arisen and thus empty is not a "reality," and thus there is nothing in a *s!7unyata* world to arise, endure, or cease. So, if we still see entities involved in the flow of arising and ceasing, we still see only from a conventional point of view – reality as it is *(tattva)* is free of differentiated entities.

Verses 1-3 are asking how arising could itself arise. If arising does not arise dependently, then this means that not all things arise dependently; but if it arises dependently, then the arising stage itself also has the three stages of arising. enduring, and ceasing. So, there is a prior "arising" upon which this arising is dependent (the arising of arising), and so on and so on - an infinite regress of beginnings and thus no actual beginning that would get anything started.

Verses 9-12 presents the problem that occurs if we think of darkness as an *entity* in its own right, not merely *the absence of light.* (See also W 34-39; but see VP 9 Comm.) If light destroys darkness, then there is no thing left to illuminate (v. 9). How does light destroy something it has not reached (v. u)? But how does the arising light reach an entity (v. 10)? And since it does not reach the entity "darkness," it does not destroy it (v. 38).

From verse 14: what is currently arising, has already arisen, or has not arisen does not arise - so what can arise? What is currently arising does not start to arise a second time. The same is also true with ceasing (v. 26).

"Svabhavatas" in verse 16 means "by its own nature" or "inherently" in an everyday sense and without the accompanying metaphysical baggage of *"svabhava"* in the technical sense of "self-existence." It is like Nagarjuna using *"atman"* to refer to oneself (10.15,27-4) without any implication of the metaphysically-loaded sense of a transcendental reality.

Whatever arises dependently is inherently pacified *(shanta)* (v. 16). From a conventional point of view, there are real entities, but from the point of view of what is real *(tattvatas),* there are no discrete, ontologically independent entities. Thus, in emptiness metaphysics there are no nonarisen entity anywhere that could arise.

Verse 22 says that what appears to endure is not in fact static over any period of time, no matter how brief. Nothing is changeless only even for a moment. Indeed, the cosmos does not endure even for an instant (R 63). Thus, it is not changeless realities and hence nothing is self-existent.

What is non-arisen cannot cease (v. 26) because it is either self-existent and so cannot cease, or it is empty and thus is not real and so there is nothing that could cease. A self-existent entity by definition cannot cease. Nor can we speak of an entity *(bhava)* and its absence *(abhava)* together (v. 30). A not-truly-existing entity *(asat-bhava)* (v. 31) is not the same as a nonentity *(abhava).* By definition, it has already ceased, and so cannot cease a second time.

When the conditioned cannot be established. the unconditioned cannot be established since the "unconditioned" is defined in contrast to the conditioned (v. 33). Both concepts then have nothing to apply to: either something is real and thus self-existent and thus not conditioned by anything; or everything is empty and thus there is no real entities that could be conditioned or unconditioned.

The image of a dream (v. 34) works for emptiness: a *dream* of a tiger is real and can have a real effect on the dreamer even though the *tiger* is unreal. Thus, what is empty is efficacious and real in that sense.

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

7

An Examination of the Composite

In the sutras, the Buddha taught:

Considering the composite, the noncomposite, positive actions, and negative ones,
When we examine them with precise knowledge, we find not the slightest trace of their existence.

WHEN WE EXAMINE THINGS and cannot find the slightest trace of their existence, emptiness becomes easy to understand. To help us in this endeavor, Nagarjuna proves the validity of this teaching of the Buddha's with logical reasoning.

There were those who claimed that composite things are real because a composite thing is defined by its characteristics of arising, abiding, and ceasing, and this arising, abiding, and ceasing are real. Thus, to help these people understand that composite entities are empty of their own essence, in this chapter Nagarjuna analyzes arising, abiding, and ceasing and demonstrates that they do not truly happen after all.

Some people ask, what would be the characteristics of something that truly existed? If something truly existed, it

would exist on its own, by itself, objectively, without depending on anything else.

Here we are looking at arising, abiding, and ceasing. If these three truly existed, then arising would exist on its own without depending on any concept of ceasing. It would exist completely by itself. Abiding would also exist on its own, without depending on arising or ceasing. Finally, ceasing would exist independently, without needing any arising or abiding to occur. If it were really like that, then one could say that these things truly exist, that they have their own inherent nature. We can analyze, however, and see that each one of these three has to depend on the others for its existence. This is why the Middle Way explains that these things do not have their own nature, that they are empty of true existence.

This can be proven with logical reasoning in the following way: Arising does not inherently exist because it depends for its existence upon the cessation of its cause—if its cause does not cease, there can be no arising of any result, whatever it might be. Abiding does not inherently exist because it depends upon arising—abiding can occur only if something has arisen in the first place. Finally, cessation does not inherently exist because it can occur only if something has first arisen and then abided for some period of time. Thus, arising, abiding, and ceasing can exist only in mutual dependence—for one to exist the others must exist, but for those others to exist the first one must exist. They therefore do not truly exist; they are dependently arisen mere appearances.

Nagarjuna sums up the implications of this in the thirty-third verse:

Arising, abiding, and ceasing do not exist,
And therefore there are no composite things.
Since composite things are utterly nonexistent,
How could anything noncomposite exist?

The defining characteristics of a composite phenomenon are that it arises due to causes and conditions, then it abides, and then it ceases. The defining characteristics of a noncomposite phenomenon are that it does not arise, abide, or cease (fn There are three different noncomposite phenomena: space, the cessation that is the result of analysis, and the cessation that is not the result of analysis. The second refers to the absence of mental afflictions and suffering in the mindstream of an arhat who has realized the selflessness of the individual through analysis. The third refers to any cessation or absence of something that is not the result of the arhat's analysis; in other words, all the ordinary instances of the nonexistence or cessation of things that occur in the world on an everyday basis. For example, the nonexistence of elephants on the moon is an instance of this third type of noncomposite phenomena. All three of these share the common trait of being the

absence of things that arise, abide, and cease. Noncomposite phenomena do not arise, abide, or cease because there is nothing there to arise, abide, or cease. They are the opposite of-the nonexistence of-things that do arise, abide, and cease.).

If we put this verse in the form of a logical reasoning, we would say: Forms and so forth—all things that are composite—do not inherently exist because they do not arise, they do not abide, and they do not cease. It is accurate to say that there is no true arising, abiding, or ceasing because arising, abiding, and ceasing cannot exist inherently, but only in dependence upon each other.

Furthermore, noncomposite phenomena do not truly exist, because they depend for their existence upon composite phenomena, and composite phenomena themselves do not truly exist. Noncomposite phenomena do not arise, abide, or cease—they are the absence of arising, abiding, and ceasing. If these three activities do not exist in the first place, how could their absence exist?

In order to understand this better, think about a car in a dream. The car is the appearance of a composite phenomenon that arises, abides, and ceases, and the space inside the car is the opposite of that—it is a noncomposite phenomenon that neither arises, abides, nor ceases. If the dream car itself does not really exist, how could the space inside the car really exist? Both are just dependently arisen mere appearances.

This is something Nagarjuna explains in verse thirty-four, the last verse of the chapter—how it is not illogical for arising, abiding, and ceasing to exist as dependently arisen mere appearances that have no inherent nature:

Like a dream, like an illusion,
Like a city of gandharvas,
That's how birth and that's how living,
That's how dying are taught to be.

Dreams, illusions, and cities of gandharvas are all examples of "empty forms"—things that appear without having any real existence—and these examples help us to understand how it could be possible for something to appear vividly at the same time that it is not real in the slightest way.

Gandharvas are a type of spirit. They live together in large communities, and when you look at them from far away it seems as if there is a whole city of them, but once you get close to them, they seem to vanish. They are a very good example of the big cities we live in these days—when we do not analyze, there seem to be a great many people there, but as soon as we look more closely, we cannot find any one of them that truly exists. Therefore, all those people are just mere appearances, like gandharvas.

In his Guide to the Bodhisattva's Conduct, the bodhisattva Shantideva teaches:

Then wanderers, these dreamlike beings, what are they?
If analyzed, they're like a banana tree—
One cannot make definitive distinctions
Between transcending misery and not.

Sentient beings who wander in samsara are like sentient beings who appear in dreams. Once we analyze, we find that they are like banana trees—when you look at a banana tree, it seems solid, but once you peel away the layers of its bark, you do not find any core. The bodies of sentient beings are the same—they appear to be solid, truly existent things, but we can apply the analysis of composite entities that we have undertaken in this chapter to sentient beings' bodies as well and find that they are not truly existent after all, that they have no real substance, because they do not really arise, abide, or cease. Thus, sentient beings are illusory appearances.

In the Mahayana, the meditation that one practices in between formal meditation sessions is called the samadhi that sees everything to be like an illusion (fn *Samadhi* refers to a state in which one is concentrated and not distracted. Paradoxically, it seems, the samadhi that sees everything to be like an illusion is the meditation one practices in the midst of all the distractions of thoughts and the objects that appear to the senses. When one remembers that all of these distractions are illusory, however, this constitutes the practice of this samadhi, and all the distractions are in fact friends of and enhancements to the meditation rather than hindrances or obstacles.). In the Vajrayana, this is called impure illusory body practice. The names are different, but the instructions for practicing them are the same: View all appearances of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, and thoughts as appearing while empty, empty while appearing; understand all your experiences to be the union of appearance and emptiness, like illusions and dreams.

These days, the samadhi that sees everything to be like an illusion is easier to practice than ever before, because modern technology has produced so many new examples of empty forms. Movies, television, telephones, faxes, e-mail, the internet—all of these are wonderful examples of how things can appear due to the coming together of causes and conditions, while at the same time being empty of any inherent nature. In big cities, there are all kinds of flashing lights and moving billboards outdoors, and when you go into any big department store, there are huge mirrors on the walls, filled with reflected images. So the city is a wonderful place to train in the samadhi of illusion.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter VII

संस्कृतपरीक्षा सप्तमं प्रकरणम्।

saṃskṛtaparīkṣā nāma saptamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

觀三相品第七(三十五偈)

guān sān xiàng;xiāng pǐn dì qī (sān shí wǔ jié;jì)

༄༅། །སྐྱེ་བ་དང་གནས་པ་དང་འཇིག་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བདུན་པའོ།།

| skye ba daṅ gnas pa daṅ ’jig pa brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa bdun pa’o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER VII - Examination of the Created Realm of Existence

JONES (Skt):
7. The Conditioned

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The Examination of the Conditioned

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
7. Analysis of the Conditioned

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[7] Examination of the External World (34 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
[omitted]

STRENG (Skt):
Section 7 - An Analysis of Composite Products (origination, duration, and decay) In 34 Verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
7. the three marks of the conditioned.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 7 Contemplation of the three marks 35 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Birth, Abiding and Perishing

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER VII - Analysis of the Characteristics of the Conditioned

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter VII: Examination of the Conditioned

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER VII - Examination of Arising, Enduring, and Ceasing

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The Examination of the Conditioned

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 7: AN EXAMINATION OF THE COMPOSITE

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/0 Question: The sutras say that dharmas have the three marks of arising, abiding and ceasing. Things arise through the dharma of arising, they abide through the dharma of abiding, and they cease through the dharma of ceasing, and this is how the various dharmas exist.

Reply: Not so, and why? Because the three marks have no fixed (nature). Are these three marks to be regarded as active, able to operate as the marks of the active, or as inactive, yet able to operate as the marks of the active? Neither is correct, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter omitted by Sprung]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Seven The Examination of the Conditioned (Samskrta-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter VII Examination of the Conditioned

Having begun the text with an examination of the relation of dependency between phenomena, and having then conducted an analysis of the fundamental ontological constituents of reality, Nāgārjuna now brings these two analyses together in a long chapter investigating the nature of the world of conditioned things as a whole. The target position is the view that dependent arising itself, as well as dependently arisen things, are either inherently existent or completely nonexistent. There are really two positions here with which Nāgārjuna must contend: First, the reificationist opponent charges .that even if we grant Nāgārjuna's earlier arguments for the conclusion that phenomena themselves are empty because they are dependently arisen, dependent arising itself must inherently exist. For only if phenomena are truly dependently arisen, one might argue, are they truly empty. Second, Nāgārjuna must answer the following objection: If dependent arising is empty, then arising, stasis, and cessation are nonexistent. Hence there are, in fact, no phenomena since phenomena are defined - particularly in a Buddhist context - as those things that arise, remain, and cease. But clearly there are actual empirical phenomena; indeed, such phenomena must exist for Nāgārjuna's claim that they are empty to make any sense at all. How can this be reconciled with the emptiness of dependent arising?

Kārikā VII.1

यदि संस्कृत उत्पादस्तत्र युक्ता त्रिलक्षणी।
अथासंस्कृत उत्पादः कथं संस्कृतलक्षणम्॥१॥

LVP 145,11-146,3 - LVP 179,9-10
yadi saṃskṛta utpādas tatra yuktā trilakṣaṇī |
athāsaṃskṛta utpādaḥ kathaṃ saṃskṛtalakṣaṇam ||1||

若生是有為 則應有三相
若生是無為 何名有為相

T1564: vol 30, pg 9a6
ruò shēng shì yǒu wéi zé yīng yǒu sān xiàng;xiāng
ruò shēng shì wú wéi hé míng yǒu wéi xiàng;xiāng

།གལ་ཏེ་སྐྱེ་བ་འདུས་བྱས་ན། །དེ་ལ་མཚན་ཉིད་གསུམ་ལྡན་འགྱུར།
།ཅི་སྟེ་སྐྱེ་བ་འདུས་མ་བྱས། །ཇི་ལྟར་འདུས་བྱས་མཚན་ཉིད་ཡིན།

Tg tsa 4b4-5 - Tg tsa 5b7
|| (5)gal te skye ba 'dus byas na | | de la mtshan ñid gsum ldan 'gyur |
| ci ste skye ba 'dus ma byas | | ji ltar 'dus byas mtshan ñid yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - If origination is of the created nature, then the three characteristics (i.e., origination, duration, cessation) will prevail. But if origination is of the uncreated nature, how could it be a characteristic of the created?

JONES (Skt):
[1] If the arising of phenomena were conditioned, then the arising would itself have the three characteristics of conditioned things - arising, enduring, and ceasing. If the arising were not conditioned, how could it be a characteristic of anything conditioned?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If arising is conditioned, therein three characteristics are proper. If arising is unconditioned, how can there be characteristics of the conditioned?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If arising is conditioned, then possessing three marks is entailed [origination, duration, destruction].
But if arising is not conditioned, how is it a mark of the conditioned?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. When this world has appeared,
There might be the three kinds of manifestations, that is, appearance, continuity, and disappearance.
In such situations this world is just appearance,
And how is it possible for this world to have any kind of symbolic image?

STRENG (Skt):
1. If origination (utpada) is a composite product, then the three characteristics of existence: "origination," "duration," and "dissolution" are appropriate. But if origination is a non-composite (asamstrta), then how could there be characteristics of a composite product?

ROBINSON (Skt):
If arising is conditioned, then it must have the three marks; if arising is unconditioned, how can it be a mark of the conditioned?

BOCKING (Ch):
7v1 If 'arising' is active
Then it should have the three marks
If arising is not active
How can you call it a mark of the active?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If birth were compounded, it would possess the three characteristics [of a compound]. If birth were uncompounded, how would it be a characteristic of a compound?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If arising were conditioned,
It would possess these three characteristics.
If arising were unconditioned,
How could it be a characteristic of the conditioned? [VII.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. If arising were produced,
Then it would also have the three characteristics.
If arising is not produced,
How could the characteristics of the produced exist?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. If arising were produced
It would also have the three characteristics.
If arising were unproduced,
How could it be the characteristic of the produced?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If arising is conditioned, therein three characteristics are proper. If arising is unconditioned, how can there be characteristics of the conditioned?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/1 If arising is active, it ought to have the three marks of arising, abiding and ceasing, but this is not correct and why? Because these (three) are mutually opposed. 'Mutually opposed' means that the mark of arising should cause dharmas to arise, the mark of abiding should cause dharmas to abide, and the mark of cessation should cause them to cease. When a dharma is at the point of arising, there should not be present the opposing dharmas, the marks of abiding and cessation. Simultaneity (of these marks) is thus incorrect, in the same way that light and darkness do not coexist. Therefore 'arising' cannot be an active dharma, and the same applies to the marks of abiding and ceasing.

(9a19) Question: If arising is not active, what is wrong with saying that it is inactive?

Reply: If arising were inactive, how could it possibly operate as marks of active dharmas? Why is this? It is because inactive dharmas have no nature. It is because of the cessation of activity that they are called inactive, and indeed this is why we speak of non-arising and non-ceasing as the marks of the unconditioned. Moreover, they have no own-mark, and therefore they are non-dharmas and cannot operate as the marks of dharmas, just as a rabbit's horns - or a tortoise's hair etc. cannot operate as the marks of dharmas. Therefore arising is not inactive, and the same goes for abiding and ceasing.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The examination of the "conditioned" (samskrta) coming immediately after the analysis of lust (raga) and the lustful one (rakta) brings out another important aspect of the Buddha's conception of the pragmatic meaning of truth, a conception that Nagarjuna seems to be clearly aware of.

Lust, as pointed out earlier, is one of the most important elements in the Buddha's analysis of experience. Lust is operative in the perceptual process especially in the formation of ideas derived from experience. Having rejected "omniscience" (sarvajnatva) as a source of knowledge, the Buddha depended primarily on sense experience. However, for him, seine experience was a "big, blooming, buzzing confusion. One way of dealing with this confusing mass of seine data is by concentrating upon items that are of interest to the individual and then forming ideas. Such selection is generally based upon one's interest. This is the significance of "dispositions" (samskara = compounding of ideas). For the Buddha, one's conception of truth is invariably bound up with such dispositions. Therefore, all ideas are "dispositionally conditioned" (samskrta). The Buddha's final statement before his death: "Dispositions are subject to change" (vayadhamma sankhara, D 2.156), therefore, is an assertion that, since ideas are impermanent, there can be no absolute truth. However, the above conception of the "dispositionally conditioned" (samskrta) was to undergo a radical change at the hands of the Buddhist metaphysicians. Nagarjuna's examination of samskrta becomes meaningful only in the background of that change of perspective. His was, indeed, an attempt to reject the Sarvastivada and Sautrantika interpretations of samskrta (and this would apply to the ideas that came to be accepted by the later Theravadins) and to revert back to the original teachings of the Buddha.

Once again, the Sarvastivada school was responsible for initiating this change of perspective. In the early discourses, the term samskrta is used along with the term prati tyasamutpanna, but not as synonyms (S 3.96,103). While the former implied "the dispositionally conditioned," the latter was used in the more comprehensive meaning of "the dependent." Thus, all dispositionally conditioned phenomena are dependent, but not all dependent phenomena are dispositionally conditioned. The equation of samskrta and prati tyasamutpanna occurs for the first time in the interpretation of the Abhidharma. It was this latter tradition that Vasubandhu was recording when he said: "Those that are made by the conditions having come together are called the samskrtas" (sametya sambhuya pratyayaih krta iti samskrtah, Akb ; see also AA 2.252, paccayehi samagantva katassa). The Sarvastivadins seem to have understood the concept of samskrta as a mere refutation of the belief in the production of an event by a single cause (eka-pratyaya-janitam, ibid.). Yasomitra, commenting upon this statement, goes on to say that samskrta and prati tyasamutpanna are, therefore, synonyms (Sakv p-172), thereby obliterating the semantic difference between "made" (krta) and "arisen" (utpanna).

This erroneous simple equation was to lead to further complications, especially in understanding the Buddha's characterization of nirvana as asamskrta. Even though the early discourses presented nirvana as an asamskrta, it was never considered to be an aprati tyasamutpanna ("independent"). For early Buddhism, both samskrta and

asamskrta are prati tyasamutpanna. However, the Sarvastivada equation led to the equation of their negations as well. Asamskrta seems to have been understood in the sense of aprati tyasamutpanna. To what extent their perspective was dominated by an adherence to the notion of self-nature (svabhava), for which they gave no causal explanation at all other than merely maintaining that it is permanent, remains a surmise.

It is this Sarvastivada conception of samskrta as being identical with prati tyasamutpanna that is being criticized at VII. 1. Nagarjuna, as indicated in the first line of this verse, had no difficulty in assuming that the samskrta is characterized by arising, change, and ceasing. This indeed was a statement attributed to the Buddha in the early discourses, where it is said: "Monks, there are these three characteristics of the dispositionally conditioned. The arising of that which is dispositionally conditioned is evident. Its cessation is also evident. Change of what has come to endure is also evident," (A 1.152). Yet if, as explained by the Sarvastivadins, samskrta is identical with prati tyasamutpanna (the latter also accounting for arising, change and ceasing), then one cannot speak of these three characteristics in the context of the asamskrta. It may be of interest to note that it is not only nirvana that came to be included in the category of asamskrta by these metaphysicians. They also admit- ted "space" (akasa) as an asamskrta. The implications of that view was examined by Nagarjuna in Chapter V.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. (fn *52. "du byed"*... This term is sometimes appropriately translated as "disposition," "action," or "compounded." Context is crucial in determining which rendering is best. In Buddhist metaphysics these meanings are closely connected. Kalupahana (1986) uses "conditioned," though he interprets this to mean "conditioned by dispositions." He argues that this chapter is closely connected to the previous chapter in' that lust "is operative in the perceptual process especially in the formation of ideas derived from experience." He argues that this chapter is devoted to an examination of the way phenomena such as desire determine the formation of ideas from "the blooming, buzzing confusion" of sense experience (p. 159). I find this reading unsupported by the text.)

The three characteristics in question are arising, stasis, and cessation. On a standard Buddhist view, all phenomena come into being in dependence upon conditions, remain in existence dependent upon conditions, and cease to exist dependent upon conditions. This is the core of the two central doctrines of dependent arising and impermanence. Nāgārjuna here poses a problem: If dependent arising itself were produced by conditions, then it itself would have these three characteristics and, apparently paradoxically, be impermanent. This is prima facie paradoxical just because if dependent arising is impermanent, it would appear that sometimes things don't arise dependently, which contradicts the thesis that all phenomena are dependently arisen. Moreover, as Nāgārjuna will argue below, this assertion threatens a vicious regress - if arising arises, there must already be arising in virtue of which it does so. But, Nāgārjuna asks in the third and fourth lines, if dependent arising is not produced, where did it come from? If one were to say that dependent arising were not produced and, hence, that it does not depend for its existence on anything else, this would appear to contradict the thesis that *everything* arises dependently. Dependent arising itself would then be the counterexample to the thesis.

Kārikā VII.2

उत्पादाद्यास्त्रयो व्यस्ता नालं लक्षणकर्मणि।
संस्कृतस्य समस्ताः स्युरेकत्र कथमेकदा॥२॥

utpādādyās trayo vyastā nālaṃ lakṣaṇakarmaṇi |
saṃskṛtasya samastāḥ syur ekatra katham ekadā ||2||

三相若聚散 不能有所相
云何於一處 一時有三相

sān xiāng ruò jù sàn bù néng yǒu suǒ xiàng;xiāng
yún hé yū;yú;wū yī chǔ yī shí yǒu sān xiàng;xiāng

།སྐྱེ་ལ་སོགས་གསུམ་སོ་སོ་ཡིས།།འདུས་བྱས་མཚན་ཉིད་བྱ་བར་ནི།
།ནུས་མིན་གཅིག་ལ་དུས་གཅིག་ཏུ།།འདུས་པ་ཡང་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་རུང་།།

| skye la sogs gsum so so yis | | ’dus byas mtshan ñid bya bar ni |
| nus min gcig la dus gcig tu | | ’dus pa yaṅ ni ji ltar (6)ruṅ |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - When the three characteristics of origination, etc. are discrete, there will be no action in the characteristics with respect to the created nature. And if they are compounded or united, how could they occur at the same time in the same place ?

JONES (Skt):
[2] The triad of arising, enduring, and ceasing cannot function separately as characteristics of anything conditioned. But how could they be together in the same place at the same time?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When the triad consisting of arising, etc. are discrete, they are not adequate to function as characteristics of the conditioned. If they were to be combined, how can they be in the same place at the same time?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
When the three, origination, etc., are separated, they are not sufficient for the functions of the marks of conditioning.
If they were combined, how would they occur at one place at one and the same time?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. The appearance, and so forth, that is the three, appearance, continuity, and disappearance, are separated into pieces,
Are not so satisfactory even though relying upon many kinds of characteristics.
The total situations of the world might be belonging to the world,
And it might be only at one place, but why does it exist just at one moment?

STRENG (Skt):
2. When the three are separate, origination of either of the other two characteristics does not suffice to function as a characteristic. If united in a composite product, how could they all be at one place at one time?

BOCKING (Ch):
7v2 The three marks, whether combined or separate,
Cannot be marked.
For how in one place, at one time
Could there be three marks?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The three such as birth cannot individually be that which characterises compounds. How is it possible for one at one time to be compounded [of all three]?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Arising and the other two are each
Incapable of characterizing the conditioned.
But how could they simultaneously
Come together anywhere? [VII.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. If the three, arising, etc., are separate,
They cannot function as the characteristics of the produced.
But how could they be joined
In one thing simultaneously?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. The three, arising, etc., cannot function separately
As the characteristics of the produced.
But how could they be joined
In one thing simultaneously?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When the triad consisting of arising, etc. are discrete, they are not adequate to function as characteristics of the conditioned. If they were to be combined, how can they be in the same place at the same time?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/2 Whether (you say that) these marks of arising, abiding and ceasing can operate as the marks of active dharmas individually, or they operate as the marks of active dharmas by acting in combination; neither is correct, and why? You may say that they operate individually; but in any one place either there exists a mark or there does not exist a mark. When something is arising, there (should be) no abiding or ceasing. When it is abiding there should be no arising or ceasing. When it is ceasing there should be no arising or abiding.

You may say that they operate in combination; but they are mutually exclusive. How can you say that they exist simultaneously? If you say that the three marks themselves have three marks, this is incorrect too, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Further objections to the Sarvastivada and Sautrantika theories relating to the characteristics of the conditioned are raised here. The discreteness of the three characteristics, as envisaged by these two schools, would not allow them to function as the characteristics of the conditioned. The Sarvastivada theory of an underlying substance, which comes to be superficially characterized by the three (or four) moments, as well as the Sautrantika theory that each moment is inherent in the previous one in the form of potentiality or seed (sakti,bija), were the direct results of such a perspective. Furthermore, if these characteristics were distinct in relation to both time and space, they could not occur in any one samskrta at the same time.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. These three characteristics, if they characterize the phenomenon of dependent arising itself, must either be present separately or together. This furnishes the basis of a destructive dilemma. If they are separate, then some parts of dependent arising have one of the three; some another. Some are arising; some abiding; some ceasing. But this is problematic since all phenomena are said to arise, to abide, and to cease. (fn 53. Moreover, one would not want to say that sometimes dependent arising is arising, sometimes abiding, sometimes ceasing. The whole Buddhist picture of impermanence is one according to which these processes are always co-occurring. But this dialectical move is not available to Nāgārjuna at this stage of the discussion. It would beg the question in, a critical sense: The properties under analysis here, as well as dependent arising itself, are introduced by the opponent as candidates for inherent existence and as components of an analysis of the ultimate nature of phenomena. In the sense that they are deployed in a positive Buddhist account of the nature of conventional reality - the sense in which all phenomena are constantly arising in some sense, abiding through change in another, and ceasing in yet another - neither the phenomena to which these predicates are applied, nor the properties ascribed, are inherently existent. Quite the contrary; this is an analysis that is designed to demonstrate the lack of inherent existence of phenomena and their characteristics. It is important throughout the discussion that follows to bear in mind that Nāgārjuna is not subjecting this view to criticism, but its substantialist cousin.) So it would seem to be the case that if dependent arising itself has all three of these characteristics, it cannot have them separately, but must have them jointly and simultaneously. But the three characteristics could not be present simultaneously since they are mutually contradictory. At any one point, dependent arising could have only one of them. The same thing cannot be - in the same sense, at the same time - arising and ceasing when these are understood in the sense at issue here, that introduced by the substantialist opponent. It is important in order to understand this argument to keep the dialectical context firmly in mind. The opponent throughout the text, whether on the nihilist side or on the reificationist side, considers existence to be inherent existence and predication to be the ascription of really existent properties to substantial bases. For the opponent Nāgārjuna has in mind here, dependent arising - if it is the nature of things at almost inherently exist. It must therefore have the three characteristics inherently. To have a characteristic inherently is to have it essentially. But then dependent arising, for the opponent, would have a contradictory set of essential properties.

Kārikā VII.3

उत्पादस्थितिभङ्गानामन्यत्संस्कृतलक्षणम्।
अस्ति चेदनवस्थैवं नास्ति चेत्ते न संस्कृताः॥३॥

utpādasthitibhaṅgānām anyat saṃskṛtalakṣaṇam |
asti ced anavasthaivaṃ nāsti cet te na saṃskṛtāḥ ||3||

若謂生住滅 更有有為相
是即為無窮 無即非有為

ruò wèi shēng zhù miè gèng;gēng yǒu yǒu wéi xiàng;xiāng
shì jí wéi wú qióng wú jí fēi yǒu wéi

།སྐྱེ་དང་གནས་དང་འཇིགརྣམས་ལ།།འདུས་བྱས་མཚན་ཉིད་གཞན་ཞིག་ནི།
།གལ་ཏེ་ཡོད་ན་ཐུག་མེད་འགྱུར།།མེད་ན་དེ་དག་འདུས་བྱས་མིན།།

| skye daṅ gnas daṅ ’jig rnams la | | ’dus byas mtshan ñid gźan źig ni |
| gal te yod na thug med ’gyur | | med na de dag ’dus byas min |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):

Verse 3 - If other characteristics of the created nature besides that of origination, duration and cessation are permitted, then this process (of assigning characteristics) could go on ad infinitum. If they are not permitted, on the other hand, then they are not of the created nature.

JONES (Skt):

[3] If there were further conditioned characteristics to arising, enduring, and ceasing, there would be an infinite series (i.e., an infinite regress of each - the arising of arising, and so forth) - but if there were no such characteristics, they would not be conditioned.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):

If there were to be a characteristic of the conditioned other than arising, duration, and destruction, there would be infinite regress. If there were to be no such [characteristics], these would not be conditioned.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):

If there are other marks of conditioning than those of origination, duration, and destruction, there is an infinite regress.
If there is not, then they are not conditioned.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):

3. Appearance, maintenance, and destruction,
And in another expression this world is just a kind of characteristics.
When an unstable world really exists as this world,
Then any world, which is different from this world, can never exist actually at all.

STRENG (Skt):

3. If origination, duration, and dissolution are other secondary characteristics of composite products, It is an infinite regress. If this is not so, they are not composite products.

BOCKING (Ch):

7v3 If you say that arising, abiding and ceasing
Themselves possess the marks of the active
This, if so, would make for an endless (regression).
If not, they would not be active.

BATCHELOR (Tb):

If birth, abiding and perishing had an other characteristic of being compounded, this would be endless. If not, they would not be compounded.

DOCTOR (Tb):

If arising, abiding, and cessation themselves
Bear further characteristics of the conditioned,
There will be an infinite regress.
Yet if they do not, they are not conditioned. [VII.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):

3. If arising, abiding, and ceasing
Have characteristics other than those of the produced,
There would be an infinite regress.
If they don't, they would not be produced.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):

3. If arising, enduring, and ceasing
Had characteristics other than those of the produced,
There would be an infinite regress.
If they do not, they would not be produced.

HAGEN (paraphrase):

If there were to be a characteristic of the conditioned other than arising, duration, and destruction, there would be infinite regress. If there were to be no such [characteristics], these would not be conditioned.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/3 If you say that arising, abiding and ceasing themselves have the marks of active (dharmas), then arising itself would have an arising, an abiding and a ceasing, and these three marks would again each have their own marks, and if this were so it would be endless. If, on the other hand, you say that they have no marks themselves, then these three marks ought not to be called active dharmas, and they will be unable to operate as the marks of active dharmas.

Question: You state that the three marks would lead to an endless regression, but this is not correct. Although arising, abiding and ceasing are active, there is no endless regression. Why is this?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If arising, stasis, and ceasing are three distinct events, then each one of these will require further characteristics of arising, stasis, and ceasing to account for themselves. Thus, the moment of arising will need three further characteristics of arising, stasis, and ceasing before it could give rise to the next moment, namely, stasis. The same applies to stasis and ceasing. This will lead to infinite regress (anavastha). On the contrary, if each of these moments do not possess further characteristics, then they cannot be defined as the conditioned.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. The other possibility is that dependent arising has some other characteristics - that is, characteristics other than those that all phenomena have in virtue of being dependently arisen. But we could then ask about the characteristics of those characteristics. Do those characteristics arise, abide, or perish? If so, the original regress has not been stopped. Another possibility is that arising, abiding, and perishing do not have characteristics at all. But if not, then they are not phenomena in any ordinary sense at all. While that would cut off the regress, it would do so without achieving any explanation, or any analysis of the kind originally sought, and would leave an uncomfortable paradox: We started seeking an understanding of dependent arising as inherently existent. But its inherent existence requires the inherent existence of arising, cessation, and stasis, all of which now come out to be ontologically suigeneris. The further paradox is this: For dependent arising to exist inherently, these three should turn out to be essential properties of all phenomena. But on the alternative under consideration, they are not properties at all.

We might, of course, try to extend this horn of the dilemma by suggesting that although arising, abiding, and ceasing are not phenomena in the ordinary sense, they are characteristics of some special kind. We then seem to have a more curious regress; new ad hoc characteristics arise at each level of analysis. The regress here is an interesting one because its viciousness consists not in the same basis being required for each putatively basic posit, but in there being no principle available to determine a basis for any putative basic posit despite a principle that urges that there must be one. The point that Nāgārjuna is after, of course, is that this principle itself - that there must be an explanatory basis, an independent entity that has characteristics, as an explanation of the occurrence of any characteristics what generates the regress and must be rejected.

There is, of course, a third alternative. These three might neither have characteristics different from those possessed by ordinary phenomena nor have no characteristics at all: They might indeed have the very trio of characteristics that all ordinary phenomena have, namely, arising, abiding, and ceasing. It is this alternative that occupies Nāgārjuna for the remainder of the chapter. This alternative is interesting dialectically in that, on the one hand, it represents the most natural way to approach an analysis of dependent arising, namely, by consistently predicating it of everything, hence suggesting that it is indeed a candidate for an essence of things. On the other hand, as we shall see, that very move precludes treating it as a genuine essence since essences turn out to lack precisely the properties that we must universalize here.

Kārikā VII.4

उत्पादोत्पाद उत्पादो मूलोत्पादस्य केवलम्।
उत्पादोत्पादमुत्पादो मौलो जनयते पुनः॥४॥

utpādotpāda utpādo mūlotādasya kevalam |
utpādotādam utpādo maulo janayate punaḥ ||4||

生生之所生 生於彼本生
本生之所生 還生於生生

shēng shēng zhī suǒ shēng shēng yū;yú;wū bǐ běn shēng
běn shēng zhī suǒ shēng huán shēng yū;yú;wū shēng shēng

|སྐྱེ་བའི་སྐྱེ་བས་རྩ་བ་ཡི||སྐྱེ་བ་འབའ་ཞིག་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད|
|རྩ་བའི་སྐྱེ་བས་སྐྱེ་བ་ཡི||སྐྱེ་བའང་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན||

| skye ba’i skye bas rtsa ba yi | | skye ba ’ba’ źig skyed par byed |
| rtsa ba’i skye bas skye ba yi | | skye ba’aṅ skyed par byed pa (7)yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):

Verse 4 - The origination of origination is nothing but the arising of the primal origination. And of course the primal origination gives rise to the origination of origination.

JONES (Skt):

[*Objection*:4] The “arising of arising” only gives rise to the “initial arising.” The initial arising only produces the arising of arising.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):

The arising of arising is exclusively the arising of primary arising. Again, the primary arising produces the arising of arising.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):

Origination is the arising of arising, the isolated beginning of origination.

Again, origination is caused to arise by the aboriginal arising of arising.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):

4. Appearance, appearance, and appearance,

The idea, which belongs to a fundamental appearance, may be individual and isolated.

Appearance produces appearance, and that is called appearance.

The fundamental might be born also in the similar case after.

STRENG (Skt):

4. The "originating origination" (utpadotpada) (i.e. the beginning of the origination) is only the origination of the basic origination (mulotpada) (i.e. the beginning of the product); Also the origination of the basic origination (i.e. the beginning of the beginning of the product) produces the "originating origination." (i.e. the beginning of the origination)

BOCKING (Ch):

7v4 That which arises in the arising-of-arising
Produces another 'original arising'.
What arises in that original arising
Produces the arising of arising in return.

BATCHELOR (Tb):

The birth of birth gives birth to the root birth alone. The root birth also is that which gives birth to the birth of birth.

DOCTOR (Tb):

Due to the arising of arising,
There arises only fundamental arising,
Yet fundamental arising is responsible
For the arising of arising as well. [VII.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):

4. The arising of arising only gives rise
To the basic arising.
The arising of the basic arising
Gives rise to arising.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):

4. The arising of arising only gives rise
To the basic arising.
The arising of the basic arising
Gives rise to the arising of arising as well.

HAGEN (paraphrase):

The arising of arising is exclusively the arising of primary arising. Again, the primary arising produces the arising of arising.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/4 When a dharma arises, seven dharmas, including the dharma itself, arise together: (1) the dharma, (2) arising, (3) abiding, (4) ceasing, (5) arising-of-arising, (6) abiding-of-abiding, (7) ceasing-of-ceasing. In these seven dharmas original arising can produce the six dharmas excepting itself. Arising-of-arising produces original arising, and original arising produces arising-of-arising. Thus the three marks, though active, are not an endless series.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

In order to avoid infinite regress, one may assume that the arming of arising is the primary arising (mulautpada), and that this latter again causes the arising of arising. Such mutual action on the part of primary arising and arising of arising could eliminate infinite regress.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. This is the opponent speaking. He suggests that dependent arising arises from a more basic arising. This basic arising comes to be, but not on the basis of anything else. The idea, defended by some earlier Buddhist schools, is this: There are two levels of dependent' arising. The more superficial is the relationship of mutual dependence of all phenomena, issuing in their impermanence. But this interdependence, on this view, is itself dependently arisen. It depends on a basic arising - a mere fact of interdependent origination, which gives rise to the more specific empirical relations we see. So in 'the first two lines of this verse, the opponent says that when arising itself is considered in isolation, all that we have is the basic arising. In the third and fourth lines, the opponent says that when that arising has arisen, it gives rise to the more superficial ordinary dependent arising. It is, then, that basic arising that is posited as ontologically foundational.

Kārikā VII.5

उत्पादोत्पाद उत्पादो मूलोत्पादस्य ते यदि।
मौलेनाजनितस्तं ते स कथं जनयिष्यति॥५॥

utpādotāda utpādo mūlotādasya te yadi |
maulenājanitas taṃ te sa kathaṃ janayiṣyati ||5||

若謂是生生 能生於本生
生生從本生 何能生本生

ruò wèi shì shēng shēng néng shēng yū;yú;wū běn shēng shēng shēng cóng běn shēng hé néng shēng běn shēng

|གལ་ཏེ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་བའི་སྐྱེས||རྩ་བའི་སྐྱེ་བ་སྐྱེད་བྱེད་ན|
|ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་རྩ་བས་མ་བསྐྱེད་དེས||དེ་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད||

| gal te khyod kyi skye ba'i skyes | | rtsa ba'i skye ba skyed byed na |
| khyod kyi rtsa bas ma bskyed des | | de ni ji ltar skyed par byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - If you say that the origination of origination is the arising of the primal origination, then how could it give rise to the primal origination, when it depends on the latter (for its own being) and has not yet arisen?

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply:*5] If the "arising of arising" is the arising of the initial arising, then it has not arisen from the initial arising - how then can what is not yet produced by the initial arising produce it?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If arising of arising is the primary arising, not being produced by the primary, how can it [the former] produces that [the latter]?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If origination is the arising of arising, it is the source of arising for you.
How, for you, will it arise out of what has not arisen aboriginally?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Appearance, appearance, and appearance.
If those appearances belong to the fundamental,
How is it possible for the fundamental, which doesn't have any birth, to be born?
And so how is it possible for such a conversation to be born even in future?

STRENG (Skt):
5. But if, according to you, the originating origination (i.e. self-originating origination) produces basic origination, (i.e. also causes the beginning of the product) How, according to you, will this originating origination (i.e. self-originating origination) produce that basic origination (i.e. the beginning of the product) if it itself is not produced by basic origination (i.e. the beginning of the product)?

ROBINSON (Skt):
If there is another conditioned-mark of arising, abiding and perishing, then there is an infinite regression; if there is no [other], they are not conditioned.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v5 If, as you say, the arising-of-arising
Can produce original arising
Since arising-of-arising comes from original arising
How can it produce original arising?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If your birth of birth gives birth to the root birth, how does that which is not yet born from your root give birth to that [root birth]?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If your "arising of arising"
Produces fundamental arising,
How could it do so when not produced
By this "fundamental arising? " [VII.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. If, as you say, the arising of arising
Gives rise to the basic arising,
How, according to you, does this,
Not arisen from the basic arising, give rise to that?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. If, as you say, the arising of arising
Gives rise to the basic arising,
How, according to you, does this,
Not arisen from the basic arising, give rise to that?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If arising of arising is the primary arising, not being produced by the primary, how can it [the former] produces that [the latter]?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/5 If the arising of arising can produce original arising, then such an arising-of-arising cannot be said to have arisen from original arising, and why? If arising-of-arising arises from original arising, how can it produce original arising? Furthermore :

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The question raised here by Nagarjuna pertains to active causation. The substantialist (Sarvastivada) view of causation, which assumes the essence of the effect to be already latent in the cause, does not permit mutual dependence of cause and effect. In such a case, the cause-effect relationship would be a one-way relationship. Nagarjuna perceives that the interdependence utilized in VII.4 in order to avoid infinite regress would not be appropriate in the context of a substantialist theory of causation.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. But Nāgārjuna makes the obvious move in reply: Does the basic arising arise from a more basic arising, or is it somehow unarisen (eternal or inexplicable)? If the former, then we seem to have an infinite regress; if the latter, a petitio principii. Nāgārjuna makes some of the numerous difficulties that afflict this view explicit in the next two verses:

Kārikā VII.6

स ते मौलेन जनितो मौलं जनयते यदि।
मौलः स तेनाजनितस्तमुत्पादयते कथम्॥६॥

sa te maulena janito maulaṃ janayate yadi |
maulaḥ sa tenājanitas tam utpādayate katham ||6||

若謂是本生 能生於生生
本生從彼生 何能生生生

ruò wèi shì běn shēng néng shēng yū;yú;wū shēng shēng
běn shēng cóng bǐ shēng hé néng shēng shēng shēng

།གལ་ཏེ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་རྩ་བ་ཡིས།།བསྐྱེད་པ་དེ་ཡིས་རྩ་སྐྱེད་ན།
།དེས་མ་བསྐྱེད་པའི་རྩ་བ་དེས།།དེ་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད།།

| gal te khyod kyi rtsa ba yis | | bskyed pa de yis rtsa skyed na |
| des ma bskyed pa'i rtsa ba des | | de ni ji ltar skyed par byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - If you say that that which depends on the primal origination gives rise to the primal origination, then how could it give rise to the primal origination which in turn depends on the origination of origination and which has not yet arisen?

JONES (Skt):
[6] If what is produced by the initial arising gives rise to the initial arising, how does the initial arising give rise to it?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If, produced by the primary, it produces the primary, how can that primary, not produced by it, produce it?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If what has arisen out of the aboriginal is, for you, given rise to by the aboriginal,
how does the aboriginal occur out of that which has not arisen.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. Actually those are born relying upon fundamental,
And at that time the fundamental will be born.
But, however, the fundamental is not born relying upon the individual,
And so how is it possible for a concrete fact to be born actually?

STRENG (Skt):
6. If, according to you, that which has originated through basic origination (i.e. referring to the dependent originating origination) produces basic origination, (i.e. like affirming that the effect exist before the cause) How does the basic origination, which is yet un-produced by that originating origination (i.e. self-originating origination), cause that originating origination (i.e. self-originating origination) to be originated?

BOCKING (Ch):
7v6 If, as you say, original arising
Can produce arising-of-arising
Then, original arising arising from it,
How could it produce arising-of-arising?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If that which is born from your root birth gives birth to the root, how does that root which is born from that give birth to that [from which it is born]?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the product of this "fundamental arising"
Itself produces fundamental arising,
Then how could fundamental arising produce it,
When it has not been produced by that? [VII.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If, as you say, that which is arisen from basic arising
Gives rise to the basis,
How does that nonarisen basis
Give rise to it?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If, as you say, that which is arisen from basic arising
Gives rise to the basic arising,
How does that basic arising, to which it has not given rise,
Give rise to it?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If, produced by the primary, it produces the primary, how can that primary, not produced by it, produce it?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/6 If you assert that original arising is able to produce the arising of-arising, then this original arising cannot be said to arise from the arising-of-arising, and why? Because original arising arises from the arising of-arising. How can it produce arising-of-arising? The dharma of the arising-of arising is supposed to produce original arising, yet the arising-of-arising cannot now produce original arising. When arising-of-arising has not yet acquired its own self-substance how can it produce original arising? Hence original arising cannot produce arising-of-arising.

Question: It is at the moment of arising of arising-of-arising, neither before nor after, that it can produce original arising. Just at the moment of arising of arising-of-arising it can produce original arising ...

Reply: Not so, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here again, Nagarjuna refuses to recognize the mutual dependence of cause and effect in the context of an active or substantialist theory of causation.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. The account is either circular or regressive. If the basic arising is held to arise in dependence on other dependently originated phenomena, and dependent arising is explained as dependent upon the basic arising, then the basis is posited as dependent upon that which it explains, and we have a vicious circle. If on the other hand the phenomena on which the basis depends are other than those it explains, and the phenomena themselves depend upon yet another basis, we have a vicious regress.

In the next verse, Nāgārjuna points out the question - begging alternative reading of the enterprise. He notes that one may explain that dependent arising arises through basic arising without circles or regresses, but only by positing the basis as itself nonarisen. This, of course, flies in the face of the demand that motivates positing it in the first place - namely, the demand that every phenomenon, including dependent arising, be explained by some ontologically more fundamental phenomenon:

Kārikā VII.7

अयमुत्पद्यमानस्ते काममुत्पादयेदिमम्।
यदीममुत्पादयितुमजातः शक्नुयादयम्॥७॥

ayam utpādyamānas te kāmam utpādayed imam |
yadīmam utpādayitum ajātaḥ śaknuyād ayam ||7||

若生生生時 能生於本生
生生尚未有 何能生本生

ruò shēng shēng shēng shí néng shēng yū;yú;wū běn shēng
shēng shēng shàng wèi yǒu hé néng shēng běn shēng

|གལ་ཏེ་མ་སྐྱེས་པ་དེ་ཡིས||དེ་སྐྱེད་པ་ནི་བྱེད་ནུས་ན|
|ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་བཞིན་པ་དེ་ཡིས||དེ་སྐྱེད་པར་ནི་འདོད་ལ་རག||

| gal te ma skyes pa de yis | | de (5a1)skyed par ni byed nus na |
| khyod kyi skye bźin pa de yis | | de skyed par ni 'dod la rag |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - This so-called presently originating will, as you wish, cause an origination if that which has not arisen is capable of causing such an origination.

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection:*7] If something, while arising, can give rise to something else, It can give rise to what is not yet arisen.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
This, while arising, if it may so desire, produce that, so that it, being not yet born, will be able to produce that.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
This present arising, for you, intends that which would arise unless this was able to not give rise to that which is to arise.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Those things and phenomena are manifesting as they are,
And so what is hopeful is to manifest this here.
And they are just this one, which is manifested as miscellaneous things and phenomena, totally
They haven't been born, transcending verbal expressions, that is just this world.

STRENG (Skt):
7. According to you, this, while originating, would certainly cause that to originate— If this, not being produced, would be able to cause origination.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v7 If at the moment when arising-of-arising arises,
It can produce original arising.
Arising-of-arising not yet existing,
How can it produce original arising?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If that which has not been born is able to give birth to that, that of yours which is being born should be able to give birth to that.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If that which has not yet arisen
Were capable of production,
Your assertion of production by the currently arising
Would have been acceptable. [VII.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. If this nonarisen
Could give rise to that,
Then, as you wish,
It will give rise to that which is arising.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. If this non-arisen
Could give rise to that,
Then you will have to accept
Things in the process of arising giving rise to each other.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
This, while arising, if it may so desire, produce that, so that it, being not yet born, will be able to produce that.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/7 It could perhaps be, as you say, that-at the moment when arising-of-arising arises it can produce original arising - but in fact it would not yet exist. Therefore, at the instant when arising-of-arising arises, it is impossible for it to produce original arising.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

At this point Nagarjuna proceeds to state the Sautrantika theory of causation, which is described very succinctly by Vasubandhu (Akb p). The Sautrantikas believed that the Buddha's discourse on the three characteristics of existencearising (utpada), change of what has endured (sthitasyanyathatva), and ceasing (vyaya)was intended for the foolish people who are blinded by ignorance (avidyandhabalah). According to them, the recognition of such characteristics involves the belief in the substantial existence (astitva) of the "conditioned" (samskrta) (see ibid.,). However, these three characteristics are not part of reality which consists of momentary (ksanika) events. Such momentary events or impressions coming one after another in rapid succession (purvasy purvasyottaraksanasyanubandhab) produces the appearance of "change of what has endured" (sthityanyathatva), whereas it is merely a series of events (pravaha) resembling one another (avisadrsa). In such a context, arising is merely the immedidate arising from a state of non-existence (pratiksanam abhutva bhava utpadah). A moment thus comes to be from nowhere and ceases immediately. (Here one is naturally reminded of the Humean version of causal relations.)

In the present verse, Nagarjuna is providing his own description of the Sautrantika theory of change. As this theory is based upon the recognition of momentariness (ksanikatva), Nagarjuna insists that the preceding event has to produce the succeeding event (in the series of similar events) even before the former is born, for the former does not endure in order to produce the latter. In other words, if there were to be any causal connection between two momentary events, the moment that serves as the cause should be ready to generate the effect before it passes away, that is, even before it is born.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. The opponent now suggests another reply. Using the analogy of a lamp that illuminates both itself and others, he argues that arising can give rise to itself and to others. This would, from the standpoint of the reificationist, have the happy consequence that while other phenomena would be dependent on dependent arising, dependent arising would be independent and nonempty:

Kārikā VII.8 (Ch)

[Robinson correlates the Sanskrit of VII.7 with the Chinese VII.7 – VII.8.]

[n/a]

[n/a]

若本生生時 能生於生生
本生尚未有 何能生生生

ruò běn shēng shēng shí néng shēng yū;yú;wū shēng shēng
běn shēng shàng wèi yǒu hé néng shēng shēng shēng

[n/a]

[n/a]

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

BOCKING (Ch):
7v8 If original arising, at the moment of its arising,
Could produce the arising-of-arising.
Original arising not yet existing,
How could it produce arising-of-arising?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/8 It could perhaps be, as you say, that at the moment of original arising's arising it could produce the arising-of-arising, but in fact it would not yet exist, hence original arising, at its moment of arising could not give rise to the arising-of-arising. Question:

Kārikā VII.8

प्रदीपः स्वपरात्मानौ संप्रकाशयिता यथा।
उत्पादः स्वपरात्मानावुभावुत्पादयेत्तथा॥८॥

pradīpaḥ svaparātmānau saṃprakāśayate yathā |
utpādaḥ svaparātmānāv ubhāv utpādayet tathā ||8||

如燈能自照 亦能照於彼
生法亦如是 自生亦生彼

rú dēng néng zì zhào yì néng zhào yū;yú;wū bǐ
shēng fǎ yì rú shì zì shēng yì shēng bǐ

།ཇི་ལྟར་མར་མེ་རང་དང་གཞན།།སྣང་བར་བྱེད་པ་དེ་བཞིན་དུ།
།སྐྱེ་བའང་རང་དང་གཞན་གྱི་དངོས།།གཉིས་ཀ་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན།།

| ji ltar mar me raṅ daṅ gźan | | snaṅ bar byed pa de bźin du |
| skye ba’aṅ raṅ daṅ gźan gyi dṅos | | gñis ka skyed par byed yin na |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 (The opponent contends) As light illumines both itself and other entities, so does origination give rise to both itself and others.

JONES (Skt):
[8] As the light from a lamp illuminates both itself and another, so arising can give rise to both itself and other arisen things.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
As a light illuminates itself as well as others, so does arising produce both itself and others.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
As light causes illumination of itself as well as others
so arising would give rise to itself as well as others. ‘

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. What is called "light", is including both subjective idea and objective sense perception.
And so it manifests itself following the method of the subjective consideration and the objective perception.
A fact that something manifests itself is the manifestation of both the subjective meaning and the objective form,
And relying upon such a combination of the two factors, the combinations of the two become possible.

ETTETT

STRENG (Skt):
8. The opponent claim: As a light is the illuminator of both itself and that which is other than itself, So origination would originate both itself and that which is other than itself.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v9 Just as a lamp can illumine itself
And also illumine others,
So, in the same way, the dharma of arising
Produces itself and produces other things.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Just as lamplight illuminates itself and others, likewise birth too gives birth to both itself and the thing of others.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Just as a light illumines
Both itself and other things,
Birth produces both itself
As well as other things. [VII.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. Just as a butterlamp
Illuminates itself as well as others,
So arising gives rise to itself
And to other arisen things.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Just as a butterlamp
Illuminates itself as well as others,
So arising gives rise both to itself
And to other things.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
As a light illuminates itself as well as others, so does arising produce both itself and others.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/9 Just as a light brought in to a dark room completely illumines every object, and also illumines itself, so also arising is similar; it can produce other things and it can produce itself.

Reply: Not so, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here, a metaphor is utilized to explain the Sautrantika version of the causal theory. The thrust of the argument is that it is not necessary for an event to endure before it can produce some other effect. A lamp or light does not have to remain for a while before it could illuminate itself as well as others. This is the same argument used by the Sautrantikas and other idealistic schools to justify the existence of a cogito discussed above (see also Masaaki Hattori, Dignaga On Perception, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968,). The Sautrantikas feared that any conception of duration or statis (sthiti) will lead to the unacceptable view of substance (svabhava).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. Nāgārjuna now launches a lengthy critique of the example, arguing that the relation between the butterlamp and what it illuminates is not one that supports a notion of an inherently existent basis on which things that are not inherently existent can depend:

Kārikā VII.9

प्रदीपे नान्धकारोऽस्ति यत्र चासौ प्रतिष्ठितः।
किं प्रकाशयति दीपः प्रकाशो हि तमोवधः॥९॥

pradīpe nāndhakāro ’sti yatra cāsau pratiṣṭhitaḥ |
kiṃ prakāśayate dīpaḥ prakāśo hi tamovadhaḥ ||9||

燈中自無闇 住處亦無闇
破闇乃名照 無闇則無照

dēng zhōng zì wú àn zhù chǔ yì wú àn
pò àn nǎi míng zhào wú àn zé wú zhào

|མར་མེ་དང་ནི་གང་དག་ན||དེ་འདུག་པ་ན་མུན་པ་མེད|
|མར་མེས་ཅི་ཞིག་སྣང་བར་བྱེད||མུན་པ་སེལ་བས་སྣང་བྱེད་ཡིན||

| mar me daṅ ni gaṅ dag na | | de ’dug pa na (2)mun pa med |
| mar mes ci źig snaṅ bar byed | | mun pa sel bas snaṅ byed yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 (Nagarjuna asserts) There is no darkness in light or in its abode. What does light illumine when, indeed, it destroys darkness?

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply:*9] There is no darkness in the light or where the light is located. What then does a lamplight illuminate, since illumination is the destroyer of darkness?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
There exists no darkness either in the light or in whatever place it is situated. What does light illuminate? For, illumination is indeed the destruction of darkness.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
There is no darkness in light or where this [light] is situated.
What does a lamp illumine when light indeed destroys darkness?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. In the existence of light, darkness does not exist really.
And so in such a situation, it must be necessary for light to exist there alone.
Why does it possible for light to make other things to be seen?
Because the brightness is able to destroy darkness actually.

STRENG (Skt):
9. Nargarjuna answers: There is no darkness in the light and there where the light is placed. What could the light illumine? Indeed illumination is the getting rid of darkness.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v10 In a light there is naturally no darkness
And in the place where it abides there is no darkness.
'Destruction of darkness' is what is meant by light.
Where there is no darkness there is no light.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Wherever lamplight is present there is no darkness. What does lamplight illuminate? It illuminates by dispelling darkness.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Light itself and the place where it is—
Neither of these have any darkness.
What does light illuminate?
Illumination occurs by dispelling darkness. [VII.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. In the butterlamp and its place,
There is no darkness.
What then does the butterlamp illuminate?
For illumination is the clearing of darkness.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. In the butterlamp and its place
There is no darkness.
What then does the butterlamp illuminate?
For illumination is the clearing of darkness.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
There exists no darkness either in the light or in whatever place it is situated. What does light illuminate? For, illumination is indeed the destruction of darkness.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/10 The substance of light is itself without darkness, and places reached by the light are also without darkness. Since light and dark are opposites, light means the destruction of darkness. Where there is no darkness there is no light. How can you say that the lamp illuminates both itself and other things?

Question: The lamp does not have light before it is produced, and it does not have light after it is produced, it is simply that at the moment of production of the light it is able to illumine itself and illumine others.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna's criticism of the Sautrantika theory begins here. In order to get rid of the metaphysics associated with the Sautranika theory of change and causation, Nagarjuna begins by questioning the meaning of the term "illumination" (prakasa). For him, light (aloka) and darkness (andhakara) are relative ideas. This same idea is expressed by the Buddha at S 2.150, where it is said: "This so-called element of light is known through its dependence upon darkness" (yayam.. abhadhatu ayamdhatu andhakaram paticca pannayati; see also Nagarjuna's discussion in his Ratnavali [Ratnavali of Nagarjuna, ed. G. Tucci, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1934, 1936, 1.48]). The relatonship here is by way of contrast; the absence of one means the presence of the other. Thus, "illumination" is synonymous with the "destruction of darkness" (tamo-vadhah), one is not produced by the other in any substantial way.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. Here Nāgārjuna is emphasizing a disanalogy between the relation between the butterlamp and what it illuminates, and the putative relation between dependent arising and what it depends upon. The opponent who wields the example does so in order to demonstrate a difference in status between dependent arising and the dependently arisen. Dependent arising is meant not to be dependently arisen, despite the fact that all dependently arisen phenomena are. So the appropriate analogy in the case of the lamp would map this difference in status between being dependently arisen and being independent onto the difference between being illuminated and not being illuminated. The problem, though, is that in the example there is nothing that is not illuminated: Everything in the neighborhood of the lamp is illuminated just as is the lamp. It was standard philosophical fare in the Buddhist tradition within which Nāgārjuna was working to see darkness as a positive phenomenon. So to the extent that one adopted a reified ontology, darkness would be reified as easily as light. The ·attack on the butterlamp analogy can thus effectively exploit the difficulties Nāgārjuna has already developed for theories that require inherently existent things to be related to one another. But it is important to see that even if one is not disposed to reify darkness, and regards it as the mere absence of light, to the extent that one reifies light, Nāgārjuna can argue that one will be compelled to reify darkness as well. For if light exists inherently, then wherever light is not present it is essentially not present. And the essential nonpresence of light is essential darkness.

Kārikā VII.10

कथमुत्पद्यमानेन प्रदीपेन तमो हतम्।
नोत्पद्यमानो हि तमः प्रदीपः प्राप्नुते यदा॥१०॥

katham utpadyamānena pradīpena tamo hatam |
notadyamāno hi tamaḥ pradīpaḥ prāpnute yadā ||10||

云何燈生時 而能破於闇
此燈初生時 不能及於闇

yún hé dēng shēng shí ér néng pò yū;yú;wū àn
cǐ dēng chū shēng shí bù néng jí yū;yú;wū àn

།གང་ཚེ་མར་མེ་སྐྱེ་བཞིན་པ།།མུན་པ་དང་ནི་ཕྲད་མེད་ན།
།ཇི་ལྟར་མར་མེ་སྐྱེ་བཞིན་པས།།མུན་པ་སེལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན།།

| gaṅ tshe mar me skye bźin pa | | mun pa daṅ ni phrad med na |
| ji ltar mar me skye bźin pas | | mun pa sel bar byed pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - How could darkness be destroyed by a presently shining light? For, indeed, the presently shining light has not as yet extended over to darkness.

JONES (Skt):
[10] How is darkness destroyed by the arising light when the arising light does not reach the darkness?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can darkness be destroyed by the emergent light, when the emergent light, indeed, does not teach darkness?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How is darkness destroyed by the shining of light?
Indeed there is no shining when light is reached by darkness.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. With what kind of process does it be realized actually?
Relying upon brightness, Darkness might be destroyed.
Because it is not true that the darkness is always keeping to be produced,
Therefore it must be true that the brightness might be able to arrive at every moment.

STRENG (Skt):
10. How is darkness destroyed by the light being originated, When the light, being originated, does not come in contact with darkness?

BOCKING (Ch):
7v11 How could a lamp at the moment of arising
Be able to destroy darkness?
Such a lamp at the first instant of arising
Cannot penetrate the darkness.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If, when lamplight is being generated, it does not encounter darkness, how does the generation of lamplight dispel darkness?

DOCTOR (Tb):
When light that is currently arising
Does not encounter darkness,
How could the currently arising light
Illuminate the darkness? [VII.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. If the arising butterlamp
Does not reach darkness,
How could that arising butterlamp
Have cleared the darkness?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. If the arising butterlamp
Does not contact darkness,
How could that arising butterlamp
Have cleared the darkness?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How can darkness be destroyed by the emergent light, when the emergent light, indeed, does not teach darkness?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/11 At the instant of its arising the light is said to be half arisen and half not-yet-arisen. If the substance of the light is not yet complete, how can it destroy the darkness? Moreover, the light cannot reach the darkness, just as a man, catching a thief, considers him nullified. If you claim that light, even though it does not reach the darkness nevertheless destroys the darkness, this too is wrong, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The example of light and darkness used to illustrate the causal relationship between two momentary events is here shown to be inappropriate, as it eventually leads to a rather substantialist notion of light reaching up to darkness in order to destroy it.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. Moreover, argues Nāgārjuna, the example itself does not bear close scrutiny as a case of an entity with some inherent power giving rise to a set of effects that depend upon it. For the task of the butterlamp is the clearing of darkness - or the production of illumination. Now the production of light and the clearing of darkness are, Nāgārjuna claims, equivalent. So, if the butterlamp illuminates objects by its light reaching them, it should clear darkness by means of its light reaching darkness. But that would be for light and darkness to be present in the same place, which is contradictory. .

Kārikā VII.11

अप्राप्यैव प्रदीपेन यदि वा निहतं तमः।
इहस्थः सर्वलोकस्थं स तमो निहनिष्यति॥११॥

aprāpyaiva pradīpena yadi vā nihataṃ tamaḥ |
ihasthaḥ sarvalokasthaṃ sa tamo nihaniṣyati ||11||

燈若未及闇 而能破闇者
燈在於此間 則破一切闇

dēng ruò wèi jí àn ér néng pò àn zhě
dēng zài yū;yú;wū cǐ jiān zé pò yī qiè àn

།མར་མེ་ཕྲད་པ་མེད་པར་ཡང་། །གལ་ཏེ་མུན་པ་སེལ་བྱེད་ན།
།འཇིག་རྟེན་ཀུན་ན་གནས་པའི་མུན། །འདི་ན་གནས་པ་ངེས་སེལ་འགྱུར།

| mar me phrad pa med par yaṅ | | gal te mun pa sel byed na |
| ’jig (3)rten kun na gnas pa’i mun | | ’di na gnas pa ṅes sel ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - If darkness is destroyed by light which is not extended, then light, in such a state, will destroy the whole world of darkness.

JONES (Skt):
[11] Indeed, if the darkness is destroyed by the light that has not yet reached it, then the light existing here will destroy all the darkness existing in all the worlds.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
On the contrary, if darkness is destroyed by light without reaching it, then that [light] remaining here will destroy the darkness present in all the worlds.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
But if darkness is overwhelmed by the light without having reached it
then in that case, it will destroy the darkness abiding in all the world. ‘

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. The facts, which are not realized, have come from brightness,
At that time, the destroyer is also darkness again.
And so the object, which is always destroyed, is just darkness itself.
Therefore darkness will be always the cause of going down.

STRENG (Skt):
11. But then, if darkness is destroyed by a light having no contact with darkness, A light placed here will destroy the darkness of the entire world.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v12 If a light, before it reached darkness,
Could nevertheless destroy the darkness,
A light in here
Would destroy all darkness.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If darkness is dispelled even though it does not encounter lamplight, this [lamplight] dwelling here would eliminate the darkness that dwells in all the worlds.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If light were to dispel darkness,
Even without encountering it,
Then the one right here would dispel
All the darkness in the world, [VII.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. If the illumination of darkness occurs
Without the butterlamp reaching darkness,
All of the darkness in the world
Should be illuminated.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. If, without making contact,
The butterlamp clears darkness,
All of the darkness remaining in the world
Should be cleared by that which is placed here.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
On the contrary, if darkness is destroyed by light without reaching it, then that [light] remaining here will destroy the darkness present in all the worlds.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/12 If a light had the power to destroy darkness without reaching it, then a lamp lit here would be able to destroy darkness everywhere, because the two would have no contact. Moreover, a light should not (be said to) illumine itself and illumine others, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The contrary of the substantialist view referred to at VII. 10 is here shown to lead to further confusion. If light can destroy darkness without reaching it, the implication would be that any spark of light anywhere can destroy the darkness present in the entire universe.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. If it is not necessary, on the other hand, for the light of the butterlamp to reach darkness in order to dispel it, since there is a lot of darkness in the world not reached by any single butterlamp, that butterlamp should be capable of dispelling all of that darkness.

Kārikā VII.12

प्रदीपः स्वपरात्मानौ संप्रकाशयते यदि।
तमोऽपि स्वपरात्मानौ छादयिष्यत्यसंशयम्॥१२॥

pradīpaḥ svaparātmānau saṃprakāśayate yadi |
tamo ’pi svaparātmānau chādayiṣyaty asaṃśayam ||12||

若燈能自照 亦能照於彼
闇亦應自闇 亦能闇於彼

ruò dēng néng zì zhào yì néng zhào yū;yú;wū bǐ
àn yì yīng zì àn yì néng àn yū;yú;wū bǐ

།མར་མེ་*རང་དང་གཞན་གྱི་དངོས།།གལ་ཏེ་སྣང་བར་བྱེད་འགྱུར་ན།
།མུན་པའང་རང་དང་གཞན་གྱི་དངོས།།སྒྲིབ་པར་འགྱུར་བར་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མེད།།

| mar me raṅ daṅ gźan gyi dṅos | | gal te snaṅ bar byed ’gyur na |
| mun pa’aṅ raṅ daṅ gźan gyi dṅos | | sgrib par ’gyur bar the tshom med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - If light illumines both itself and other entities, then undoubtedly, darkness will also darken itself and other entities as well.

JONES (Skt):
[12] If a lit lamp illuminates itself and other things, then surely darkness too covers itself and other things.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If light were to illuminate both itself and others, then certainly darkness too will conceal itself and others.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If light is illuminated by itself or by another [source],
then darkness will undoubtedly conceal itself as well as others.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. Brightness is oneness between something subjective and something objective. ,
Therefore it might be some kind of manifestation at the time.
Darkness is also oneness between something subjective and something objective.
Therefore darkness also covers the facts, which are not clear.

STRENG (Skt):
12. If the light illuminated both itself and that which is other than itself, Then, without a doubt, darkness will cover both itself and that which is other than itself.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v13 If a light' could illumine itself
And could illumine other things
Darkness, too could darken itself
And also darken other things.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If lamplight illuminated itself and the thing of others, darkness too would without doubt obscure itself and the thing of others.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If light could illumine
Both itself and other things,
Darkness would undoubtedly conceal
Both itself and other things as well. [VII.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. If, when it is illuminated,
The butterlamp illuminates itself and others,
Darkness should, without a doubt,
Conceal itself and others.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. If the butterlamp
Illuminates itself and others,
Darkness should, without a doubt,
Conceal itself and others.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If light were to illuminate both itself and others, then certainly darkness too will conceal itself and others.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/13 If light, being the opposite of darkness, can illumine itself and also illumine. other things, then darkness, being the opposite of light, should also darken itself and other things. If darkness, being the opposite of light cannot darken both itself and other things, then light, being the opposite of darkness, should likewise be unable to illumine itself and other things. Therefore light is no illustration. Because we have not yet exhaustively refuted the causes and conditions of 'arising', we must now further expound them.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Taking the argument of the substantialist at VII.8 that light illuminates itself as well as others, Nagarjuna is here showing that the same could be said of darkness too, which would invalidate the meaningfulness of the very example used by the substantialist.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

12. Finally, Nāgārjuna argues, if we are seriously to maintain that the butterlamp illuminates itself and others through a luminous essence, then since the essence of darkness is to conceal things, and things with such essences affect themselves and others, we should expect darkness to be self-concealing. But then we would not see darkness.

The point of all of this is not that we can't see lamps when they are lit or that we can when they aren't. Rather it is that the mechanism by which we see what we see when a lamp is lit is the same whether we are seeing the lamp or other things. To put it in contemporary terms, photons reach our eyes from the lamp or from its flame in the same way they do from the other physical objects in the neighborhood. And just as the visibility of the things in the neighborhood is dependent on a host of conditions, so is the visibility of the lamp. So we do not have even an analogy to a case where the status of dependent arising would be distinct from that of the dependently arisen.

———

Kārikā VII.13

अनुत्पन्नोऽयमुत्पादः स्वात्मानं जनयेत्कथम्।
अथोत्पन्नो जनयते जाते किं जन्यते पुनः॥१३॥

anutpanno ’yam utpādaḥ svātmānaṃ janayet katham |
athotanno janayate jāte kiṃ janyate punaḥ ||13||

此生若未生 云何能自生
若生已自生 生已何用生

cǐ shēng ruò wèi shēng yún hé néng zì shēng
ruò shēng yǐ zì shēng shēng yǐ hé yòng shēng

།སྐྱེ་བ་འདི་ནི་མ་སྐྱེས་པས། །རང་གི་བདག་ཉིད་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེད།
།ཅི་སྟེ་སྐྱེས་པས་སྐྱེད་བྱེད་ན། །སྐྱེས་ན་ཅི་ཞིག་བསྐྱེད་དུ་ཡོད། །

| skye ba ’di ni ma skyes pas | | raṅ gi bdag ñid ji ltar skyed |
| ci ste (4)skyes pas skyed byed na | | skyes na ci źig bskyed du yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - How could an origination which has not arisen give rise to its own self? Again, if that which has arisen gives rise to itself, how could there be a rise again?

JONES (Skt):
[13] How could an arising that is not yet arisen give rise to itself. And if what is already arisen produces the arising, then, since it is already arisen, what is going to be produced again in what is already produced?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can this non-arisen arising produce itself? If it is the arisen that produces, then being born, what is it that is produced again?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How would this arising, which has not arisen, give rise to itself?
Besides, if it is the arisen that is given rise to, again, the arisen is given rise to by what?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. What has never been produced, but what has appeared, is this World,
Therefore how is it possible for any subjective personality to be born?
And so appearance might be born as birth,
Therefore how is it possible for birth to be born again actually?

STRENG (Skt):
13. If it has not yet originated, how does origination produce itself? And if it has already originated, when it is being produced, what is produced after that which is already produced?

BOCKING (Ch):
7v14 When arising has not yet arisen
How can it produce itself?
If, already arisen, it produces itself,
Being already arisen, why would it need to arise?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How can unborn birth give birth to itself? If the born gives birth, when it has been born, what would be born?

DOCTOR (Tb):
When it has not arisen itself,
How could arising produce its own nature?
If it does so having already arisen,
Having arisen, what is it that is produced? [VII.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. How could this arising, being nonarisen,
Give rise to itself?
And if it is arisen from another,
Having arisen, what is the need for another arising?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. How could this arising, being non-arisen,
Give rise to itself?
And if it is arisen from something arisen,
Having arisen, what is there to arise?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How can this non-arisen arising produce itself? If it is the arisen that produces, then being born, what is it that is produced again?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/14 On an occasion when arising produces itself, either it will arise when it has already arisen, or it will arise when it has not yet arisen. If it arises without being arisen then it is not a dharma, and if it is not a dharma, how can it produce itself? If you say that it arises when already arisen, then it may be considered as already complete, and there is no need for any further arising, just as something that has already been made should not be made again. So, whether already arisen or not yet arisen, neither of these two arises, and consequently there is no arising. You earlier said that arising was like a lamp in that it could both produce itself and produce others. This is not correct, and the same goes for abiding and ceasing. Again：

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The principle adopted at I.6 in criticizing the identity and non-identity theories of causation is here applied to reject the notion of a self-creating arising. The metaphysical assumptions associated with the Sautrantika theory of momentary arising is laid bare by an examination of the so-called "deep structures." i. (non-arisen) arising produces itself ii. (arisen) arising produces itself The first alternative is impossible. The second is meaningless

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

13. Here Nāgārjuna is bringing us back to the original argument and reminding us of the reificationist's uncomfortable choice between a vicious regress and a begged question. If every arisen thing depends on an ontologically prior arising, we have an infinite regress. For each arising will require such a foundation. But if we cut off the regress by presupposing at some level a nonarisen dependent arising, we have to ask why *that* level is exempt from the need for explanation. Nāgārjuna now announces the conclusion he will defend in the next section of the chapter:

Kārikā VII.14

नोत्पद्यमानं नोत्पन्नं नानुत्पन्नं कथंचन।
उत्पद्यते तथाख्यातं गम्यमानगतागतैः॥१४॥

notpadyamānaṃ notpannaṃ nānutpannaṃ kathaṃ cana |
utpadyate tad ākhyātaṃ gamyamānagatāgataiḥ ||14||

生非生已生 亦非未生生
生時亦不生 去來中已答

shēng fēi shēng yǐ shēng yì fēi wèi shēng shēng
shēng shí yì bù shēng qù lái zhōng yǐ dā

|སྐྱེས་དང་མ་སྐྱེས་སྐྱེ་བཞིན་པ། །ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ཡང་མི་སྐྱེད་པ།
|དེ་ནི་སོང་དང་མ་སོང་དང་། །བགོམ་པས་རྣམ་པར་བཤད་པ་ཡིན།།

| skyes daṅ ma skyes skye bźin pa | | ji lta bur yaṅ mi skyed pa |
| de ni soṅ daṅ ma soṅ daṅ | | bgom pas rnam par bśad pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 14 - In no way is it possible that origination rises from presently arising, that which has arisen, or that which has not arisen. This (line of argument) has already been discussed with respect to gamyamana, gata, and agata. - Note: Reference is here made to Chapter II on Gatagata pariksa.

JONES (Skt):
[14] Neither what is currently arising, nor the arisen, nor what is non-arisen arise in any way at all. Thus, they are explained by the analysis in Chapter 2 of the moving, the moved, and the unmoved.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Neither the present arising, nor the arisen, nor the non-arisen, is being arisen in any way. This has already been explained by means of [the concepts of] present moving, the moved and the not yet moved.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How do neither the nonarising, the nonarisen, or the arisen [not unarisen] arise?
They are known in the [same] way as going, gone, and not gone.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
14. This world is not the world, which has been produced, or the world, which hasn't be accomplished yet.
How is it possible for the world not to be the world, which hasn't been born at all?
Even though a concrete thing, which has been born, without having any name yet,
They can be called with the name of "is going", "have gone", or "not have gone."

STRENG (Skt):
14. In no way does anything originate by what is being originated (ii), by what is already originated (iii), or by what is not yet originated (i)— Just as it has been said in the analysis of "presently going to (ii)," "that which is already gone to (i)" and "that which is not yet gone to (iii)."

BOCKING (Ch):
7v15 Arising is not produced after it has arisen,
For is it produced before it has arisen.
Nor is it produced at the same time as it arises
This has already been dealt with in (the chapter or) 'going and coming' .

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The born and the unborn, the being born do not in any way give birth. That has been explained by the gone, not gone and going.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The arisen, unarisen, and arising
Are not produced in any way.
Tins was explained before
By what was, will be, and is being traversed. [VII.14]

GARFIELD (Tb):
14. The arisen, the nonarisen, and that which is arising
Do not arise in any way at all.
Thus they should be understood
Just like the gone, the not-gone, and the going.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
14. The arisen, the non-arisen, and that which is in the process of arising
Do not arise in any way at all.
Thus they are explained
Through the gone, the not-gone, and the going.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Neither the present arising, nor the arisen, nor the non-arisen, is being arisen in any way. This has already been explained by means of [the concepts of] present moving, the moved and the not yet moved.

7/15 'Arising' means that by a combination of causes there is arising. In something already produced there is no. activity, and hence no arising, and in something not yet produced there is no activity and hence no arising. In the instant of arising there is also none. You cannot have an instant of arising separated from a dharma of 'arising', and you cannot have a dharma of arising separate from the instant of arising. How can there be arising in the moment of arising? This point has already been dealt with in (the chapter on) going and coming.

(10a25) A dharma which has already arisen cannot arise. Why is this? For something already arisen to arise again and continue thus repeatedly would be endless, like something already made being made again. Moreover if, after having arisen, it were again to arise, by what dharma of arising would it arise? Its mark of arising would not yet have arisen, yet you say that it arises after already having arisen. This contradicts your own statement, and why? Although the mark of arising has not yet arisen you say there is arising. If you say that there is arising even though something has not yet arisen, the dharma can either be already arisen, and yet still arise, or it can be not-yet arisen, and yet still arise. You earlier said that it arose after having already arisen, but this is not settled.

Again, just as something already burnt cannot-burn again, and something already gone cannot go again, for the same reasons as apply in these cases, something already arisen cannot arise again.

(10b4) A dharma not yet arisen does not arise either, and why? If a dharma has not yet arisen, it cannot combine with its productive causes, and if it does not combine with its productive causes, then there is no arising of the dharmas. If dharmas arose without having combined with their productive causes, then there would be action without dharmas of action, going without dharmas of going, passion without dharmas of passion, anger without dharmas of anger and delusion without dharmas of delusion, and such being the case all dharmas in the world would be negated. Therefore, a not-yet-arisen dharma does not arise.

(10b9) Moreover, if a dharma not yet arisen could arise, all dharmas in the world not yet arisen should arise. All the ordinary people in whom enlightenment has not yet arisen could now produce the dharma of imperishable bodhi128 (enlightenment). An arhat freed from the afflictions would now develop the-afflictions, and hares without horns would now produce them, but this is not right. Therefore dharmas do not arise when they are not yet arisen.

(10bl4) Question: If dharmas do not arise when they are not yet arisen, it is because they do not yet have causes; they lack doing, doer, time and space, etc,, and this is why they do not arise. If conditions such as doing, doer, time and space were combined then the not-yet-arisen dharma would arise. Thus for you to say that no dharmas at all arise that are not-yet arisen is not correct.

(10b18) Reply: If a dharma is produced by the combination of conditions such as time, space, etc., then it is not a preexistent thing that arises, nor a non-pre-existent thing that arises, nor a both pre-existent and non-pre-existent thing that arises, for these three (possibilities) have already been refuted. Consequently something already arisen does not arise, and something not yet arisen does not arise.

(10b20) In the moment of arising there is no arising either, and why? (Because) the already-risen part does not arise, and the not yet- arisen part does not arise, as has already been shown. Furthermore, if there were a moment of arising separate from arising, this moment of arising would itself have to arise, but there is no moment of arising separate from arising, and therefore in the moment of arising there is no arising either.

(10b24) Moreover, if you say that the moment of arising itself arises, there would be the fallacy of two arisings; the first known as the moment of arising and the second being the arising within the moment of arising, and to have these two is incorrect. There are not two. dharmas involved, for how can there be two arisings? Therefore, 'in the moment of arising too, there is no arising'.

(10b27) Moreover, before the dharma of arising is manifested, there is no moment of arising, and since there is no moment of arising, what could arising depend on? Therefore you cannot say that the moment of arising arises. According to our investigation then, there is no arising, in what has already arisen, there is no arising in what has not yet arisen, and there is no arising in the moment of arising. Because there is no arising, arising is not established, and arising not being established, abiding and ceasing also cannot be established. Since arising, abiding and ceasing cannot be established, active dharmas cannot be established. This is why it says in the verse that this has already been dealt with in relation to the gone, the not-yet-gone and the moment of going. Question:

(10c3) We do not exactly say that there is arising in the already arisen, arising in the not-yet-arisen and arising in the moment of arising, but merely that through the combination of causal conditions there is arising.

Reply: Even though you state it like this, it is still incorrect, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The analysis of present arising (utpadyamana), the arisen (utpanna), and the non-arisen (anutpanna) conceived of in metaphysical terms compares well with the analysis of motion in Chapter II.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

14. Recall the analysis of motion: Nāgārjuna argued that no entity answering to "motion" could be found in an entity that was in motion in the past, nor in an entity yet to move, nor in a currently moving entity. Motion had to be understood relationally and not as an entity. Using similar reasoning, Nāgārjuna will now argue that arising cannot be found as an entity in something not yet arisen, nor in something that has already arisen, 'nor in something yet to arise. Arising will also fail to be an entity and will have to be understood relationally. This will provide the key both to the refutation of the position that underlies both extreme positions - that for arising to exist, it must exist inherently - and to the construction of a coherent positive account of dependent arising. The next three verses begin a sketch of dependent arising as empty, connecting this fact with the emptiness of dependently arisen phenomena:

Kārikā VII.15

उत्पद्यमानमुत्पत्ताविदं न क्रमते यदा।
कथमुत्पद्यमानं तु प्रतीत्योत्पत्तिमुच्यते॥१५॥

utpadyamānam utpattāv idaṃ na kramate yadā |
katham utpadyamānaṃ tu pratītyotattim ucyate ||15||

若謂生時生 是事已不成
云何眾緣合 爾時而得生

ruò wèi shēng shí shēng shì shì yǐ bù chéng
yún hé zhòng yuán hé;gé ĕr shí ér dé;dĕi;de shēng

།གང་ཚེ་སྐྱེ་བ་ཡོད་པ་ན།།སྐྱེ་བཞིན་འདི་འབྱུང་མེད་པའི་ཚེ།
།ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་ནི།།སྐྱེ་བཞིན་ཞེས་ནི་བརྗོད་པར་བྱ།།

| gaṅ tshe skye ba yod pa na | | skye bźin 'di 'byuṅ med pa'i tshe |
| ji ltar skye la brten nas ni | | (5)skye bźin źes ni brjod par bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 15 - When tills presently arising does not proceed from the origination, how can it be said that the former depends on the latter?

JONES (Skt):
[I5] The present arising does not take place within something arising. So how can we say that what is currently arising is dependent upon that something?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When this present arising does not proceed from within arising, indeed how can the present arising be spoken of as dependent arising?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If this present arising is not preceeded by arising,
how is present arising called dependent arising?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
15. A fact that something is going on,
Suggests that anything hasn't been accomplished yet.
In that situation what has been going on?
Then it might be a very clear enjoyment of productivity.

STRENG (Skt):
15. When, in that-which-is-originated (iii), there is nothing which activates that which is being originated (ii), How can one say: That which is being originated (ii) exists presupposing that which is produced?

BOCKING (Ch):
7v16 If you say that there is arising in the moment of arising
This fact has not been established.
In the moment when conditions are combining,
How can there be arising?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When being born does not arise in what is born, then how can one say "[it is] being born in dependence on the born"?

DOCTOR (Tb):
When there is arising,
Current arising occurs,
Yet, when there is none, how can you claim
That this current arising is based on arising? [VII.15]

GARFIELD (Tb):
15. When there is arising but not yet
That which is arising,
How can we say that that which is arising
Depends on this arising?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
15. When there is arising,
That which is in the process of arising comes into existence. But when there is not,
How can you say that that which is in the process of arising
Depends on this arising?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When this present arising does not proceed from within arising, indeed how can the present arising be spoken of as dependent arising?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/16 Arising in the moment of arising has been refuted already- for various reasons. How can you again say that there is arising, as a result of the combination of causal conditions? Whether causal conditions are complete or incomplete, they are refuted together with arising. Again :

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The first line utilizes the conceptual apparatus of the substantialists in speaking of the effect (i.e., the present arising, utpadyamana) as issuing out of the cause (i.e., the arising, utpatti). This is a theory of selfproduction. As indicated in I.7, Nagarjuna rejects this causal explanation as meaningless, for there is actually no production of anything new in such a context. It is mere self-re-production. If the substantialist were to adopt the terminology of the Buddha (utilized so often by Nagarjuna), then he could say that the "present arising is dependent (pratitya) upon arising." Even though this sounds like the Buddha's (and, therefore, Nagarjuna's) formulation of the causal principle, yet Nagarjuna is not willing to recognize it. This is because dependent arising does not simply mean the reproduction of the same thing. In the present case, it is an explanation of the present arising (utpadyamana) on the basis of arising (utpatti), which is simply tautological with no new information provided. "Dependent arising" accounts for the arising of something new or different, even though such newness or difference is not emphasized to the complete neglect of the relationship of dependence.

The present verse is indicative of the manner in which the Sautrantikas, while trying to explain causation in terms of "association" of discrete momentary entities, were eventually led to a substantialist conception causation. Either they had to accept self-causation or remain satisfied with mere self-re-production, the latter providing no explanation of creativity at all. "Dependent arising," on the contrary, accounts for creativity without falling into the substantialist trap.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

15. Nāgārjuna here suggests that the way the reificationist has gone about posing the philosophical problem about the status of dependent arising itself is all wrong. The initial presumption at the basis of this debate is that arisen entities arise from an independently existing process of dependent arising. But this is wrongheaded in at least two ways: First, phenomena arise from other phenomena, not from arising. So, for instance, if I strike a match, the fire emerges from the friction, the sulphur, the oxygen, my desire for light, and so forth, but *not* from dependent arising itself. That is a fact at a different level of analysis, which itself comprises the network of relationships just indicated. Second, if the existence of the process of arising antedates the existence of the arisen, it cannot be a sufficient condition or a complete explanation of the arisen. For if it were, the arisen would then exist. That being so, Nāgārjuna asks, "Why posit dependent arising itself as a phenomenon within the framework of dependent arising?"

Kārikā VII.16

प्रतीत्य यद्यद्भवति तत्तच्छान्तं स्वभावतः।
तस्मादुत्पद्यमानं च शान्तमुत्पत्तिरेव च॥१६॥

pratītya yad yad bhavati tat tac chāntaṃ svabhāvataḥ |
tasmād utpadyamānaṃ ca śāntam utpattir eva ca ||16||

若法眾緣生 即是寂滅性
是故生生時 是二俱寂滅

ruò fǎ zhòng yuán shēng jí shì jì miè xìng
shì gù shēng shēng shí shì èr jù;jū jì miè

།རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྱུང་བ་གང་ཡིན་པ།།དེ་ནི་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ཞི།
།དེ་ཕྱིར་སྐྱེ་བཞིན་ཉིད་དང་ནི།།སྐྱེ་བ་ཡང་ནི་ཞི་བ་ཉིད།།

| rten ciṅ 'byuṅ ba gaṅ yin pa | | de ni ṅo bo ñid kyis źi |
| de phyir skye bźin ñid daṅ ni | | skye ba yaṅ ni źi ba ñid |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 16 - Any entity which exists by virtue of relational origination is quiescence in itself. Therefore, presently arising and origination per se are likewise in the nature of quiescence.

JONES (Skt):
[16] Whatever arises dependently is inherently pacified. Therefore, what is currently arising and the arising itself are pacified.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever that comes to be dependently, that is inherently peaceful. Therefore, that which is presently arising as well as arising itself are peaceful.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
That which comes into being dependently, that is inherently peaceful.
Therefore arising and presently arising are peaceful.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
16. Miscellaneous things and phenomena can exist as they are,
And those things and phenomena manifest the serene situations as they are.
Therefore what they are manifesting themselves really,
Are the balanced and serene situations as they are just in front of us.

STRENG (Skt):
16. Whatever comes into existence presupposing something else is without self-existence (stabhava). As there is an allayment of "being originated," so also of that which is originated (iii).

ROBINSON (Skt):
Whatever comes into being in dependence is quiescent by its own-being; therefore the now-arising is quiescent, and so is production.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v17 If a dharma arises from conditions
Its nature will be calm extinction.
Therefore arising and the moment of arising
Would both be nirvanic.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Whatever is dependently arising, that is by nature pacified. Therefore, being born and what is born too are pacified.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which originates dependently
Is peace by its very essence.
Arising and the currently arising as well
Are, therefore, peace itself. [VII.16]

GARFIELD (Tb):
16. Whatever is dependently arisen,
Such a thing is essentially peaceful.
Therefore that which is arising and arising itself
Are themselves peaceful.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
16. Whatever is dependently arisen,
That thing is essentially peaceful.
Therefore that which is in the process of arising and arising itself
Are themselves peaceful.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Whatever that comes to be dependently, that is inherently peaceful. Therefore, that which is presently arising as well as arising itself are peaceful.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/17 Dharmas produced by conditions have no self-nature and are consequently nirvanic. Nirvana is considered to be nonexistent, but this non-existence and the marks of this nonexistence cut off the flow of words and put an end to all sophistries. The meaning of 'conditions' may be likened to cloth which exists because of its threads, or a rush mat which exists because of the rushes. If the threads themselves had fixed characteristics, they would not come from hemp. If the cloth itself had fixed characteristics, it would not come from the threads, but in fact we do get cloth from threads, and threads from hemp, so threads have no fixed nature, and cloth has no fixed nature. It is like fire and fuel, which are established by the combination of causal conditions and have no self-nature. Without fuel there is no fire, and without fire there is no fuel.

(10c20) All dharmas are like this; therefore dharmas arising from causal conditions have no self-nature, and having no self-nature are empty and unreal like a mirage. This is why the verse says that arising and the moment of arising are both nirvanic. We should not say that there is arising of the moment of arising. Although you wish to establish by various reasonings a characteristic of 'arising', these are all sophistries and do not have the characteristic of nirvana.

Question: There is definitely a differentiation between the three periods of time. A dharma which belongs to the future may arise. If there are causes and conditions it will arise. How can you say that it will not arise?

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This singularly important statement in the present chapter comes after VII. 15 where Nagarjuna refused to recognize a form of "dependent arising" that also carries the implication of self-causation (svata-utpati). The notion of dependent arising (pratitya bhavati = pratityasamutpada) is simply free from any idea of self-causation involving substance or self nature (svabhavatah satam) and, in that sense, is "inherently peaceful." It does not contribute to the notion of "self" (atman, svabhava) or "other" (para) and, as a result, does not generate lust (raga) or hatred (dvesa), attachment or aversion. It is the more appropriate view regarding the present arising (utpadyamna) as well as arising (utpatti) and constitutes an understanding (jnana) or wisdom (prajna) that brings about freedom (vimukti, nirvana). It is indeed not a negation of arising (utpada, utpatti), but simply a non-substantialist way of perceiving such phenomena.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

16. The sense of "peaceful" *(zhi-ba)* here is important. Nāgārjuna is asserting that things are not, from the ultimate point of view, in the constant flux of arising, remaining, and decaying that characterizes them from the conventional point of view. This will be the conclusion of the extended argument that follows and is here merely announced in advance. But it is important at this stage to be clear about just what Nāgārjuna is asserting for it is indeed a delicate point: It is true that ordinarily and prereflectively, and sometimes as the result of bad philosophy, we tend to think of things as permanent and as having fixed essential natures. But a careful reflection on the nature of conventional phenomena shows them on analysis to be impermanent and, hence, to be characterized by the three properties of arising, stasis, and cessation. (fn 54. Such remarks also make it hard to sustain the nihilistic reading of the text Wood (1994) offers. For here Nāgārjuna is clearly committed to the claim that there are dependently arisen phenomena.)

But while this takes us to a deeper understanding of the nature of phenomena, it does not take us all the way. For phenomena, having no essence, cannot have even these properties essentially. One way of seeing that is this: If we take the import of the threefold nature of phenomena seriously, we see that the phenomena are themselves literally momentary. And if they are momentary, then there is literally no time for them to arise, to endure, or to decay. So from an ultimate point of view, the point of view from which they have no existence as extended phenomena at all, they do not possess these three properties. Hence no single real entity is in flux. In this sense they are peaceful. Nāgārjuna points out the other way of seeing phenomena in the next .verse: It does not follow from the fact that there are no inherently existent arisen entities that there are non-arisen ones. All phenomena are arisen, but they arise as empty, and as dependent. Coming to be just is arising, and all arising is dependent arising.

Nāgārjuna now turns his attention to an analysis of the three characteristics of arising, stasis, and cessation, showing of each in turn that it cannot be understood as ontologically independent. He begins with arising:

Kārikā VII.17

यदि कश्चिदनुत्पन्नो भावः संविद्यते क्वचित्।
उत्पद्येत स किं तस्मिन् भाव उत्पद्यतेऽसति॥१७॥

若有未生法 說言有生者
此法先已有 更復何用生

།གལ་ཏེ་དངོས་པོ་མ་སྐྱེས་པ། །འགའ་ཞིག་གང་ན་ཡོད་གྱུར་ན།
།དེ་ནི་སྐྱེ་འགྱུར་དངོས་པོ་དེ། །མེད་ན་ཅི་ཞིག་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར།།

yadi kaścid anutpanno bhāvaḥ saṃvidyate kva cit |
utpadyeta sa kiṃ tasmin bhāva utpadyate ’sati ||17||

ruò yǒu wèi shēng fǎ shuì yán yǒu shēng zhě
cǐ fǎ xiān yǐ yǒu gèng;gēng fù hé yòng shēng

| gal te dṅos po ma skyes pa | | ’ga’ źig gaṅ na yod gyur na |
| de ni skye ’gyur dṅos po de | | med na ci źig skye bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 17 - If an entity which has not arisen is granted to exist somewhere, then it would originate. But how could this entity, when it actually does not exist, originate?

JONES (Skt):
[17] If any non-arisen entity is found anywhere, then it would arise. But how does it arise when it does not exist?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If a certain non-arisen existent is evident somewhere, then that would arise. When such a thing does not exist, how can an existent arise?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If there is any nonarisen being, it would be arisen by being found anywhere.
Where the being does not exist, it is arisen by what?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
17. When even a little bit of thing hasn’t been seen,
What is called “existence” might be recognized as if it were actually exist.
It might be possible for something to appear from something concrete,
But it might be perfectly impossible for "existence" really to exist at all.

STRENG (Skt):
17. If some particular thing which is not yet originated (i) is indeed known to exist, That thing will be originated. What originates if it does not exist?

BOCKING (Ch):
7v18 If there is a dharma which has not yet arisen,
And you say that it will arise,
If this dharma already exists
What need will it have for any further arising?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If any unborn thing existed anywhere, on being born that [unborn] thing would not exist. If so, what would be born?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If an unarisen entity were to exist somewhere,
Then that could arise.
But, when it does not exist,
What sort of thing could then arise? [VII.17]

GARFIELD (Tb):
17. If a nonarisen entity
Anywhere exists,
That entity would have to arise.
But if it were nonexistent, what could arise?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
17. If a non-arisen entity
Exists anywhere,
That entity would have to arise.
But if it were nonexistent, what could arise?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If a certain non-arisen existent is evident somewhere, then that would arise. When such a thing does not exist, how can an existent arise?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/18 If, in the future period of time, there is a not-yet-arisen dharma which arises, since this dharma will already have arisen, why will it need to arise again? An existent dharma should not have to arise again.

Question: Although it will exist in the future, this is not like the characteristic of (being in) the present. We call it arisen when it takes on the characteristic of being in the present.

Answer: The characteristic of present existence is not in the future. Since it is not in the future, how can you say that a future dharma arises?

(11a3) If something exists it is not regarded as future, but as present. What is present has no need to arise again, and since neither of these arise, there is no arising. Furthermore; you say that arising at the moment-of arising can also give rise to something else. We must now give a further explanation:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here Nagarjuna seems to be setting up the Sarvastivada theory of identity against the Sautrantika view of non-identity. The identity theory of causation recognizes an entity (bhava), permanent and eternal, lying concealed somewhere (kvacit), and therefore not yet arisen (anutpanna). If such a thing were to exist, then it could be said to arise. However, if such a thing were to be non-existent (tasmin asati), how can one say that a thing or entity arises? This is, once again, a criticism of the Sautrantika theory of the arising of a non-existing entity (abhutva bhava utpada, Akb ; see also Kalupahana, Causality,). Here, Nagarjuna is maintaining that the Sarvastivada theory of causation, though excessively metaphysical, may be intelligible in some way, but that the Sautrantika theory of the arising of a non-existent entity makes no sense at all.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

17. We can exclude nonarisen entities from the analysis since the only sense that we can make of the existence of any phenomenon is in terms of its having arisen. Arising is hence a ubiquitous characteristic of phenomena. This, of course, is part of what motivates treating it, as well as stasis and cessation, as inherently existent.

Kārikā VII.18

उत्पद्यमानमुत्पादो यदि चोत्पादयत्ययम्।
उत्पादयेत्तमुत्पादमुत्पादः कतमः पुनः॥१८॥

utpadyamānam utpādo yadi cotpādayaty ayam |
utpādayet tam utpādam utpādaḥ katamaḥ punaḥ ||18||

若言生時生 是能有所生
何得更有生 而能生是生

ruò yán shēng shí shēng shì néng yǒu suǒ shēng
hé dé;děi;de gèng;gēng yǒu shēng ér néng shēng shì shēng

།གལ་ཏེ་སྐྱེ་བ་དེ་ཡིས་ནི། །སྐྱེ་བཞིན་པ་ནི་སྐྱེད་བྱེད་ན།
།སྐྱེ་བ་དེ་ནི་སྐྱེ་བ་ལྟ། །གང་ཞིག་གིས་ནི་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད།།

| (6)gal te skye ba de yis ni | | skye bźin pa ni skyed byed na |
| skye ba de ni skye ba lta | | gaṅ źig gis ni skyed par byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 18 - If origination gives rise to the presently arising, then again, what kind of origination will now give rise to the (first type of) origination?

JONES (Skt):
[18] And if an arising were to give rise to the current arising, what arising would give rise to that arising?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If arising were to produce this present arising, which arising would again produce that arising of that arising?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the arising of the presently arising is caused by having arisen,
again, which arising would give rise to that arising?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
18. To be continuing appearance is appearance,
And so we can say that this world is always being produced incessantly.
To expect such a world is appearance,
And so how is it possible for us to expect the appearance once more?

STRENG (Skt):
18. And if the origination originates that which is being originated (ii), What origination, in turn, would originate that origination? (i.e. infinite regress)

BOCKING (Ch):
7v19 You say that there is an arising at the moment of arising
Then there must be something which is produced;
How can there be any further arising –
Which can produce this arising?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If that which has been born gives birth to what is being born, what [other thing] that has been born would be giving birth to that which has been born?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If arising gives rise
To the currently arising,
Then what, in turn,
Gives rise to arising? [VII.18]

GARFIELD (Tb):
18. If this arising
Gave rise to that which is arising,
By means of what arising
Does that arising arise?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
18. If this arising
Gives rise to that which is in the process of arising,
What arising gives rise to
That arising?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If arising were to produce this present arising, which arising would again produce that arising of that arising?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/19 If an arising in the moment of arising can produce something else, what is it that this arising in turn produces?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Infinite regress becomes a necessary corollary of the Sautrantika theory of momentary events. As mentioned earlier, the Sautrantikas were compelled to assume the notion of potentiality (sakti, bija) in order to avoid such infinite regress. Nagarjuna was not ready to accept that solution.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

18. If we take arisen things to require ontological grounds, then ground them not in other arisen things (since that would generate an obvious regress within the phenomenal world), but in dependent arising itself, there remains the infinite regress to which Nāgārjuna alluded earlier. Assuming dependent arising is to be the ground, then if grounds are needed, it too needs a ground. Nāgārjuna makes this explicit in the following verse: ,

Kārikā VII.19

अन्य उत्पादत्येनं यद्युत्पादोऽनवस्थितिः।
अथानुत्पाद उत्पन्नः सर्वमुत्पद्यते तथा॥१९॥

anya utpādayaty enaṃ yady utpādo ’navasthitiḥ |
athānutpāda utpannaḥ sarvam utpadyatāṃ tathā ||19||

若謂更有生 生生則無窮
離生生有生 法皆能自生

ruò wèi gèng;gēng yǒu shēng shēng shēng zé wú qióng
lí shēng shēng yǒu shēng fǎ jiē néng zì shēng

|གལ་ཏེ་སྐྱེ་བ་གཞན་ཞིག་གིས||དེ་སྐྱེད་ཐུག་པ་མེད་པར་འགྱུར|
|ཅི་སྟེ་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་སྐྱེ་ན||ཐམས་ཅད་དེ་བཞིན་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར||

| gal te skye ba gźan źig gis | | de skyed thug pa med par ’gyur |
| ci ste skye ba med skye na | | thams cad de bźin skye bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 19 - If another (origination) gives rise to this (first) origination, then origination will go on ad infinitum. But if that which has arisen arises from non-origination, then everything will arise in such a way.

JONES (Skt):
[19] If another arising gives rise to this arising, arising is an infinite series. But if what is arisen is without arising, then everything arises in this manner.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If this arising were to produce another, arising would turn out to be infinite regression. If the non-arising is arisen, then it will produce everything in this manner.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If another causes this arising, then arising is an infinite regress.
In that way, then, all nonarising is arisen by the arisen.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
19. If a little different appearance might be the fact,
Then the appearance might be a little unstable.
In such a situation, nothing has become appeared, is the appearance,
And in that case everything has become accomplished in such situations.

STRENG (Skt):
19. If another origination originates that origination, there will be an infinite regress of originations. But if non-origination is that which is origination, then everything without qualification would originate.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v20 If you say that there are repeated arisings,
Then the arising of arising will continue endlessly.
If there is arising apart from the arising of arising,
Then dharmas can produce themselves.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If another [thing] that has been born gives birth [to it], this would be endless. If it is born without [another] which has been born [OR if it is born without being born], everything would be born like that [i.e. causelessly].

DOCTOR (Tb):
If arising is due to a separate arising
There will be an infinite regress.
If it arises without arising,
Then so does everything else. [VII.19]

GARFIELD (Tb):
19. If another arising gives rise to this one,
There would be an infinite regress.
If something nonarisen is arisen,
Then all things could arise in this way.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
19. If another arising gave rise to this one
There would be an infinite regress.
If anything arose without arising,
Then everything could arise in this way.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If this arising were to produce another, arising would turn out to be infinite regression. If the non-arising is arisen, then it will produce everything in this manner.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/20 If there is repeated arising within arising, then arising will be endless. If there were no such repeated arising and yet there were arising, then all dharmas could produce themselves, but in fact this is not the case. Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Not only does the Sautrantika theory lead to infinite regress (anavastha), it also contributes to the chaotic view that anything can come out of anything, which is the opposite of the Sarvastivada view that nothing comes out of nothing. Causal uniformity has no place whatsoever in the Sautranika scheme of things. This is another point of comparison between the Sautrantika and Humean views of causation.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

19. The last two lines of this verse emphasize that the regress cannot ever be cut off by positing some nonarisen arising. That would, as Nāgārjuna argued above, patently beg the question.

Kārikā VII.20

सतश्च तावदुत्पत्तिरसतश्च न युज्यते।
न सतश्चासतश्चेति पूर्वमेवोपपादितम्॥२०॥

sataś ca tāvad utpattir asataś ca na yujyate |
na sataś cāsataś ceti pūrvam evopapāditam ||20||

有法不應生 無亦不應生
有無亦不生 此義先已說

yǒu fǎ bù yīng shēng wú yì bù yīng shēng
yǒu wú yì bù shēng cǐ yì xiān yǐ shuì

|རེ་ཞིག་ཡོད་དང་མེད་པ་ཡང་||སྐྱེ་བར་རིགས་པ་མ་ཡིན་ཞིང་|
|ཡོད་མེད་ཉིད་ཀྱང་མ་ཡིན་ཞེས||གོང་དུ་བསྟན་པ་ཉིད་ཡིན་ནོ||

| re śig yod daṅ med pa yaṅ | | skye (7)bar rigs pa ma yin źiṅ |
| yod med ñid kyaṅ ma yin źes | | goṅ du bstan pa ñid yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 20 - Indeed, an origination relative to either being or non-being cannot by justified. Nor is it possible with being and non-being (at the same time). This has been demonstrated before. - Note: Reference is to Chapter I, Verses 6 & 7.

JONES (Skt):
[20] Thus, the arising of something existent or nonexistent is not admissible. This was demonstrated previously in Chapter 1, verse 6.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
As such, neither the arising of an existent nor the arising of a non-existent is proper. Even so is the arising of that which is both existent and non-existent, and this has been previously explained.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Therefore the arising of what exists and the arising of what does not exist do not occur.
“Existence and nonexistence” have been discussed previously [I, 6-7].

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
20. Relying upon what really exist, accidence can be recognized,
And what do not exist really, can never be regulated by the real existence at all.
No existence and not to exist are the same meaning,
And before the time, what has been manifested itself, has been shown in front of us already.

STRENG (Skt):
20. It is not possible that what has originated either exists or does not exist, Nor that what has not originated either exists or does not exist; this has been demonstrated earlier.

ROBINSON (Skt):
It has already been demonstrated that neither of the real nor of the unreal nor of both-real-and-unreal is arising possible.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v21 Existing dharmas should not arise
Non-existent dharmas likewise should not arise.
Existent and non-existent together do not arise.
This idea has been discussed previously.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Thus it is not reasonable for what exists or does not exist to be born. It has been shown above that there is no existent or non-existent.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The existent and nonexistent cannot reasonably arise.
Something that is both
Cannot do so either.
Indeed, this has already been explained. [VII.20]

GARFIELD (Tb):
20. Neither an existent nor a nonexistent
Can be properly said to arise.
As it is taught before with
"For neither an existent nor a nonexistent."

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
20. It does not make any sense
For an existent or a nonexistent to arise,
As it is presented before with
“For neither and existent nor a nonexistent.”

HAGEN (paraphrase):
As such, neither the arising of an existent nor the arising of a non-existent is proper. Even so is the arising of that which is both existent and non-existent, and this has been previously explained.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/21 Ordinarily, whatever has arisen is regarded either as an existent dharma which has been produced, or as an inexistent dharma which has been produced, or as a both existent-and inexistent dharma which has been produced. None of these is correct, and this has already been explained. Beyond these three possibilities there is no other (form of) arising, and consequently there is no arising.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Neither the identity theory of causation nor the non-identity theory nor even a combination of these two will appropriately account for all the issues relating to causation. This idea continues to be emphasized by Nagarjuna .

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

20. The reference of the last line is to I: 6: "For neither an existent nor a nonexistent thing Is a condition appropriate. If a thing is nonexistent, how could it have a condition? If a thing is already existent, what would a condition do?" The implicit argument is, then, that inherently existent phenomena cannot be said to arise since they would exist eternally and independently; nonexistent phenomena cannot be said to arise since if they did, they would exist. Arising can hence only be a property of. noninherently, but conventionally, existent phenomena. But it then follows that arising as a property can only be a noninherently existent, conventional property.

Nāgārjuna now turns his attention to the properties of cessation and endurance. He begins, though, with a final remark on arising as a transition, concerning the relation between arising and cessation. This next verse must be read along with VII: 23 and 26. Together they constitute an exhaustive discussion of the possible inherence of the three properties under discussion in ceasing entities:

Kārikā VII.21

निरुध्यमानस्योत्पत्तिर्न भावस्योपपद्यते।
यश्चानिरुध्यमानस्तु स भावो नोपपद्यते॥२१॥

nirudhyamānasyotattir na bhāvasyopapadyate |
yaś cānirudhyamānas tu sa bhāvo nopapadyate ‖21‖

若諸法滅時 是時不應生
法若不滅者 終無有是事

ruò zhū fă miè shí shì shí bù yīng shēng
fă ruò bù miè zhě zhōng wú yǒu shì shì

།དངོས་པོ་འགག་བཞིན་ཉིད་ལ་ནི།།སྐྱེ་བ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
།གང་ཞིག་འགག་བཞིན་མ་ཡིན་པ།།དེ་ནི་དངོས་པོར་མི་འཐད་དོ།།

| dṅos po ’gag bźin ñid la ni | | skye ba ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |
| gaṅ źig ’gag bźin ma yin pa | | de ni dṅos por mi ’thad do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 21 - Origination of a presently extinguishing entity is impossible. Moreover, it is equally impossible for a presently non-extinguishing entity.

JONES (Skt):
[21] The arising of something that is ceasing to be does not occur - but an entity that is not ceasing to be does not occur.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The arising of an existent that is ceasing is not appropriate. Whatever existent that is non-arising, that existent too is not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The arising of a presently ceasing being does not occur.
That being which is not now presently ceasing does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
21. In the regulated situations what has been realized has been manifested already,
It does never manifest the appearance of itself in the area of existence at all.
And which is never regulated by any kind of regulation at all.
Therefore actually Existence itself does never manifest itself at all actually.

STRENG (Skt):
21. The origination of something being destroyed is not possible; And whatever is not being destroyed, that entity is not possible.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v22 At the moment of cessation of dharmas –
At this point there should be no arising.
And if dharmas have no cessation
Then there is no question of arising at all.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is not tenable for a thing that is perishing to be born. It is not tenable for that which is not perishing to be a thing.

DOCTOR (Tb):
A thing that is currently ceasing
Cannot reasonably arise.
A thing that is not currently ceasing
Cannot reasonably be a thing. [VII.21]

GARFIELD (Tb):
21. The arising of a ceasing thing
Is not tenable.
But to say that it is not ceasing
Is not tenable for anything.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
21. The arising of an entity in the process of ceasing
Is not tenable.
Nor is it tenable that that which is not
In the process of ceasing is an entity.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The arising of an existent that is ceasing is not appropriate. Whatever existent that is non-arising, that existent too is not appropriate.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/22 If a dharma has the mark of cessation, then this dharma should not arise, and why? Because the two characteristics are mutually opposed. One is the mark of cessation by which we know that a dharma is ceasing, the other is the mark of arising, by which we know that a dharma is arising. The two marks are the opposite of each other, and they cannot co-exist simultaneously, so a dharma with the mark of cessation cannot arise.

(11a23) Question: Even though dharmas with the mark of cessation should not arise, surely dharmas without the mark of cessation may arise?

Reply: Since all active dharmas are ceasing every instant, there are no non-ceasing dharmas. Apart from active dharmas, there are no fixed, inactive dharmas. 'Inactive dharma' is merely a designation, and this is why we say that if dharmas do not cease this problem (of arising) does not occur.

Question: Even if dharmas have no arising, surely they have abiding?

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The theory discussed at VII.20 was the arising of a non-existent entity. The discussion now moves on to the question regarding the arising of an event that is ceasing. The Abhidharma interpreters recognized two types of causes (hetu) that provide a foundation for the causal efficacy of an event that is ceasing (nirudhyamane karitram dvau hetu kurutah, AK ii.63; AKB ; also see definition of karistra at AD 321; Adv). Nagarjuna is reluctant to accept even the fact that an existent that is on its way to ceasing can arise. In other words, cessation and arising cannot be described as events taking place in relation to the same entity. Or more specifically, a changing substance is unacceptable to Nagarjuna. Similarly, one cannot speak of an entity that is not ceasing (anirudhyamana).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

21. The first alternative Nāgārjuna considers is that a ceasing thing is arising. But if a thing is already ceasing, it is therefore no longer arising. And since all phenomena are, when their impermanence is taken into consideration, ceasing, it would follow that nothing can be said to be arising.

Kārikā VII.22

न स्थितभावस्तिष्ठत्यस्थितभावो न तिष्ठति।
न तिष्ठति तिष्ठमानः कोऽनुत्पन्नश्च तिष्ठति॥२२॥

na sthitabhāvastiṣṭhatyasthitabhāvo na tiṣṭhati |
na tiṣṭhate tiṣṭhamānaḥ ko ’nutpannaś ca tiṣṭhati ||22||

不住法不住 住法亦不住
住時亦不住 無生云何住

bù zhù fǎ bù zhù zhù fǎ yì bù zhù
zhù shí yì bù zhù wú shēng yún hé zhù

།དངོས་པོ་གནས་པ་མི་གནས་ཏེ།།དངོས་པོ་མི་གནས་གནས་པ་མིན།
།གནས་བཞིན་པ་ཡང་མི་གནས་ཏེ།།མ་སྐྱེས་གང་ཞིག་གནས་པར་འགྱུར།།

| dṅos po gnas pa mi gnas te | | dṅos po (5b1)mi gnas gnas pa min |
| gnas bźin pa yaṅ mi gnas te | | ma skyes gaṅ źig gnas par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 22 - An entity which has arisen does not abide (i.e., endure) nor does an entity which has not arisen. A presently enduring entity also does not abide. How could something without origination abide?

JONES (Skt):
[22] An entity that has endured does not now endure, nor does an entity that has not endured, nor does the currently enduring, and how can what is not yet arisen endure?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
An existent that has endured is not stationary, nor is an existent that has not endured. The presently enduring is not stationary. What non-arisen can stay?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
No being that has endured stays, and a being that has not endured does not stay.
The presently enduring does not stay and so which nonarisen stays?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
22. What should not stop, has stopped, is called "existence,"
And the “existence,” which has been stopped, does never stop once more.
The states, which are stopping, do never stop,
And where is it possible for what hasn’t been born to stop actually?

STRENG (Skt):
22. Neither an "entity that has endured (iii)" (sthitabhava) nor an "entity that has not endured (i)" endures; Not even something enduring (ii) endures. And what endures if it is not originated?

BOCKING (Ch):
7v23 Non-abiding dharmas do not abide
Abiding dharmas do not abide either.
Nor does the moment of abiding abide.
Since they do not arise, how can they abide?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
A thing that has remained does not remain. A thing that has not [yet] remained does not remain. That which is remaining also does not remain. What unborn [thing] can remain?

DOCTOR (Tb):
A thing that has abided does not abide,
A thing that has yet to abide does not abide,
And no currently abiding thing abides either.
What thing abides that does not arise? [VII.22]

GARFIELD (Tb):
22. A static existent does not endure.
A nonstatic existent does not endure.
Stasis does not endure.
What nonarisen can endure?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
22. An entity that has endured does not endure.
An entity that has not endured does not endure.
That which is in the process of enduring does not endure.
What non-arisen can endure?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
An existent that has endured is not stationary, nor is an existent that has not endured. The presently enduring is not stationary. What non-arisen can stay?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/23 Non-abiding dharmas do not abide because they have no mark of abiding. Abiding dharmas similarly do not I abide, and why? Because they already have abiding. Abiding exists by virtue of movement. If a dharma of abiding already exists it will not need to abide again. There is no abiding, in the moment of abiding either, and since there is no moment of abiding apart from abiding and not abiding, there is no abiding. Even though you search everywhere in this way for abiding you will not be able to find it. It is the same as no arising, and if there is no arising, how can there be abiding?

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Sarvastivadins (especially the Vaibhasikas) argued that unless "stasis" (sthiti) of an entity (dharma) is not recognized, it causal efficacy also cannot be admitted (Adv). This is contrary to the view (referred to in VII.21) expressed by the Sautrantikas, namely, that an entity, when it is ceasing, can generate causal efficiency. Thus, while the Sautrantikas refused to recognize a moment of stasis fearing that it would lead to a belief in substance, the Sarvastivadins insisted upon admitting such a static moment. As such, the Sarvastivadins can maintain that a static moment endures (sthita-bhavah tisthati), primarily because they assumed that stasis has its own nature (svabhava). If there was no such nature, then phenomena could not endure. Here again, we have the distinction between a phenomenon and its static nature. What Nagarjuna is denying here is not that a phenomenon can endure, but that a static nature can endure (asthitabhavah tisthati)? This would appear to be self-contradictory to Nagarjuna. To say that "presently enduring is enduring" (tisthamanah tisthati) would be tautological.

All the above mentioned views would pertain to something that has already arisen. Finally, Nagarjuna insists that we cannot speak of a non-arisen entity as having stasis.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

22. ("A static existent does not endure" fn 55. To translate the Tibetan *"gnas-pa,* " I have used "stasis (static)" as a noun form, "to endure" as a verb (and sometimes "to abide" to emphasize, where context makes it appropriate, the dynamic character of this process). One should bear in mind that these diverse English terms do not mark diverse Tibetan (or Sanskrit) terms in the original. I have tried to be consistent in preserving the connotations that are important in each context and to render the text in as smooth English as possible. This precludes the otherwise desirable lexical uniformity one would achieve by using one of these terms throughout.)

Nāgārjuna now turns to stasis - the moment between arising and" ceasing. This verse must be read along with VII: 23, 25, and 27, which together provide a complete examination of the status of stasis. Here he emphasizes that the moment between the arising and ceasing of a momentary phenomenon - an event has no temporal extent. So a thing that we might conventionally refer to as static literally does not endure with identity through time. But of course neither does something that is not even conventionally static. And finally, since as a consequence of· these two premises stasis is not instantiated in any phenomenon, it itself does not endure. So, Nāgārjuna concludes, stasis fails to exist over time in any sense and so is no candidate for an inherently existent phenomenon.

Kārikā VII.23

स्थितिर्निरुध्यमानस्य न भावस्योपपद्यते।
यश्चानिरुध्यमानस्तु स भावो नोपपद्यते॥२३॥

sthitir nirudhyamānasya na bhāvasyopapadyate |
yaś cānirudhyamānas tu sa bhāvo nopapadyate ||23||

若諸法滅時 是則不應住
法若不滅者 終無有是事

ruò zhū fǎ miè shí shì zé bù yīng zhù
fǎ ruò bù miè zhě zhōng wú yǒu shì shì

།དངོས་པོ་འགག་བཞིན་ཉིད་ལ་ནི། །གནས་པ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
།གང་ཞིག་འགག་བཞིན་མ་ཡིན་པ། །དེ་ནི་དངོས་པོར་མི་འཐད་དོ།

| dṅos po 'gag bźin ñid la ni | | gnas pa 'thad par mi 'gyur ro |
| gaṅ źig 'gag bźin ma yin pa | | de ni dṅos por mi 'thad do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 23 - The abiding of a presently extinguishing entity is impossible. Indeed, the abiding of a presently non-extinguishing entity is equally impossible.

JONES (Skt):
[23] The duration of an entity that is ceasing to be does not occur. But an entity that is not ceasing to be does not occur.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Duration of an existent that is ceasing is not appropriate. Whatever existent that is non-ceasing is also not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The endurance of a presently ceasing being does not OCcur.
That being which is not now presently ceasing does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
23. Standing still is belonging to the state of self-regulation,
And the self-regulation does not manifest itself in a simple condition of existence.
Such a kind of standing still is beyond the self-regulation totally,
The Real Existence does never manifest itself at all.

STRENG (Skt):
23. Duration is not possible of a thing that is being destroyed. But whatever is not being destroyed, that thing (bhava) is also not possible.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Abiding of a vanishing existent is not true to fact; but no non-vanishing existent is a fact.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v24 When dharmas are ceasing
They cannot be abiding
And if dharmas do not cease,
The problem (of abiding) will not occur at all.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is not possible for a thing that is perishing to remain. It is not possible for that which is not perishing to be a thing.

DOCTOR (Tb):
A thing that is currently ceasing
Cannot reasonably abide.
A thing that is not currently ceasing
Cannot reasonably be a thing. [VII.23]

GARFIELD (Tb):
23. The endurance of a ceasing entity
Is not tenable.
But to say that it is not ceasing
Is not tenable for anything.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
23. The endurance of an entity in the process of ceasing
Is not tenable.
Nor is it tenable that that which is not in the process of ceasing
Is an entity.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Duration of an existent that is ceasing is not appropriate. Whatever existent that is non-ceasing is also not appropriate.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/24 If a dharma has the mark of cessation, then this dharma will not have the mark of abiding, and why? Because in the one dharma there would be two contradictory marks, the first being the mark of ceasing, the second being the mark of abiding. It is not possible for abiding and ceasing to exist in the same time and place. Therefore you cannot say that a dharma with the mark of ceasing is abiding.

Question: Surely if dharmas are not ceasing they can abide?

Reply: There are no dharmas which are not ceasing, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

While the Sautrantikas (as mentioned earlier) recognized causal efficiency in a phenomenon at the moment of its arising (utpada), and as such they did not have to accept a static moment, the Sarvastivadins argued that without a static moment a phenomenon cannot generate any causal efficiency (yadi hi dharmasya sthitir na syat, tasyatmanyavasthitasya hetvakhyah saktiprabhavaviseso na syat, Adv). A moment of stasis is to be followed by decay (jara) and destruction (vyaya). If the Sarvastivadins were not happy about recognizing causal efficiency of a phenomenon at the moment of its arising, the moment being such a minute instant of time, they will be compelled to admit such causal efficiency in a static moment as it begins to disappear (nirudhyamana). Nagarjuna's argument here is, therefore, directed agains the Sarvastivadins when he says: "The duration of an existent that is presently ceasing is not appropriate." However, someone may assume that Nagarjuna's criticism of the Sarvastivada theory of stasis would mean that he is compelled to accept the contrary view, namely, that there is a phenomenon that is not ceasing (anirudhyamana). This latter view he rejects in the second line.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

23. This verse plays a central role in each of two interwoven arguments. In the context of VII: 21 and 26, it provides part of the exhaustive analysis of the impossibility of arising, abiding and ceasing as instantiated in ceasing (hence in impermanent) phenomena. In the context of VII: 22,25, and 27, it provides part of the analysis of the impossibility of locating endurance in any phenomenon, hence emphasizing the impermanence of all phenomena. Since to exist is to exist in time and things that are ceasing are by definition not in a state of continued existence, ceasing phenomena do not provide the kind of continuity with numerical identity that endurance demands. And all phenomena are, upon analysis, seen to be constantly ceasing. So endurance has no possibility of instantiation, and ceasing phenomena cannot have this property as an essential attribute.

Kārikā VII.24

जरामरणधर्मेषु सर्वभावेषु सर्वदा।
तिष्ठन्ति कतमे भावा ये जरामरणं विना॥२४॥

jarāmaraṇadharmeṣu sarvabhāveṣu sarvadā |
tiṣṭhanti katame bhāvā ye jarāmaraṇaṃ vinā ||24||

所有一切法 皆是老死相
終不見有法 離老死有住

suǒ yǒu yī qiè fǎ jiē shì lǎo sǐ xiàng;xiāng
zhōng bù jiàn yǒu fǎ lí lǎo sǐ yǒu zhù

།དངོས་པོ་ཐམས་ཅད་དུས་ཀུན་ཏུ། །རྒ་དང་འཆི་བའི་ཆོས་ཡིན་ན།
།གང་དག་རྒ་དང་འཆི་མེད་པར། །གནས་པའི་དངོས་པོ་གང་ཞིག་ཡོད།

| dṅos po thams cad dus kun (2)du | | rga daṅ 'chi ba'i chos yin na |
| gaṅ dag rga daṅ 'chi med par | | gnas pa'i dṅos po gaṅ źig yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 24 - As all entities are always subject to the conditions (i.e., dharmas} of ageing and death, what entities abide which are not subject to the conditions?

JONES (Skt):
[24] When all things are always by nature decaying and dying, what things endure without decay and death?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When all existents are always of the nature of decay and death, which existents that are without decay and death can stay?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
All of the beigs always [experience] the events of old age and death.
Where do which beings endure without old age and death?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
24. Aging and death are following the rule of the Universe,
And they are belonging to the whole existence at every moment.
How is it possible for everything to stop at all?
Those existences do not have any aging, or any death.

STRENG (Skt):
24. Because every entity always remains in the law of old age and death, What entities are there which endure without old age and death?

BOCKING (Ch):
7v25 Every dharma which exists
Has the marks of old age and death.
You will never see any dharma
Abiding without old age and death.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If all things at all times are aging and dying phenomena, what things are there which could remain without aging and dying?

DOCTOR (Tb):
All things, at all times,
Are subject to aging and death.
What thing then remains
Free from aging and death? [VII.24]

GARFIELD (Tb):
24. Inasmuch as the nature of all things
Is aging and death,
Without aging and death,
What existents can endure?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
24. Inasmuch as the nature of all entities
Is always aging and death,
Without aging and death,
What entities can endure?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When all existents are always of the nature of decay and death, which existents that are without decay and death can stay?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/25 All dharmas at the moment of their arising are impermanent. Always accompanying impermanence are two things, namely old age and death. All dharmas are the same in this respect, and because old age and death are always present there is no moment of abiding.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is a simple rejection of any metaphysical idea pertaining to the real stasis (sthiti) of phenomena. This rejection is based upon the empirical notions of decay and death (jara-marana) emphasized by the Buddha himself.

The interpreters of the Abhidharma seem to have experienced difficulty in reconciling the Buddha's description of the "dispositionally conditioned" (samskrta) as having three characteristics (trini laksanani) (A 1.152; Tseng 12.5 [Taisbo 2.607c]) with their own theories of momentariness. While the Sarvastivadins recognized a fourth moment (caturtham atra vaktavyam syat, Akb), splitting up "change of what has remained" (thitassa annathatta) into two moments as stasis (sthiti) and decay (anyathatva, jara), the Sautrantikas admitted only two moments rejecting both stasis and decay. The Theravadins accepted a theory of three moments, once again omitting decay.

The need for recognizing stasis on the part of the Sarvastivadins and its denial by the Sautrantikas is discussed at length by Vasubandhu (Akb p). Both schools assumed (and this is the case with the later Theravadins too) that the Buddha's definition of the "dispositionally conditioned" in terms of three characteristics (as arising. decay or change of what has remained, and ceasing) is for the sake of the unenlightened (vineyajanartham). They argued that it is for this reason that the Buddha utilized the term "appears" (pannayati, prajnayate) when speaking of these three characteristics. However, this is not the case with the Abhidharma theory of moments (na tu ksanasya).

The interpreters of the Abhidharma (hardly realizing that the Abhidharma did not have a theory of moments) were making a distinction between the "discourses" (sutra) and Abhidharma, comparable to the distinction made in the Saddharmapundari ka between the Agama and Mahayana discourses. They assumed that the Abhidharma analysis (i.e., in terms of moments) is for those who really understand the "meaning" (arthajna), not for those who merely go after the "texts" (granthajna). Thus came to be established the definition of Abhidharma as containing "taintless wisdom" (prana 'mala sanncara 'bhidharmah, AK i.21).

Nagarjuna seems to have remained undaunted by such claims on the part of the Buddhist metaphysicians. He was probably aware that all three metaphysical views presented by the Sarvastivadans, the Sautrantikas and the later Theravadins (the last was probably not known to him) were incompatible with the Buddha's own conception of change explained in terms of decay and death (jara-marana). Therefore, he perceives no existents (bhava) that are free from decay and death.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

24. Moreover, since all things decay, this analysis is perfectly general. Nothing exists in the way that it would have to in order to have endurance as part of its essence.

Kārikā VII.25

स्थित्यान्यया स्थितेः स्थानं तयैव च न युज्यते।
उत्पादस्य यथोत्पादो नात्मना न परात्मना॥२५॥

sthityānyayā sthiteḥ sthānaṃ tayaiva ca na yujyate |
utpādasya yathotpādo nātmanā na parātmanā ||25||

住不自相住 亦不異相住
如生不自生 亦不異相生

zhù bù zì xiàng;xiāng zhù yì bù yì xiàng;xiāng zhù
rú shēng bù zì shēng yì bù yì xiāng shēng

།གནས་པ་གནས་པ་གཞན་དང་ནི།།དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་གནས་མི་རིགས།
།ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེ་བ་རང་དང་ནི།།གཞན་གྱིས་བསྐྱེད་པ་མ་ཡིན་བཞིན།།

| gnas pa gnas pa gźan daṅ ni | | de ñid kyis kyaṅ gnas mi rigs |
| ji ltar skye ba raṅ daṅ ni | | gźan gyis bskyed pa ma yin bźin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 25 - The abiding state of an entity is not justifiable on the grounds of another entity's abiding or by its own abiding. This is just as the origination of origination which is dependent neither on its own self nor on another.

JONES (Skt):
[25] The endurance does not endure through itself or through another endurance, just as arising does not arise through itself or another arising.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The endurance of an enduring thing based on the endurance of itself or of another is not proper. It is like the absence of arising of arising, either from itself or from another.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Enduring should endure with the having endured but neither of them is reasonable.
just as the arising of arising is not from itself or another.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
25. Standing still relying upon other things, is also a kind of standing still, and the state is confirmed much more stable.
However even though relying upon such a method, the situation is never to be bound so much.
Belonging to the work is just working for the work itself,
And it is not relying upon myself, or it is not relying upon others.

STRENG (Skt):
25. The enduring quality of a different duration is as impossible as of that same duration, So the origination of origination is neither itself nor that which is other than itself.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v26 Abiding is not abiding of its own marks,
Nor is it abiding of the marks of something else
Just as arising does not produce itself
Nor does it produce the marks of anything else.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is not reasonable for what remains to remain due to something else that remains or due to itself. This is like how what has been born is not given birth to by itself or another.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Abiding cannot reasonably abide
Due to itself, or due to another.
The case was the same with arising,
Which arises neither by itself nor through another. [VII.25]

GARFIELD (Tb):
25. Stasis cannot endure through itself
Or through another stasis.
Just as arising cannot arise from itself
Or from another arising.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
25. For enduring to endure through another
Enduring or through itself makes no sense,
Just as arising cannot arise through itself
Or through another arising.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The endurance of an enduring thing based on the endurance of itself or of another is not proper. It is like the absence of arising of arising, either from itself or from another.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/26 If there were a dharma of abiding, then it could either be regarded as the abiding of its own marks or as the abiding of another thing's marks, but neither of these is correct. If it is its own marks which abide then it would be considered permanent. All active dharmas arise from causal conditions, and if a dharma of abiding were self-abiding, it would not be considered active. If abiding were the abiding of own marks, dharmas too ought to abide in their own marks. Just as the eye cannot see itself, so it is with abiding.

(11b24) If it is abiding of another thing's marks, that abiding would again have to abide, and abiding would be an endless regression. Moreover, we see different dharmas producing different marks, but we cannot find uncaused, different dharmas which nevertheless have different marks, because their different marks are not fixed. To say that there is abiding on the basis of different marks is not correct.

Question: If there is no abiding, surely there must be ceasing?

Reply: No, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If stasis (sthiti) were to be a distinct event, then the metaphysicians who needed to explain such an event in terms of causality will have to maintain that it could occur either depending upon itself (= self-causation, svatotpatti) or based upon another (external causation, parata utpatti). Both are not appropriate. This is similar to the criticism made of arising at VII. 18-19.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

25. This verse recalls the discussion of VII: 13-19 and has an important echo in VII: 32. Nāgārjuna argued earlier that we cannot analyze arising either as sui· generis or as dependent upon some other arising. In the first case, we beg the question; in the second we invite an infinite regress. He now points out that the same is true of stasis. We can't, in order to demonstrate the inherent existence of stasis, argue that it endures because of itself. If this kind of reflexive explanation were possible, we would not need to posit stasis in the first place as an explanation of the continued existence of empirical phenomena. Each could count as self-explanatory. 'But if we say that stasis, like other static things, is static because of its possessing a distinct stasis, we are off on a vicious regress.

Kārikā VII.26

निरुध्यते नानिरुद्धं न निरुद्धं निरुध्यते।
तथापि निरुध्यमानं किमजातं निरुध्यते॥२६॥

nirudhyate nāniruddhaṃ na niruddhaṃ nirudhyate |
tathā nirudhyamānaṃ ca kim ajātaṃ nirudhyate ||26||

法已滅不滅 未滅亦不滅
滅時亦不滅 無生何有滅

fǎ yǐ miè bù miè wèi miè yì bù miè
miè shí yì bù miè wú shēng hé yǒu miè

|འགགས་པ་འགག་པར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ།།མ་འགགས་པ་ཡང་འགག་མི་འགྱུར།
|འགག་བཞིན་པ་ཡང་དེ་བཞིན་མིན།།མ་སྐྱེས་གང་ཞིག་འགག་པར་འགྱུར།།

| ’gags pa ’gag par (3)mi ’gyur te | | ma ’gags pa yaṅ ’gag mi ’gyur |
| ’gag bźin pa yaṅ de bźin min | | ma skyes gaṅ źig ’gag par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 26 - That which has not extinguished does not extinguish. That which has extinguished does not extinguish also. This is alsc the case with that which is presently extinguishing. How could an entity which has not arisen extinguish itself?

JONES (Skt):
[26] What has not yet ceased does not cease, nor does what has already ceased, nor does the currently ceasing - and what not-arisen thing can cease?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
That which has not ceased does not cease. That which has ceased also does not cease. Even so is that which is ceasing. Is it the unborn that ceases?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Neither that which has ceased ceases nor that which has not ceased ceases,
so also the presently ceasing. What ceases that has not arisen?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
26. What is not restricted would not be restricted,
And what hasn't been restricted wouldn't be restricted.
In such situations even the states, which have been restricted yet,
How is it possible for what hasn't been born, to be restricted actually.

STRENG (Skt):
26. "That which has ceased (iii)" (niruddha) does not cease; and "that which has not ceased (i)" does not cease; Nor even "that which is ceasing (ii)." For, what can cease if it is produced? (i.e. or if it is not really produced?)

BOCKING (Ch):
7v27 A dharma already ceased does not cease
And when not yet ceased also does not cease.
At the moment of ceasing, too, there is no ceasing.
With no arising, how can there be ceasing?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
What has ceased does not cease. What has not ceased also does not cease. Likewise what is ceasing also does not. What unborn [thing] can cease?

DOCTOR (Tb):
A thing that has ceased does not cease,
A thing that has yet to cease does not cease,
And no currently ceasing thing ceases either.
What thing ceases that did not arise? [VII.26]

GARFIELD (Tb):
26. The ceasing of what has ceased does not happen.
What has not yet ceased does not cease.
Nor does that which is ceasing.
What nonarisen can cease?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
26. That which has ceased does not cease.
What has not yet ceased does not cease.
Nor does that which is in the process of ceasing.
What non-arisen can cease?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
That which has not ceased does not cease. That which has ceased also does not cease. Even so is that which is ceasing. Is it the unborn that ceases?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/27 If a dharma has already ceased, it does not cease, because it has previously ceased. Similarly, if it has not yet ceased it does not cease, because it is without the mark of cessation. It does not cease at the moment of ceasing either, for apart from these (first) two there is no further 'moment of ceasing'. Thus, according to our investigation the dharma of cessation is nothing but non-arising, for where there is no arising how can there be ceasing?

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

After analysing the metaphysical concepts of arising (utpada) and stash (sthitt), Nagarjuna settles down to an examination of the problem of cessation or destruction (nirodha, vyaya). This criticism follows the method adopted at II. 1, excepting the final question: "Is it the unborn that ceases?" If cessation were to be understood in the sense of momentary cessation, it cannot be explained. However, if one were to accept a permanent and eternal substance (svabhava) which would, at the same time, be unborn (ajata), as the Sarvastivadins did, then that certainly cannot cease to exist.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

26. Nāgārjuna thus completes the tripartite argument for the impossibility of the instantiation of arising, abiding, and ceasing begun in VII: 21 and 23. Cessation, conceived of as an inherently existent, independent property, needs a substratum. We have seen in the previous two verses in this argument that neither arising nor static things can provide this substratum. The only alternative remaining is the ceasing. But these phenomena, passing out of existence, are by definition not inherently existent and so fail as candidates. And again, since all phenomena are ceasing, this means that ceasing as an independent property has no basis. The argument here is an obvious echo of the argument against the inherent existence of motion. So the conclusion to draw is not that there is no cessation or that there are no ceasing phenomena. That would be crazy. Rather, neither cessation nor any impermanent phenomenon can be identified independently as an entity itself. Their existence is purely relational. Nāgārjuna now turns to the cessation of the static:

Kārikā VII.27

स्थितस्य तावद्भावस्य निरोधो नोपपद्यते।
नास्थितस्यापि भावस्य निरोध उपपद्यते॥२७॥

sthitasya tāvad bhāvasya nirodho nopapadyate |
nāsthitasyāpi bhāvasya nirodha upapadyate ||27||

法若有住者 是則不應滅
法若不住者 是亦不應滅

fǎ ruò yǒu zhù zhě shì zé bù yīng miè
fǎ ruò bù zhù zhě shì yì bù yīng miè

|རེ་ཞིག་དངོས་པོ་གནས་པ་ལ།།འགག་པ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
|དངོས་པོ་མི་གནས་པ་ལ་ཡང༌།།འགག་པ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།།

| re źig dṅos po gnas pa la | | ’gag pa ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |
| dṅos po mi gnas pa la yaṅ | | ’gag pa ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 27 - In truth, the cessation of an abiding entity is not possible. Also, the cessation of a non-abiding entity is not possible.

JONES (Skt):
[27] Thus, the cessation of an enduring entity does not occur, nor does the cessation of an entity that has not endured.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The cessation of an existent that has endured is not appropriate. The cessation of an existent that has not endured is also not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Therefore the cessation of the enduring being does not occur.
Moreover. the cessation of a nonenduring being does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
27. As long as we are standing still, we can belong to the state of existence.
The attitude of self-regulation does not appear without efforts to do.
Even just not to stand still, belongs to existence,
And the self-regulation manifests itself.

STRENG (Skt):
27. Therefore cessation of an enduring entity is not possible. Moreover, cessation of a non-enduring entity is not possible.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v28 If dharmas did abide
They could not cease.
If dharmas did not abide,
Then, too, they could not cease.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is not possible for a thing which has remained to cease. It is also not possible for a thing which has not remained to cease.

DOCTOR (Tb):
A thing that abides
Cannot reasonably cease,
Yet a thing that does not abide
Cannot reasonably cease either. [VII.27]

GARFIELD (Tb):
27. The cessation of what is static
Is not tenable.
Nor is the cessation of
Something not static tenable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
27. The cessation of an entity that is enduring
Is not tenable.
Nor is the cessation of
An entity that is not enduring.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The cessation of an existent that has endured is not appropriate. The cessation of an existent that has not endured is also not appropriate.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/28 If dharmas really did abide there would be no cessation, and be why? Because they would have the mark of abiding. If a dharma of abiding ceased there would be two marks, the mark of abiding and the mark of ceasing. Therefore, you cannot say that abiding contains ceasing, just as, in the same way being born and dying cannot exist simultaneously. But if dharmas do not abide, there is no cessation either, and why? Because they are without the mark of abiding. If they are without the mark of abiding then they are not dharmas, and not being dharmas, how can they cease?

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As mentioned earlier, the Buddha's discourse pertains to "change of what has remained" (thitassa annathatta), where "what has remained" (thita) would not imply something that has remained static without any change, but rather "what has become" (bhuta, bhutva). What has become can then cease to exist. Thus, "change of what has remained" (namely, something that has undergone a process of change or transformationviparinama) can come to an end. Hence, it is meaningful to speak of cessation (vaya) after "change of what has remained" (thitassa annathatta).

However, this is not the case with stasis (sthiti) as explained by the metaphysicians, primarily because such stasis was distinguished from change (anyathatva). As such, stasis implied that something remains static, without change, for a while and then without any cause or reason it would suddenly start changing or would cease to exist. This is the implication of the theory referred to in the first line which is not acceptable to Nagarjuna.

The second line implies the equally metaphysical and unacceptable view of the Sautrantikas who argued that an event ceases immediately upon arising without remaining even for one moment (ksanikasya hi dharmasya vina sthitya vyayo bhavet, Akb).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

27. Two points are being made here: First, if there were intrinsically real entities that could serve as ontological bases for cessation, they would have to have either remained stable or not. If the former, then in virtue of having the nature of stasis, they would be incapable of cessation. If the latter, since they never really existed, there is nothing to cease. But there is also a second point being made that depends upon the conventional reality of cessation. Since cessation is conventionally real and is incompatible both with inherently existent stasis and with there being no stasis at all, both of these alternatives with respect to stasis are eliminated. Cessation and stasis must be understood relatively and not absolutely. This point is reiterated in the following verse:

Kārikā VII.28

तयैवावस्थयावस्था न हि सैव निरुध्यते।
अन्ययावस्थयावस्था न चान्यैव निरुध्यते॥२८॥

tayaivāvasthayāvasthā na hi saiva nirudhyate |
anyayāvasthayāvasthā na cānyaiva nirudhyate ||28||

是法於是時 不於是時滅
是法於異時 不於異時滅

shì fǎ yū;yú;wū shì shí bù yū;yú;wū shì shí miè
shì fǎ yū;yú;wū yì shí bù yū;yú;wū yì shí miè

།གནས་སྐབས་དེ་ཡིས་གནས་སྐབས་ནི།།དེ་ཉིད་འགག་པ་ཉིད་མི་འགྱུར།
།གནས་སྐབས་གཞན་གྱིས་གནས་སྐབས་ནི།།གཞན་ཡང་འགག་པ་ཉིད་མི་འགྱུར།།

(4)| gnas skabs de yis gnas skabs ni | | de ñid ’gag pa ñid mi ’gyur | |
gnas skabs gźan gyis gnas skabs ni | | gźan yaṅ ’gag pa ñid mi ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 28 - From its abiding state, surely, the same state does not extinguish itself. Also, from another abiding state, that state does not extinguish itself.

JONES (Skt):
[28] Indeed, a given state does not cease by means of that state, nor does it cease by means of another state.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Indeed, a certain state [of existence] does not cease from a state identical with its own. Nor does a state [of existence] cease from another state different from its own.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, a state does not cease on account of itself, and
a state does not cease on account of another state.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
28. Relying upon such a real situation, the balanced situations have become balanced, Because the real situations themselves are never be regulated by themselves.,
Utilizing a differently balanced situations, are just the true situations,
And it is never the different one, which is really self-regulated.

STRENG (Skt):
28. Indeed, a state of existence does not cease because of this state; And a different state of existence does not cease because of a different state.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v29 A certain dharma, at a certain moment
Does not cease in that same. moment
A certain dharma, at another moment
Does not cease in that other moment.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
A particular state [of something] does not cause that particular state itself to cease. Moreover, another particular state does not cause that particular state to cease.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The same state does not
Bring an end to itself
Nor is it that a different state
Makes the initial one cease. [VII.28]

GARFIELD (Tb):
28. Being static does not cease
Through being static itself.
Nor does being static cease
Through another instance of being static.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
28. A state does not make
That state itself cease.
Nor does one state
Make another state cease.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Indeed, a certain state [of existence] does not cease from a state identical with its own. Nor does a state [of existence] cease from another state different from its own.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/29 If a dharma has the mark of ceasing, then either this dharma's ceasing is a mark belonging to itself, or its ceasing is a mark of something else, but neither is correct, and why? As an example, milk does not cease at the moment when it is milk, for while it is milk the mark of milk definitely abides. At the time when it is not milk, it does not cease either, since if it is not milk you cannot say that it is ceasing to be milk.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The principles of self-causation (svata-utpatti) and external causation (paratautpatti), rejected in Chapter I, may have to be adopted in order to explain cessation itself (nirodha), if the latter were to be understood in the way the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas conceived of it. Either cessation will have to occur on its own, or on the basis of another. Such discussions were rampant during the scholastic period in Indian philosophy (especially with the domination of the doctrine of momentariness) when it was argued as to whether destruction is inherent in birth or whether it is brought about by external causes or conditions (see Adv p-108). Nagarjuna's rejection applies to both views.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

28. This verse also echoes VII: 25 and that discussion of the impossibility of arising being either self-explanatory or always explained by reference to yet another arising. All things, having remained momentarily in existence, change constantly. This, however, cannot be explained by reference to the nature of stasis, either reflexively or regressively.

Kārikā VII.29

यदैवं सर्वधर्माणामुत्पादो नोपपद्यते।
तदैवं सर्वधर्माणां निरोधो नोपपद्यते॥२९॥

yadaiva sarvadharmāṇām utpādo nopapadyate |
tadaivaṃ sarvadharmāṇāṃ nirodho nopapadyate ||29||

如一切諸法 生相不可得
以無生相故 即亦無滅相

rú yī qiè;qiē zhū fǎ shēng xiàng bù kě dé;děi;de
yǐ wú shēng xiàng gù jí yì wú miè xiàng;xiāng

།གང་ཚེ་ཆོས་རྣམས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི། །སྐྱེ་བ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་བ།
།དེ་ཚེ་ཆོས་རྣམས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི། །འགག་པ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།

| gaṅ tshe chos rnams thams cad kyi | | skye ba ’thad par mi ’gyur pa |
| de tshe chos rnams thams cad kyi | | ’gag (5)pa ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 29 - As the origination of all dharmas (i.e., factors of existence) is not possible, so, also, is the cessation of all dharmas.

JONES (Skt):
[29] When the arising of all things does not occur, then the cessation of all things does not occur.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Indeed, when the arising of all things is not appropriate, then the cessation of all things is also not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
When the arising of all events does not take place,
then the cessation of all events does not happen.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
29. Just at that time, everything is all things and phenomena in the whole Universe,
And what has appeared already, does never appear again,
Just at that moment everything is just all things and phenomena in the Universe,
And the self-regulation can never be seen from outside at all.

STRENG (Skt):
29. So, if the production of all dharmas is not possible, Then neither is the cessation of all (i.e. any?) dharmas possible.

ROBINSON (Skt):
When the arising of all the dharmas is not a fact, then the extinction of all the dharmas is not a fact.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v30 It is the same with all dharmas;
No mark of arising can be found
Because of the mark of non-arising,
There is also the mark of no-ceasing.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When the birth of all phenomena is not possible, then the cessation of all phenomena is not possible.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When no phenomenon’s arising
Makes any sense,
No phenomenon’s cessation,
Makes any sense either. [VII.29]

GARFIELD (Tb):
29. When the arising of any entity
Is not tenable,
Then the cessation of any entity
Is not tenable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
29. Since for no entity
Is arising tenable,
For no entity
Is ceasing tenable.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Indeed, when the arising of all things is not appropriate, then the cessation of all things is also not appropriate.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/30 As found in the foregoing investigation, no mark of arising can be discovered in any dharma, and at the same time there is no mark of cessation. We have refuted arising, and therefore there is no arising. Since there is no arising, how can there be ceasing? If your mind is still undecided, I will now expound further reasons for cessation to be denied.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Note that the term sarva (all) is used as an adjective of dharma, but not utpada (arising). This means that Nagarjuna is not rejecting all forms of arising (sarvautpada) as being unsatisfactory. Rather, he is critical of utilizing the conception of arising (utpada), discussed previously, to any or all phenomena (dharma). If arising in a metaphysical sense cannot be applied to all phenomena, then cessaton (nirodha) too, similarly conceived, is inapplicable.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

29. Since nothing arises inherently, nothing ceases inherently. Since upon careful examination nothing withstands analysis as an inherently existing phenomenon, nothing remains independent of conventional designation to be characterized as arising or ceasing. This is how it goes from the ultimate standpoint. From that standpoint - though achieved by noting the universality of arising and cessation of conventional phenomena - since there are no phenomena, there is no arising and cessation. But by contraposition we get the corelativity and mutual entailment of arising and ceasing at the conventional level.

Kārikā VII.30

सतश्च तावद्भावस्य निरोधो नोपपद्यते।
एकत्वे न हि भावश्च नाभावश्चोपपद्यते॥३०॥

若法是有者 是即無有滅
不應於一法 而有有無相

།རེ་ཞིག་དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་པ་ལ། །འགག་པ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
།གཅིག་ཉིད་ན་ནི་དངོས་པོ་དང་། །དངོས་པོ་མེད་པ་འཐད་པ་མེད།།

sataś ca tāvad bhāvasya nirodho nopapadyate |
ekatve na hi bhāvaś ca nābhāvaś copapadyate ||30||

ruò fǎ shì yǒu zhě shì jí wú yǒu miè
bù yīng yū;yú;wū yī fǎ ér yǒu yǒu wú xiàng;xiāng

| re źig dṅos po yod pa la | | ’gag pa ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |
| gcig ñid na ni dṅos po daṅ | | dṅos po med pa ’thad pa med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 30 - In truth, the cessation of a real existing entity is not possible. For, indeed, it is not possible to have the nature of both existence and non-existence at the same time.

JONES (Skt):
[30] So too, to claim the cessation of a self-existent entity is not tenable. Indeed, it is not tenable to claim an entity and the absence of an entity in a context of oneness.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Furthermore, the cessation of a real existent is not appropriate. Indeed, in the context of identity, neither existence nor non-existence is appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Therefore, the cessation of a being that exists does not take place.
In identity, indeed, neither a being or a nonbeing happen.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
30. From what really exist, an adequate volume belong to existence,
What is adequately self-regulated, does not manifest itself at all.
The fact that something is just only one, does not suggests its existence,
And if it is true, the non-existence of number can never be found at all.

STRENG (Skt):
30. Therefore cessation of a real existing entity is not possible; And certainly both an existing entity and a non-existing entity cannot be possible in the same case.

ROBINSON (Skt):
The extinction of a real existent is not true to fact, since that existent and inexistent occur in a unity is not true to fact.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v31 If a dharma is existent.
Then there is no cessation.
There could not be in one dharma
The marks of both being and non-being.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Cessation is not possible in an existent thing. Thingness and nothingness are not possible in one.

DOCTOR (Tb):
A thing that exists
Cannot have a cessation,
Because the same thing cannot
Be both thing and no thing. [VII.30]

GARFIELD (Tb):
30. For an existent thing
Cessation is not tenable.
A single thing being an entity and
A nonentity is not tenable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
30. For an existent entity
Cessation is not tenable.
A single thing being an entity and
A nonentity is not tenable.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Furthermore, the cessation of a real existent is not appropriate. Indeed, in the context of identity, neither existence nor non-existence is appropriate.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/31 When a dharma is existent you may seek for a mark of cessation but you will not be able to find it, and why? How could there be, within one dharma, the marks of both being and non-being? They are like light and shadow which cannot occupy the same place.

Further:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

30. This verse and the next reinforce the point about the ultimate nonexistence of cessation and, by implication, of arising and stasis. In the preceding, Nāgārjuna emphasizes that for an inherently existent entity to cease to exist would be for it to inherently exist and not exist. In the subsequent verse, he points out that it makes no sense for a nonexistent thing to cease to be, just as it makes no sense to behead someone a second time:

Kārikā VII.31

असतोऽपि न भावस्य निरोध उपपद्यते।
न द्वितीयस्य शिरसच्छेदनं विद्यते यथा॥३१॥

asato ’pi na bhāvasya nirodha upapadyate |
na dvitīyasya śirasaś chedanaṃ vidyate yathā ||31||

若法是無者 是即無有滅
譬如第二頭 無故不可斷

ruò fǎ shì wú zhě shì jí wú yǒu miè
pì rú dì èr tóu wú gù bù kě duàn

|དངོས་པོ་མེད་པར་གྱུར་པ་ལའང་||འགག་པ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ|
|མགོ་གཉིས་པ་ལ་ཇི་ལྟར་ནི||གཅད་དུ་མེད་པ་དེ་བཞིན་ནོ||

| dṅos po med par gyur pa la’aṅ | | ’gag pa ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |
| mgo gñis pa la ji ltar ni | | gcad du (6)med pa de bźin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 31 - The cessation of an unreal existing entity is also not possible. It is as if the severance of a second head (of a person) is inconceivable.

JONES (Skt):
[31] In addition, the cessation of a not-truly-existing entity is not tenable, just as a second beheading of a person does not occur.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The cessation of an unreal existent is also not appropriate, just as a second beheading [of a person] is not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
And the cessation of a being that does not exist does not take place,
just as a second beheading does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
31. Even the non-existence of Reality, has begun to be existent,
Even the denial of existent everything can be possible,
The highest one can never be included into the second-class levels at all.
The perfect destruction can be recognized in such a situation.

STRENG (Skt):
31. Even more, cessation of a non-real existing entity is not possible. Just as there is no second decapitation!

ROBINSON (Skt):
Neither is the extinction of an unreal existent a fact, just as the cutting off of a second head is not a fact.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v32 If a dharma is non-existent
Then there is no cessation
Just as, not having a second head
You cannot out it off.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Cessation is not possible also in what is not a thing. This is similar to how there is no cutting off a second head. [i.e. a person cannot be beheaded twice]

DOCTOR (Tb):
A thing that does not exist
Cannot have a cessation,
Just as it is impossible
To cut off a second head. [VII.31]

GARFIELD (Tb):
31. Moreover, for a nonentity,
Cessation would be untenable.
Just as a second beheading
Cannot be performed.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
31. Moreover, for a nonexistent entity
Cessation would be untenable.
Just as a second head
Cannot be cut off.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The cessation of an unreal existent is also not appropriate, just as a second beheading [of a person] is not evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/32 If a dharma is non-existent, there is no characteristic of cessation. It is like a second head or a third hand - not having them, you cannot cut them off.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna'scriticism so far has been confined to arising, stasis and ceasing metaphysically conceived as events in themselves. In the present contexts, he returns to the criticism of the cessation of real existents (satah bhavasya), similar to the criticism of the real existents in Chapter I. Neither existence or nonexistence, nor a combination of both, are acceptable to him.

Kārikā VII.32

न स्वात्मना निरोधोऽस्ति निरोधो न परात्मना।
उत्पादस्य यथोत्पादो नात्मना न परात्मना॥३२॥

na svātmanā nirodho ’sti nirodho na parātmanā |
utpādasya yathotādo nātmanā na parātmanā ||32||

法不自相滅 他相亦不滅
如自相不生 他相亦不生

fǎ bù zì xiàng;xiāng miè tā xiàng;xiāng yì bù miè
rú zì xiàng;xiāng bù shēng tā xiàng;xiāng yì bù shēng

།འགག་པ་རང་གི་བདག་ཉིད་ཀྱིས། །ཡོད་མིན་འགག་པ་གཞན་གྱིས་མིན། །ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེ་བ་རང་དང་ནི། །གཞན་གྱིས་སྐྱེད་པ་མ་ཡིན་བཞིན།

| ’gag pa raṅ gi bdag ñid kyis | | yod min ’gag pa gźan gyis min |
| ji ltar skye ba raṅ daṅ ni | | gźan gyis skyed pa ma yin bźin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 32 - There is no cessation by itself or by another entity. It is just as the origination of origination does not arise by itself or by another.

JONES (Skt):
[32] Cessation does not cease because of itself nor because of something else, just as the arising of arising is not because of itself or because of something else.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
There is no cessation by itself or by another entity, just as the arising of arising is neither by itself nor by another.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
There is no cessation on account of itself or on account of another,
just as the arising of arising is not out of itself or out of another.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
32. Without the self-mind, the self-regulation does never exist,
And the self-regulation is never also the same as the objective mind.
What kind of appearance does belong to the appearance?
The appearance is never the subjective mind, or the objective mind.

STRENG (Skt):
32. There is no cessation by means of itself; nor cessation by something other than itself; Just as there is no origination of origination by itself nor by another.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v33 A dharma does not cease by virtue of its own marks,
Nor by the marks of something else.
Just as there is no arising from own marks
Nor arising from the marks of another.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Cessation does not exist by its own self, nor does cessation [exist] by something else. This is like how what has been born is not given birth to by itself or another

DOCTOR (Tb):
Cessation is neither brought about
By itself nor by anything else,
Just as arising is not produced
By itself or something else. [VII.32]

GARFIELD (Tb):
32. Cessation does not cease by means of itself.
Nor does it cease by means of another.
Just as arising cannot arise from itself
Or from another arising.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
32. Cessation does not exist through itself.
Nor does it exist through another.
Just as arising is given rise to
Neither by itself nor by another.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
There is no cessation by itself or by another entity, just as the arising of arising is neither by itself nor by another.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/33 As previously explained in relation to the mark of arising; arising does not produce itself, nor does it arise from something else. To say that it arises out of its own substance would be incorrect, for everything is produced by causal conditions, and just as a finger tip is unable to touch itself, so arising cannot produce itself. Arising from some other source is also wrong, and why? When arising has not yet occurred, there should be no arising from anything else. Since there is no such arising, there is no self-substance, and since there is no self-substance there is likewise no other, thus arising from another is incorrect. The dharma of cessation is also like this: there is no cessation by own marks or by marks of others.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is the final criticism of the identity and non-identity theories as applied to the idea of cessation (nirodha). It is comparable to the criticism of arising (utpada) presented at VII. 12.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

32. This verse has an exact parallel in VII: 25. Again, Nāgārjuna recalls the uncomfortable choice between a trivially begged question and a vicious regress presented originally in the context of the discussion of arising and recalled in the discussion of stasis. The argument applies, mutatis mutandis, to cessation. The conclusion of this trio of arguments is that we cannot conceive of any of the three characteristics of dependent arising as self-grounded. All must be understood dependently and hence as empty.

Kārikā VII.33

उत्पादस्थितिभङ्गानामसिद्धेर्नास्ति संस्कृतम्।
संस्कृतस्याप्रसिद्धौ च कथं सेत्स्यत्यसंस्कृतम्॥३३॥

utpādasthitibhaṅgānām asiddher nāsti saṃskṛtam |
saṃskṛtasyāprasiddhau ca kathaṃ setsyaty asaṃskṛtam ||33||

生住滅不成 故無有有為
有為法無故 何得有無為

shēng zhù miè bù chéng gù wú yǒu yǒu wéi
yǒu wéi fǎ wú gù hé dé;děi;de yǒu wú wéi

|སྐྱེ་དང་གནས་དང་འཇིག་པ་དག||མ་གྲུབ་ཕྱིར་ན་འདུས་བྱས་མེད|
|འདུས་བྱས་རབ་ཏུ་མ་གྲུབ་པས||འདུས་མ་བྱས་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་འགྲུབ||

| skye daṅ gnas daṅ ’jig pa dag | ma grub phyir na ’dus byas med |
| ’dus byas rab tu ma grub pas | | ’dus ma (7)byas ni ji ltar ’grub |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 33 - As the establishment of origination, duration and cessation is not possible there is no created realm. Without the establishment of the created realm, how then will the uncreated realm come about?

JONES (Skt):
[33] Because arising, enduring, and cessation cannot be established, there is nothing conditioned. And when the conditioned cannot be established, how can the unconditioned be established?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
With the non-establishment of arising, duration, and destruction, the conditioned does not exist. With the non-establishment of the conditioned, how could there be the unconditioned?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
With the nonestablishment of arising, duration, and cessation, conditioning does not exist.
Where there is no establishment of conditioning, how will the unconditioned be proved?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
33. Appearance, continuity, and distraction,
This world does never exist as some thing unfinished.
In this world there is anything unfinished actually,
How is it possible for unfinished world will be finished in future?

STRENG (Skt):
33. Because the existence of production, duration, and cessation is not proved, there is no composite product (samskrta); And if a composite product is not proved, how can a non-composite product (asamskrta) be proved?

ROBINSON (Skt):
Because arising, abiding, and perishing are not established, there is no conditioned; since the conditioned is not established, how can the unconditioned be established?

BOCKING (Ch):
7v34 Arising, abiding and ceasing not being established,
There is consequently no activity
Since there are no active dharmas
How can there be inactive ones?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Because birth and remaining and perishing are not established, there is no conditioned. Because the conditioned is utterly unestablished, how can the unconditioned be established?

DOCTOR (Tb):
As arising, abiding, and cessation are not established,
There is nothing that is conditioned.
Since the conditioned lacks any establishment,
How could the unconditioned be established? [VII.33]

GARFIELD (Tb):
33. Since arising, ceasing, and abiding
Are not established, there are no compounded things.
If all compounded things are unestablished,
How could the uncompounded be established?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
33. Since arising, enduring, and ceasing
Do not exist, there are no produced things.
If no produced things exist,
How could the unproduced exist?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
With the non-establishment of arising, duration, and destruction, the conditioned does not exist. With the non-establishment of the conditioned, how could there be the unconditioned?

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Arising, abiding, and ceasing do not exist,
And therefore there are no composite things.
Since composite things are utterly nonexistent,
How could anything noncomposite exist? (33)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/34 You earlier stated that activity existed because of the marks of arising, abiding and ceasing. It is because of activity that there is inactivity. We have now shown by reasoned investigation that these three marks are untenable, so how can you say that there is activity? As we said before, there exist no dharmas without marks. Since there are no active dharmas, how can there be inactive dharmas? The characteristics of the inactive are non-arising, non-abiding and non-ceasing.

Stopping of the marks of activity is what is meant by 'the characteristics of inactivity'. The inactive has no special marks of its own; the marks of the inactive are contingent upon these three marks. For example, heat is the mark of fire, hardness is the mark of earth, and coldness is the mark of water, but the inactive is not like this.

Question: If these (marks of) arising, abiding and ceasing are absolutely non-existent, how can you speak their names in this treatise? Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Arising (utpada), stasis (sthiti), and destruction (bhanga), as explained by the metaphysicians, would not establish their conception of the "conditioned" (samskrta). If the "conditioned", so conceived, is not established, indeed there cannot be a similarly formulated conception of the "unconditioned" (asamskrta). One very significant fact that cannot escape a careful scrutiny of the contents of this entire chapter is that, while Nagarjuna has specifically criticized the three kinds of events (arising, stasis, and ceasing), he has made no criticism whatsoever of decay (jara). In fact, at VII.24, decay and death (jara-marana) were used as arguments for the rejection of stasis (sthiti). In short, the Buddha's own conceptions of arising (uppada), ceasing (vaya, nirodha), change of what has remained (thitassa annathatta), decay (jara), impermanence (anicatta) have been left intact. These have no room for a substantial entity (an atman, a svabhava) and are indeed compatible with the Buddha's famous doctrine of non-substantiality (anatta). There could be no reason why a philosopher of Nagarjuna's calibre could not distinguish the empirical nature of the Buddha's analysis of the "characteristics of the dispositionally conditioned" (sankhatassa sankhata-lakkhanani) from the metaphysical character of the ideas expressed by the interpreters of the Abhidharma.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

33. That is, arising, abiding, and ceasing are not entities at all - they are mere relations. Since these fundamental attributes of dependently arisen phenomena are empty of inherent existence, what could have inherent existence?

Kārikā VII.34

यथा माया यथा स्वप्नो गन्धर्वनगरं यथा।
तथोत्पादस्तथा स्थानं तथा भङ्ग उदाहृतम्॥३४॥

yathā māyā yathā svapno gandharvanagaraṃ yathā |
tathotpādas tathā sthānaṃ tathā bhaṅga udāhṛtam ||34||

如幻亦如夢　如乾闥婆城
所說生住滅　其相亦如是

rú huàn yì rú mèng rú qián tà pó chéng
suǒ shuì shēng zhù miè qí xiàng;xiāng yì rú shì

|རྨི་ལམ་ཇི་བཞིན་སྒྱུ་མ་བཞིན།།དྲི་ཟའི་གྲོང་ཁྱེར་ཇི་བཞིན་དུ།
|དེ་བཞིན་སྐྱེ་དང་དེ་བཞིན་གནས།།དེ་བཞིན་དུ་ནི་འཇིག་པ་གསུངས།།

| rmi lam ji bźin sgyu ma bźin | | dri za'i groṅ khyer ji bźin du |
| de bźin skye daṅ de bźin gnas | | de bźin du ni 'jig pa gsuṅs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 34 - It is like an illusion, a dream, or an imaginary city in the sky. In such a way, (the concepts of) origination, duration, and cessation have been described.

JONES (Skt):
[34] Like an illusion, or a dream, or the castle in the sky of the Gandharvas (heavenly musicians), so have arising, endurance, and cessation been explained.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
As an illusion, a dream, a city of the *gandharvas*, so have arising, endurance and destruction been exemplified.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
As illusion, as dream, as an imaginary city in the sky,
so have arising, endurance, and destruction been illustrated.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
34. For example the Supernatural Power, for example a dream,
A fantastic city in the sky, called Gandharva, for example.
Similarly in the case of appearance, similarly in the case of stable situations,
And similarly a very big distraction has been spoken as a rumor.

STRENG (Skt):
34. As a magic trick, a dream or a fairy castle. Just so should we consider origination, duration, and cessation.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Like an illusion, like a dream, like a fairy castle, thus is arising, thus is abiding, thus is perishing declared to be.

BOCKING (Ch):
7v35 Like an illusion, like a dream
Like a Gandharva-city;
The arising, abiding and ceasing of which we speak
Have marks such as these.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Like a dream, like a magician's illusion, like a city of gandharvas, likewise birth and likewise remaining, likewise perishing are taught.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Like a dream, like an illusion,
Like a city of scent-eaters—
This is how arising, abiding,
And cessation are taught to be. [VII.34]

GARFIELD (Tb):
34. Like a dream, like an illusion,
Like a city of Gandharvas,
So have arising, abiding,
And ceasing been explained.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
34. Like a dream, like an illusion,
Like a city of gandharvas,
So have arising, enduring,
And ceasing been explained.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
As an illusion, a dream, a city of the *gandharvas*, so have arising, endurance and destruction been exemplified.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Like a dream, like an illusion,
Like a city of gandharvas,
That's how birth and that's how living,
That's how dying are taught to be. (34)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

7/35 The characteristics of arising, abiding and ceasing are not fixed and real. Unenlightened people with their voracious attachments assert that they are fixed and real, so saints and sages, out of pity and compassion and a desire to bring to an end their perverted views, revert to using those terms to which people are attached. Though the expressions are the same, their minds are different. To speak thus of arising, abiding and ceasing should not deserve criticism, just as the acts of an illusionist should not be censured, because of his motive. There should be no feelings of grief or joy in this regard; one should simply see with one's eyes and that is all, just as one should not seek in the real world for something seen only in a dream, and just as, for example, a Gandharva-city, manifesting with the sunrise is not real, but merely a conventional designation which soon ceases to be. 'Arising', 'abiding' and 'ceasing' are also like this. The unenlightened man differentiates them as existents; the sage investigates and finds them untenable.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If the analysis of the contents of the present chapter is correct, then there could be no question that the illusory character as exemplified by "dream" and "the city of the gandharvas" is appplicable only to the metaphysical ideas of arising, stasis and ceasing as presented by the interpreters of the Abhidharma, and not to any one of the concepts of arising, ceasing, decay, change, and impermanence formulated by the Buddha and accepted by Nagarjuna himself.

The Buddha utilized the similies of foam (phena), bubble (bubbula), mirage (marici), trunk of a plantain tree (kadali), and illusion (maya) in order to illustrate the non-substantiality of the five aggregates (S 3.142). Nagarjuna is here using comparable similies for the same purpose. A careless applicaton of these similies to explain all forms of ideas, whether substantialist or non-substantialist, has given rise to enormous misunderstandings relating to the Buddhist doctrine.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

34. This chapter thus brings the first principal section of *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā* to a close, drawing together the threads spun in the earlier chapters to produce a thorough demonstration of the emptiness of the conventional phenomenal world. Having demonstrated the emptiness of conditions and their relations to their effects, change and impermanence, the elements, the aggregates, (fn 56. Sometimes translated as "heaps," or "collections." These are the groups of more basic phenomena into which complex phenomena such as persons are decomposed in analysis. The decomposition is in principle bottomless - bundles of bundles of bundles.... See Chapters III and IV.) and characteristics and their bases - in short, of all the fundamental Buddhist categories of analysis and explanation - Nāgārjuna has now considered the totality they determine - dependent arising itself and the entire dependently arisen phenomenal world - arguing that dependent arising and what is dependently arisen are themselves empty of inherent existence.

This is a deep result. It again presages the doctrine of the emptiness of emptiness that is made explicit in Chapter XXIV, and it develops further the theme explored in Chapter I, namely, that when from the Madhyamika perspective one asserts that a thing is empty or that it is dependently arisen, one is not contrasting their status with the status of some other things that are inherently existent. Nor is one asserting that they are *merely* dependent on some more fundamental independent thing. Nor is one asserting that instead of having an independent essence things have as their essence dependence or emptiness, either or both of which exist in some other way. Rather, as far as one analyzes, one finds only dependence, relativity, and emptiness, and their dependence, relativity, and emptiness.

But this is not to say either that emptiness, dependent arising or conventional phenomena are nonexistent - that they are hallucinations. Indeed it is to say the opposite. For the upshot of this critical analysis is that existence itself must be reconceived. What is said to be "like a dream, like an illusion" is their existence in the mode in which they are ordinarily perceived/conceived - as inherently existent. Inherent existence simply is an incoherent notion. (fn 57. Compare Wood (1994), who misses the structure of this simile. The respect in which dependently arisen things are like a dream is this: They exist in one way (as empty) and appear to exist in another (as inherently existent). Just as dreams and mirages exist in one way (as illusions) and appear to exist in another (as objects of perception, or as water). But dreams and mirages are real dreams and mirages. So this verse should not be interpreted as asserting the complete nonexistence of all phenomena.) The only sense that "existence" can be given is a conventional, relative sense. And in demonstrating that phenomena have exactly that kind of existence and that dependent arising has exactly that kind of existence, we recover the existence of phenomenal reality in the context of emptiness. In the next major section, comprising Chapters VIII through XIII, Nāgārjuna addresses the emptiness of the subject of experience.

Chapter VIII

कर्मकारकपरीक्षा अष्टमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀作作者品第八(十二偈)

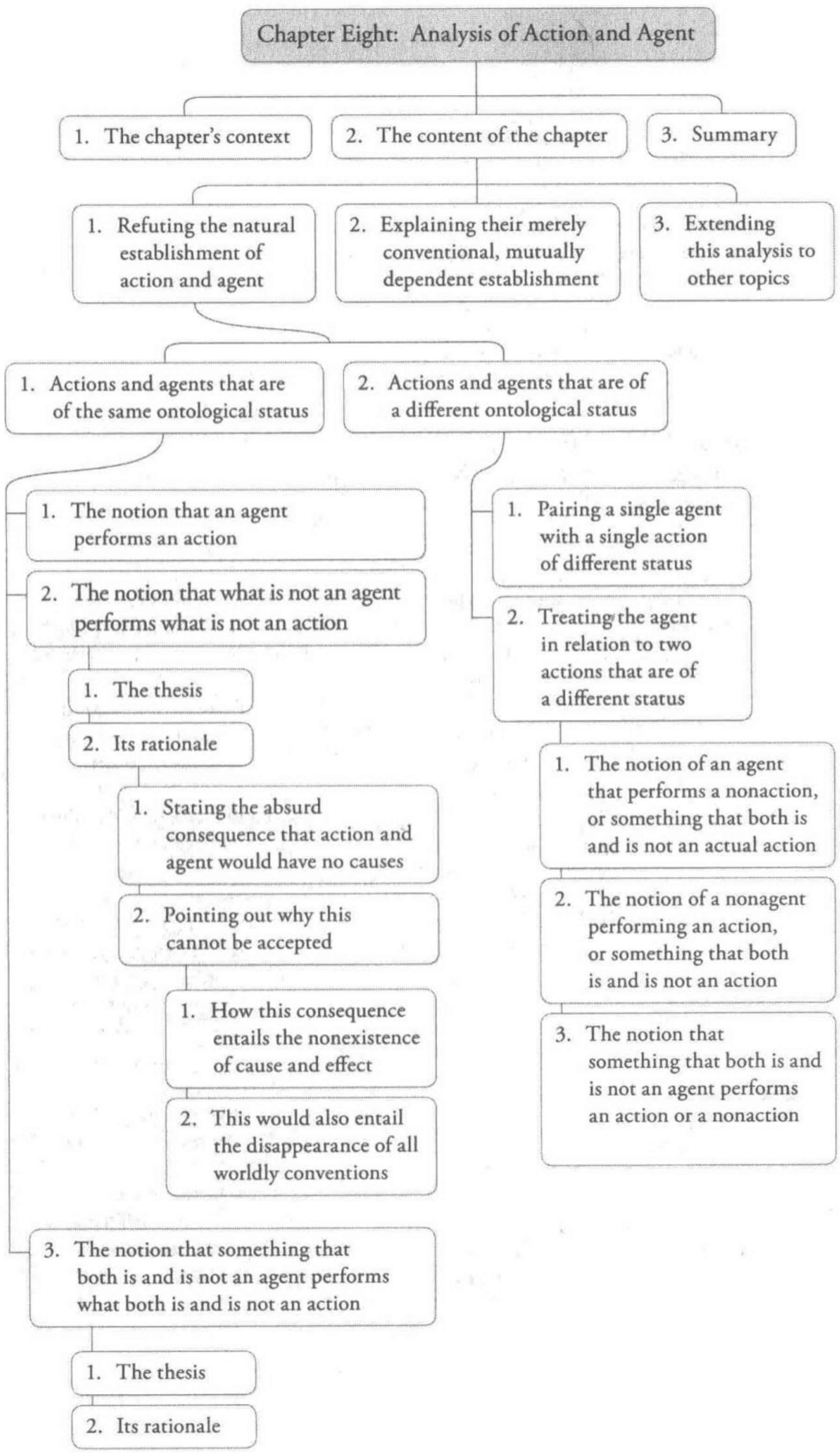
།བྱེད་པ་པོ་དང་ལས་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བརྒྱད་པའོ།།

karmakārakaparīkṣā nāma prakaraṇam aṣṭamaṃ ||

Chapter VIII: Examination of the Agent and Action

Chapter VIII

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are in the section of the text explaining the refutation of the proof of the existence of the self of phenomena, and having completed the first two parts of that section, which were the refutation of the existence of the defilements and the refutation of the existence of the arising, ceasing, and enduring of the characteristics, we are now in the third part of that section which is the refutation of the existence of the agent and action.

EXPLANATION:

Here some argue that produced phenomena such as consciousness exist inherently, because their cause—agent and action—exists. They point out that the teacher also says:

The person driven by ignorance assembles meritorious dispositions, nonmeritorious dispositions and unshakable dispositions. [*Salistambha-sutra, mDo sde* tsha 120a]

The agent of action, his action, and its effect—such things as consciousness— are thus presented.

The refutation of this statement has three parts: the refutation of agent and action existing inherently, the mode of positing action and agent conventionally, and applying the argument to other phenomena.

SUMMARY:

So it should be ascertained that if actions and agents were not merely conceptually posited as existent, and if instead were inherently existent **[206]** as they are taken to be, no agent or action would be tenable, and it should be understood that they exist merely in mutual dependence.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER VIII - Examination of the Doer and the Deed

This chapter brings to sharp focus the Buddhist conceptions of the doer (karaka) and his deed (karma) in order to correctly understand the workings of the dharmas in the realm of created elements. In discussing the two concepts, Nagarjuna introduces the metaphysical notion of a thing in its finished or completed state as well as its unfinished or incompleted state and attempts to illustrate the various possible conditions expressible and assignable with respect to the doer and his deed. But all these conditions, which are taken up in turn, are untenable. The ultimate standpoint is that of the dynamics of relational structure which occurs in Verse 12 and which is an important link with the Madhyamika Credo. The final verse speaks of the various other phenomena which can be examined similarly as that of the doer and his deed, thus projecting into and anticipating the next two chapters which discuss, respectively, the former or antecedent state of an entity and the relationship between fire and wood.

In looking over the verses it would be worth noting that Candrakirti, in reference to the initial verse, discusses an interesting contrast between the completed and incompleted states of the doer and his deed. It illustrates the two alternatives in which these terms are related as follows:

The completed state is accompanied by function while the incompleted state is not. Yet, in discussing either the doer or the deed, the function represents a third concept. And furthermore, as the first verse below clearly indicates, the status of any entity in a completed or incompleted state cannot issue forth another entity.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

8. *Action and agent* (*karma-karaka*). While "dependently arisen (*pratityasamutpanna*) phenomena imply a process of natural occurence "unconditioned by dispositional tendencies" (*asamskrta*) on the part of human beings, "dispositionally conditioned" (*samskrta*) phenomena are the results of human deliberations (*samskara)* or actions (*karma*). For this reason, after clarifying the notions of the "conditioned" and the "unconditioned,'' it was natural for Nagarjuna to take a look at the notions of action (*karma*) and agent (*karaka*). If these two were found to be real in a substantialist sense, then the lengthy analysis of "conditioned" phenomena in the previous chapter would appear faulty.

Therefore, Nagarjuna begins with a substantial agent (*sadbhuta karaka*) who performs a substantially existing action (*sadbhuta karma*) and his analysis demonstrates that such an agent as well as such an action, in fact, logically lead to a denial of action (*kriya*), agent (*kartr*) as well as a cause (*karana*).

Verse VIII. 5 represents an unequivocal assertion on the part of Nagarjuna that such a substantialist view not only leads to the denial of action, etc., but also to an abandoning of discriminations and distinctions such as good (*dharma*) and bad (*adharma*) that are so relevant to the Buddha's conception of fruits (*phala*) of life, both worldly (= heavenly, *svarga*) and ultimate (= freedom from suffering, *moksa*). Not only the goal or fruit of life, but also the path that leads thereto or all the actions that produce such fruits, would thereby be rendered useless or meaningless (*nairarthakyam).*

The statement at VIII.12 that both action and agent are dependently (*pratitya*) arisen and that there is no other perceivable manner in which these could be established (*nanyat pasyamah siddhikaranam*) stands as an eloquent testimony to Nagarjuna's vindication of the empirical standpoint of the Buddha and of early Buddhism.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Actors

Real actors do not perform real acts
Nor unreal actors unreal acts.
Real actors are inactive;
Real acts need no actors.

Real actors do not perform unreal acts
Nor unreal actors real acts.
Unreal acts and unreal actors
Need no causes.

No causes –
No causality.
No causality –
No activity, actors or performance.
No performance -
No good and bad.
No good and bad -
No fruits of good and bad.
No fruits of good and bad –
No way to heaven,
No way to freedom.

Unreal real actors
Do not perform real unreal acts:
Reality and unreality
Cancel each other out.

Actors depend on acts
And acts depend on actors -
I cannot see it otherwise.

When acts and actors vanish,
You understand clinging
And everything else.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

8. Action and the One Who Acts

Here Nagarjuna draws out the impossibility of our actions if all things are self-existent. The analysis is straightforward: if a person is self-existent, he or she could not change, but any type of action is by definition always a change - so the action and person must be distinct, with the action having no agent and the person no activity (vv. 1-2). An actor who is not real (self-existent) cannot perform a real act, and so any alleged act would be without a cause; the actor, being unreal, would also not have a real cause (v. 3). Indeed, there would be no action or actor if a metaphysics of self-existence prevailed (v. 4). But such a metaphysics clearly conflicts with what we see in the world and so cannot be accepted. (There would also be no real actor since action is not real under an emptiness metaphysics [SS 38], but at least this metaphysics allows change and interaction.) Verses 5-6 draw the conclusion relevant to the Buddhist soteriological goal of liberation: religiously propitious actions would be impossible.

Notice that verses 1 and 8 only together cover the basic four possibilities of a truly existing actor, a non-truly existing actor, a truly existing act and a non-truly existing act. In Nagarjuna's analysis, neither type of actor can produce either type of act - for if the act is real it exists in its own right and is not produced, and a non-truly existing act is not real and so is not produced. So too, if the actor is real, he or she is permanent and so cannot act since that is a type of change; and if the actor is not real, he or she does not exist and so there is nothing real to change.

Verses 12-13 set forth the position that the concepts of "actor" and "action" are intertangled, and so neither can be established as an independently real entity. So too, as discussed below and in *Overturning the Objections* neither could establish the existence of the other. In the last sentence, this analysis is expanded as a model for all entities in a similar situation.

8

An Examination of Actors and Actions

In the Sutras of the Mother, the Buddha taught:

No actor is perceptible and no action is perceptible, either.

IN THIS CHAPTER, Nagarjuna will prove the validity of this statement with logical reasoning.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to those who thought that composite things truly exist because the actors and actions that produce them truly exist. In order to demonstrate to these people that their belief was flawed, Nagarjuna had to examine actors and actions and demonstrate that they do not truly exist after all.

The way to analyze actors and actions is to examine the possible ways they could exist in relation to each other. If they do exist, do they exist sequentially or simultaneously? They cannot exist sequentially, because, first, the actor cannot exist before the action. If the actor did exist before and therefore independent of the action, then there would be a performer of an action even when the action was not being performed. For example, if the action was to write a letter and the actor was the letter writer, then there would be a letter writer who did not perform any action of writing a letter. Furthermore, the action cannot exist before and independent of the actor, for if it did, it would be an action without an actor performing it, which would be impossible. Since the actor can exist only if there is an action, but the action can exist only if there is an actor, they exist only in mutual dependence, and therefore they have no nature of their own. They do not truly exist.

Then one might ask, “I can see why the actor can’t exist before the action and why the action can’t exist before the actor, but why can’t they exist at the same time?” The reason they cannot is that if they did, and each had its own inherent nature, there would not be any connection between them—they would be two independent things. To say that things exist inherently means that they do not exist in dependence upon each other. Here, though, the only reason we can say there is an actor is because there is some action, and the only reason we can say there is an action is because there is some actor. They have a relationship in which each is the cause of the other; they are dependent upon each other for their existence. This is why they cannot exist simultaneously as independent entities—if they did, they would not have that relationship of mutual dependence. Like a horse and a cow, each would be able to go its own way without any effect on the other at all.

We can put this in a form of a logical reasoning by saying: Neither an actor nor an action has any nature of its own, because for an actor to exist there must be an action, but that action can exist only in dependence upon the actor herself. Since they can exist only in mutual dependence, they do not truly exist.

Thus, actors and actions do not truly exist because they cannot exist independent of each other. They do, however, exist as dependently arisen mere appearances that manifest due to the coming together of causes and conditions. To explain this, Nagarjuna writes in verse twelve:

An actor exists in dependence upon an action,
An action exists in dependence upon an actor,
And apart from that,
No reason for their existence can be seen.

It is very good for us to know the root verses of this text, as opposed to merely receiving a general explanation of their meaning, because then we can be certain of what the text actually says. In fact the Sanskrit version of this text exists, as does the Tibetan translation, and now there are translations into English and other languages. If you like, you can compare these different versions in order to gain a better understanding of their meaning. To have at least one version to refer to helps us to have a good and stable understanding of what this text is about.

There are three ways of understanding actors and the karmic actions that they perform. When explanations are given to beginners about karma and the actors who perform karmic actions, these things are explained as if they really exist. We have to understand, though, that this is from the perspective of no analysis, the perspective of just taking appearances to be real, without analyzing them. The next step is to analyze with precise knowledge, and when we do that, then we see, as we have done here, that actors and actions are not real, that they do not really exist at all. The ultimate understanding is that the true nature of actors and actions is beyond any conceptual notion of them, whether it be a thought that they exist or that they do not exist. Their actual nature transcends both of those concepts, and this third stage presents the ultimate way to understand reality. It is important for us to distinguish these three stages of no analysis, slight analysis, and thorough analysis, because by doing so it becomes clear that there are no contradictions in the Buddha’s teachings. At the same time, our respect for the Buddha’s skill in presenting teachings of gradually increasing levels of subtlety and profundity will grow.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter VIII

कर्मकारकपरीक्षा अष्टमं प्रकरणम्।

karmakārakaparīkṣā nāma prakaraṇam aṣṭamaṃ ||

中論觀作作者品第八(十二偈)

zhōng lùn guān zuò zuò zhě pǐn dì bā (shí èr jié;jì)

|བྱེད་པ་པོ་དང་ལས་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བརྒྱད་པའོ||

| byed pa po daṅ las brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa brgyad pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER VIII - Examination of the Doer and the Deed

JONES (Skt):
8. Action and the One Who Acts

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Action and the Agent

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
8. Analysis of Action and Agent

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[8] Examination of the Fusion between Action and Conduct (13 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
The Agent Subject and his Doing

STRENG (Skt):
Section 8 - An Analysis of the Product (Karma) and the Producer (action and agent) In 13 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
8. the act and the agent.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 8 Contemplation of Deed and Doer 12 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Act and Actor

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER VIII - Analysis of Action and Agent

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter VIII: Examination of the Agent and Action

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER VIII - Examination of the Agent and Action

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Eight - Examination of Action and Agent

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 8: AN EXAMINATION OF ACTORS AND ACTIONS

PINGALA COMMENTARY

8/0 Question: Doing, the doer, and the deed which he performs, manifestly exist. Karmic recompense exists by virtue of the combination of these three elements, so there must be a doer and a deed.

Reply: In chapter after chapter above, we have negated all dharmas, with nothing remaining. The three marks, for example, have been negated, and since the three marks do not exist, there are no active dharmas. Since active (dharmas) do not exist there are no non-active ones, and since there are neither active nor non-active dharmas, there is no doing, and no doer of any dharma whatsoever. If these are active, then they have been negated already, being included in the active. If inactive, they have been negated already being included among the inactive. You should not question this again, yet being deeply immersed in mental attachments, you have raised more questions, to which we must now give more replies:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter IX]

Refutation of realism

You may object that the compound elements of existence (*samskrta dharma*) (fn 1 Topic of a chapter [MMK VII] not included in this translation.) - consciousness and the rest — do exist in fact, it being their nature to exist as compounded; this is because their cause, the agent subject and his doing (*karma- karaka*), exists in fact. As the illustrious one said, 'A human person, o monks, who is in the grip of ignorance develops meritorious qualities or unmeritorious qualities of a special kind', and so on. This passage speaks of the agent subject and his doing and teaches that the consequences of his doing -- consciousness and the other factors (fn 2 The allusion is to the Buddhist paradigm of causality, the cyclical linkage of causal factors in existence: ignorance, character disposition, consciousness, individuality, sense organs, etc., leading to re-birth.) — are compounded. That of which there is a productive agent must itself exist, as, for example, a pot. What does not exist can have no producer, as, for example, a garment made of tortoise hair.

We reply that there would be compounded factors like consciousness if the agent subject and his doing existed as their cause; but they do not. Because

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Eight Examination of Action and the Agent (Karma-karaka pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter VIII Examination of the Agent and Action

The discussion of external phenomena comprised by the first seven chapters of the text leads naturally to a discussion of the subject side of experience, a discussion that occupies the next six chapters. For it might be granted that the phenomenal external world is empty, but argued that it depends for its nominal existence on an inherently existing subject. This idealist tactic, familiar in the West through Berkeley and Hume (and criticized by Kant in the refutation of idealism), was adopted by some (the Cittamatra school) in the history of Buddhist philosophy. We can well imagine an opponent at this stage in the dialectic conceding to Nāgārjuna that external phenomena lack inherent existence and that the dependent arising that characterizes them lacks inherent existence, but that their very emptiness entails their nominal character 'and, hence, some subject capable of engaging in nominal imputation. So the subject as agent must exist.

Kārikā VIII.1

सद्भूतः कारकः कर्म सद्भूतं न करोत्ययम्।
कारको नाप्यसद्भूतः कर्मासद्भूतमीहते॥१॥

LVP 180,10-11 - LVP 191,10-11
sadbhūtaḥ kārakaḥ karma sadbhūtaṃ na karoty ayam |
kārako nāpy asadbhūtaḥ karmāsadbhūtam īhate ||1||

決定有作者 不作決定業
決定無作者 不作無定業

T1564: vol 30, pg 12b14
jué dìng yǒu zuò zhě bù zuò jué dìng yè
jué dìng wú zuò zhě bù zuò wú dìng yè

|བྱེད་པོ་ཡིན་པར་གྱུར་པ་དེ||ལས་སུ་གྱུར་པ་མི་བྱེད་དོ|
|བྱེད་པོ་མ་ཡིན་གྱུར་པ་ཡང་||ལས་སུ་མ་གྱུར་མི་བྱེད་དོ||

Tg tsa 5b7-6a1 - Tg tsa 6a7
|| byed po yin par gyur pa de | | las (6a1)su gyur pa mi byed do |
| byed po ma yin gyur pa yaṅ | | las su ma gyur mi byed do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - A doer in a completed state cannot create a deed in a completed state. Again, a doer in an incompleted state cannot create a deed in an incompleted state.

JONES (Skt):
[1] A truly existing actor does not perform a truly existing action, nor does an actor who does not truly exist perform an action that does not truly exist.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
This really existent agent does not perform a really existent action. Neither is it intended that a really non-existent agent performs a really non-existent action.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
A true agent does not do this true act.
Nor does a true agent attempt a true act.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. The Real Existence, Conduct, and Action,
The Real Existence does never produce this World.
To produce something, is never to produce something abstract at all.
Action does sacrifice itself sometimes for getting some abstract fame.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 An agent subject, actual as such, does not give rise to a product, actual as such. Nor does an agent subject not actual as such realize a product not actual as such.

STRENG (Skt):
1. A real producer does not produce a real product. Even more so, a non-real producer does not seek a non-real product.

BOCKING (Ch):
8v1 If there is a fixed, existent doer
He does not do a fixed deed.
If there is no fixed, existent doer
He does not do a non-fixed deed.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
One who exists as an actor does not do that which exists as an act. One who does not exist as an actor also does not do that which does not exist as an act.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which is an agent does not
Perform something that is an action.
A nonagent does not
Perform a nonaction. [VIII.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. This existent agent
Does not perform an existent action.
Nor does some nonexistent agent
Perform some nonexistent action.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. That which is an agent
Does not perform an existent action.
Nor does that which is not an agent
Perform some nonexistent action.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.1 A truly existent agent does not perform a truly existent action. Nor does a nonexistent agent perform a non-existent action.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

8/1 If there is a fixed, pre-existent doer, and a fixed, existent deed, then there should be no doing. If there is no fixed preexistent doer and no fixed deed, then also there should be no doing, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The verse says the agent subject 'gives rise to' or 'produces' (*karoti*), that is, he is the doer (*karta*). The term agent subject, or producer, is used only of someone who produces something, not of one who does not produce something. One must conceive of such an act of production as the act of an agent who is actual as such (*sadbhuta*) or who is not (*asadbhuta*) or who both is and is not. 'What is produced' — the product, what is done (*karma*) — is the primary object of the agent; it too may have three modes: actual, non-actual or both.

The two themes of this verse are, first, that an agent subject, actual as such — one conjoined with the activity (*kriyayukta*) of agency — does not give rise to a product which is actual as such, that is which is conjoined with the activity of being produced; and, second, that an agent not actual as such - one devoid of the activity (*kriyarahita*) of agency does not give rise to a product which is not actual as such, that is which is devoid of the activity of being produced.

With a view to establishing the first thesis Nagarjuna says

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The examination of the "dispositionally conditioned" (samskrta) naturally led Nagarjuna to another major philosophical problem that has been the subject of much misunderstanding among the Buddhists as well as the non-Buddhists, namely, the doctrine of karma.

In the early discourses, karma and samskara (and, therefore, samskrta) are mutually related. While karmas are said to form samskaras (see M 2.121), samskaras themselves are determinants of karma. The Buddha who denied an eternal soul or self (atman) was often confronted by skeptics who raised the question as to how karmas performed by a "no-self" can affect a person (anattakatani kammani kam (katam) attanam phusissanti, M 3.119; S 3.103). This is not, however, the problem of moral responsibility (karma-phala), which Nagarjuna takes up later in Chapter XVII. The present problem relates mostly to the nature of an action and an agent (karma-karaka). When this latter question was raised in the discourses, very often it is said that there is no substantial agent who is the author of actions. What is generally understood as a substantial being (satta) or person (puggala) is nothing more than a "lump of dispositions" (sankhara-punja, S 1.134), which is another name for the five aggregates (khandha), each receiving its form conditioned by the sankharas (S 3.87; Tsa 2.14 [Taisho 2.11c]). Neither the "lump of dispositions" nor the aggregates were considered to be substantial, that is, having a reality of their own. The "dispositions" (sankhara), which are acquired by the person and, therefore, impermanent, are also responsible for conditioning that personality. Thus, according to early Buddhism, neither the person nor the aggregates (one of which is disposition, sankhara) have any substantial reality. In the first place, the dispositions themselves are impermanent (vayadhamma sankhara, D 2.156) and, secondly, all phenomena, including all persons or aggregates, are non-substantial (sabbe dhamma anatta, M 2.228; S 3.133; A 1.286; [Taisho 2.668])

Yet, when the canonical Abhidharma texts rejected a real self or soul (atta) and listed the various physical and psychological factors that go to constitute the human personality, the interpreters of these physical and psychological factors transgressed the limits of speculation and admitted the real existence of these various factors. Thus came to be the theory of the substantiality of elements propounded by the Sarvastivadins. Therefore, in his attempt to establish the non-substantiality of all elements (dharma-nairatmya), Nagarjuna was compelled to examine the concepts of action (karma) as well as the agent of such action (karaka) in the present section of his treatise (leaving the question regarding moral responsiblity for a detailed discussion at a later and more appropriate time). As explained previously, Nagarjuna realized that the concepts of substantial existence (sat, astitva) as well as absolute non-existence (asat, nastitva) were two extremes to be avoided in any discussion of action and agent.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. Nāgārjuna here announces that, with respect to agency and action as well, he will steer a middle course between inherent existence and complete nonexistence. Neither action nor agent will come out to be an inherently existing entity. Nor will either end up being completely nonexistent.

Kārikā VIII.2

सद्भूतस्य क्रिया नास्ति कर्म च स्यादकर्तृकम्।
सद्भूतस्य क्रिया नास्ति कर्ता च स्यादकर्मकः॥२॥

sadbhūtasya kriyā nāsti karma ca syād akartṛkam |
sadbhūtasya kriyā nāsti kartā ca syād akarmakaḥ ||2||

決定業無作 是業無作者
定作者無作 作者亦無業

jué dìng yè wú zuò shì yè wú zuò zhě
dìng zuò zhě wú zuò zuò zhě yì wú yè

|ཡིན་པར་གྱུར་ལ་བྱ་བ་མེད།|བྱེད་པོ་མེད་པའི་ལས་སུའང་འགྱུར།
|ཡིན་པར་གྱུར་ལ་བྱ་བ་མེད།|ལས་མེད་བྱེད་པ་པོར་ཡང་འགྱུར།|

| yin par gyur la bya ba med | | byed po med pa'i las su'aṅ 'gyur |
| yin pa'aṅ gyur la bya ba med | | las med byed pa por yaṅ 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - When a doer is in a completed state, there will be no doing and also a deed will be without a doer. Likewise, when a deed is in a completed state, there will be no doing and also a doer will be without a deed. - Note: The concept of a function or doing is introduced here to set up a triadic relationship, i.e., with respect to doer (karaka, kartr), doing (kriya), and the deed (karma).

JONES (Skt):
[2] A truly existing entity has no activity; there would also be action without an actor, and an actor would exist without an action.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A really existent entity has no activity. Therefore, acton would be without an agent. A really existent entity has no activity. Therefore, even an agent would be without action.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
There is no activity of a true action and so it would be without an agent.
There is no activity of a true agent and so it would be without action.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. In the Real Existence, Practical Action does never really exist at all.
And Action itself might be different from a person, who actually does the Action directly.
In the Real Existence, Practical Action does never really exist at all.
A person, who acts some thing to accomplish his aim, has possibility that he sometimes does not have any special clear aim at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 If there is no activity of an agent subject who is actual as such, a product would be without a producer. If there is no activity of an agent subject actual as such the agent would be without a product.

STRENG (Skt):
2. There is no producing action of a real thing; if so, there would be a product without someone producing. Also, there is no producing by a real thing; if so, there would be someone producing without something produced.

BOCKING (Ch):
8v2 A fixed deed has no doing,
And such a deed has no doer
A fixed doer has no doing
And a doer also has no deed.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
One who exists has no activity; [something] would also exist as an act without an actor. One who exists has no activity; [something] would also exist as an actor without an act.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which is an agent would have no activity.
There would also be action without an agent.
That which is an action is not performed,
So the agent would be lacking its action. [VIII.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. An existent entity has no activity.
There would also be action without an agent.
An existent entity has no activity.
There would also be agent without action.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. That which is an agent has no activity.
There would then be action without an agent.
That which is an action has no activity.
There would also be agent without action.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.2 A truly existent entity has no activity. Thus, action would be without an agent, and an agent would be without action.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

8/2 If there is a fixed, pre-existent deed, then there should not be any additional doer. Even so (you might argue) there should be a deed apart from the doer - but this is not so. If there is a fixed, pre-existent doer, then there should not be any additional deed. (Perhaps) even so there should be a doer apart from the deed? - but this is not so. Therefore, if you have a fixed doer or a fixed. deed there cannot be doing, and if you have a non-fixed doer and a non-fixed deed then there cannot be doing either, and why? Because from the beginning they never existed. Even an existent doer and existent deed cannot do. How much less a non-existent doer and non-existent deed!

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

2ab *If there is no activity of an agent subject who is actual as such, a product would be without a producer.*

Because what is called an agent subject is essentially conjoined with the activity of agency, only an agent who exists as such conjoined with the activity of agency gives rise to something and receives the name agent or producer. It follows that for one such, who is called agent or producer because of his activity of production, there cannot be another activity by which he gives rise to a product. If, because of the absence of this second activity the agent does not give rise to anything, then a product would be unrelated to an agent, that is, would be without a producer (*akartrka*). But a product is not possible without a producer, it would be like the making of a pot by the son of a barren woman. This being so, if there is no activity of an agent subject who is actual as such, a product would be without a producer.' Because of this unacceptable consequence an agent subject actual as such does not give rise to any product (fn 3 A producer is such only when he is producing; i.e. he must be a producer before he enters into the activity of producing a product. Yet a producer can produce nothing but a product. Therefore he cannot be a producer before he produces a product.).

And now, explaining that an agent does not give rise to a product actual as such, Nagarjuna says

2cd *If there is no activity of an agent subject actual as such the agent would be without a product.*

What is called a product actual as such (*sadbhuta karma*) is essentially conjoined with the activity of being produced. Of such a product, which gets its name from the activity of being produced, there is no second activity by which it would be produced. In this sense there is no activity of being produced

of a product already actual as such. If there is no second activity of being produced then the producer most certainly does not produce a product actual as such. And if he does not produce because there is no second activity of being produced on the part of the product, then the producer of such a product would be without a product (*akarmaka*) — a producer of a non-existing product. But this makes no sense: it is contrary to experience that there could be a perpetrator of an unforgivable deed which has not been perpetrated.

Refutation of idealism

(fn 4 This section refutes the Buddhist (Sarvastivada) view that elements of existence persist even when not actual in space and time; it can also be taken as a critique of views like Plato's theory of forms.)

Having thus established that an agent actual as such does not give rise to a product actual as such, Nagarjuna, expounding how it is that an agent not actual as such (*asadbhuta karaka*) does not give rise to a product not actual as such (*asadbhuta karma*) now says

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is an extremely interesting analysis of the implications as well as the consequences of admitting a really existing entity (sadbhuta), a soul or a self (atman , pudgala) or even a substance (svabhava). The concept of a self (atman) as envisaged in the substantialist traditions, like the Upanisads, is one of pure entity, permanent and eternal, unaffected by the changes taking place in the phenomenal world. It is beyond all forms of duality and multiplicity. The concept of substance, even though rarely defined as a "pure entity," yet partakes of all other characteristics, namely, permanence, eternality, non-duality, and non-multiplicity. This means that any activity, any change in quality, in quantity, in character, or in form would be merely superficial. The real or the essential is eternal. Such implications of the Sarvastivada theory of substance (svabhava) were noted earlier (see Chapter I). If

the cause and effect were to be identical in essence, then their difference becomes superficial. A cause becomes unproductive and would be like a tree stump that remains motionless (vanjha kutattha, D 1.14, 56; S 3.211; M 1.517; avicalita-nityatva, see Kalupahana, Causality, p. 28).

Hence Nagarjuna's statement: "A really existing entity is without activity." This assertion leads to two rather disastrous consequences, especially for the doctrine of karma; either an action (karma) will be rendered agentless (a-kartrka) or an agent (kartr) would be action-less (a-karmaka).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. If the agent were inherently existent, then it would be unchanging. Activity is always a kind of change. So if there were action in the context of an inherently existing agent, the action would be agentless, which would be absurd. Moreover, the agent would be inactive, which would also be absurd. This, of course, is just one more case of Nāgārjuna demonstrating the incoherence of a position that tries both to posit inherently existent, independent entities and then to get them to interact.

Kārikā VIII.3

करोति यद्यसद्भूतोऽसद्भूतं कर्म कारकः।
अहेतुकं भवेत्कर्म कर्ता चाहेतुको भवेत्॥३॥

karoti yady asadbhūto ’sadbhūtaṃ karma kārakaḥ |
ahetukaṃ bhavet karma kartā cāhetuko bhavet ||3||

若定有作者 亦定有作業
作者及作業 即墮於無因

ruò dìng yǒu zuò zhě yì dìng yǒu zuò yè
zuò zhě jí zuò yè jí duò yū;yú;wū wú yīn

།གལ་ཏེ་བྱེད་པོར་མ་གྱུར་པ།།ལས་སུ་མ་གྱུར་བྱེད་ན་ནི།
།ལས་ལ་རྒྱུ་ནི་མེད་པར་འགྱུར།།བྱེད་པ་པོ་ཡང་རྒྱུ་མེད་འགྱུར།།

| gal te byed por ma gyur pa | | las su (2)ma gyur byed na ni |
| las la rgyu ni med par ’gyur | | byed pa po yaṅ rgyu med ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - If a doer in an incompleted state creates a deed in an in-completed state, then (in actuality) the deed will be without a cause and the doer will (in itself) have no cause.

JONES (Skt):
[3] If an actor who does not truly exist performs an action that does not truly exist, then the action would be without a cause, and the actor too would be without a cause.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If a non-existent agent were to perform a non-existent action, the action would be without a cause, and the agent too would be without a cause.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If an untrue agent does an untrue act, the act would be without a cause and the agent would be without a cause.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. When something abstract is produced.
The something abstract, which are products, are Action and Practice.
Something unreasonable can exist as Action,
And a person, who acts, can also exist as someone unreasonable actually.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 If an agent not actual as such gives rise to a product not actual as such then such a product would be uncaused and the agent would be non-causal.

STRENG (Skt):
3. If a non-existent producer would produce a non-real product, The product would be without a causal source and the producer would be without a causal source.

BOCKING (Ch):
8v3 If there were a fixed doer
And a fixed deed
Both the doer and the deed
Would fall into causelessness

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If one who does not exist as an actor did that which does not exist as an act, the act would have no cause; the actor too would have no cause.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If a nonagent were to perform
Unit which is not an action,
The action would have no cause
And the agent would have no cause either. [VIII.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. If a nonexistent agent
Were to perform a nonexistent action,
Then the action would be without a cause
And the agent would be without a cause.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. If that which is not an agent
Were to perform that which is not an action,
Then the action would be without a cause
And the agent would be without a cause.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.3 If a non-existent agent performed a non-existent action, both the action and the agent would be without a cause.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

8/3 If there were a fixed, pre-existent doer and fixed existent deed, and you say that there is a doer who does, then this constitutes causelessness. If there is a doer apart from the deed done, or a deed apart from its doer, then they exist without arising from causal conditions.

Question: What is wrong in saying that both doer and deed exist, without arising from causal conditions? Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

An agent not actual as such is one devoid of the activity of agency. As the activity of agency is the basis (hetu) for the expression agent, an agent not actually producing would be non-causal (*nirhetuka*); and as well a product not actual as such would be uncaused (*nirhetuka*). If we accept the doctrine that things can exist without a causal basis (*hetu*) (fn 5 Either material cause or causal principle in general. This is an attack on the view, held by some Buddhists, that dharmas, the elements of existence, subsist, when not actualized in time, without a material basis and causally inactive.) then, Nagarjuna says, effect and cause and all related concepts would be denied validity.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If one were to accept the view which is contrary to the one mentioned at VIII. 2, that is, a non-existent entity performing a non-existent action, then both agent (kartr) and action (karma) would be rendered cause-less (ahetuka). VIII.2-3 thus turn out to be a clear warning against the universal and indiscriminate application of the examples of "illusion" (maya), "dream" (svapna) and the "city of the gandharvas" (gandharva-nagara), especially in the matter of explaining "emptiness" (sunyata) at VII. 34 and elsewhere.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. However, if agent and action are totally nonexistent, there will be no cause for the action and no justification for calling the agent an agent.

Kārikā VIII.4

हेतावसति कार्यं च कारणं च न विद्यते।
तदभावे क्रिया कर्ता करणं च न विद्यते॥४॥

若墮於無因 則無因無果
無作無作者 無所用作法

།རྒྱུ་མེད་ན་ནི་འབྲས་བུ་དང་།།རྒྱུ་ཡང་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
།དེ་མེད་ན་ནི་བྱ་བ་དང་།།བྱེད་པ་པོ་དང་བྱེད་མི་རིགས།།

hetāv asati kāryaṃ ca kāraṇaṃ ca na vidyate |
tadabhāve kriyā kartā kāraṇaṃ ca na vidyate ||4||

ruò duò yū;yú;wū wú yīn zé wú yīn wú guǒ
wú zuò wú zuò zhě wú suǒ yòng zuò fǎ

| rgyu med na ni ’bras bu daṅ | | rgyu yaṅ ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |
| de med na ni bya ba daṅ | | byed pa po daṅ byed mi rigs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - Without a cause, there can be no effect or an efficient cause. Without these (effect and cause), there can be no functions of doing, doer and deed. - Note: Hetu which is simply cause must be distinguished for karana which is an instrumental or efficient cause, i.e., having a potential. The karana in the second line is used synonymously for karma.

JONES (Skt):
[4] If there is no cause, then an effect and its cause are not found. Without these, activity, an actor, and a means of action are not found.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When a cause does not exist, both the effect and the sufficient condition are not evident. When these are non-existent, activity, agent and performance of action are also not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where the cause does not exist, neither the antecedent cause nor the act to be done occur.
Where these do not exist, the activity, the agent, and the act to be done do not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. There is no special stimulus, and at the same time there is no recognition to be successful, there might be no possibility to succeed, And the factor of success can not be recognized at all.
Non existence of the Real Practice and non existence of a person, who practice it by himself,
The factor of success can not be recognized at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 In the absence of the causal principle there will be no cause and no effect. In their absence there will be no activity, no agent and no means.

STRENG (Skt):
4. If there is no causal source, there is nothing to be produced nor cause-in-general (karana). Then neither do the producing action, the person producing, nor the instrument of production (karana) exist.

BOCKING (Ch):
8v4 If you fall into causelessness
Then there is no cause and no effect.
No doing and no doer
And no dharma of deed involved.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there were no cause, effect and cause would not be evident. If they were non-existent, activity and agent and doing would not be evident.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there is no cause,
Cause and effect become untenable.
Without these, action, agent, and activity
Will all be nonsensical as well. [VIII.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. Without a cause, the effect and
Its cause will not occur.
Without this, activity and
Agent and action are not possible.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. Without a cause, the effect and
The cause would not be possible.
Without this, action,
Agent and instrument would not be possible.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.4 When there is no cause, there is no effect. Without cause or effect, neither action, agent, nor activity appear.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

4ab *In the absence of the causal principle there will be no cause and no effect.*

If we accept the causal principle in general (*hetu*), what is produced in virtue of causality is the effect. What gives rise to the effect may appropriately be called direct cause (*karana*). For example clay is the material cause (*hetu*) of a pot and the pot is the effect. The potter's wheel and so on are the cooperating direct causes. If, however, we assume that there is no causal principle there could be no pot because it would be unrelated to a material basis, like a pot made from the crest- jewel taken from the head of a frog. If there is no pot how could there be a cause of it? So, as Nagarjuna put it, 'In the absence of the causal principle there will be no cause and no effect.' Therefore

4cd *In their absence there will be no activity, no agent and no means.*

'In their absence' means in the absence of cause and effect. What effect would make the activity of an agent conceivable? In which activity would there be an independent agency of the potter? Nor does it make sense that the effective means should be merely the pot having the same nature as the clay. So much for in their absence there will be no activity, no agent and no means.' Therefore

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Further implications of the denial of a cause at VIII. 3 are highlighted here. Not only would it negate an effect (karya) or a sufficient condition (karana), it would also lead to the abandoning of activity, agent as well as action, none of which is acceptable to Nagarjuna.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. Agent, the agent's activity, and the action all depend upon conditions. They are all, therefore, dependently arisen and empty. If, as the opponent would have it, these are inherently existent, there would be no action. But if we think of them as dependent, we can make perfectly good sense of agent, activity and action in interrelation.

Kārikā VIII.5

धर्माधर्मौ न विद्येते क्रियादीनामसंभवे।
धर्मे चासत्यधर्मे च फलं तज्जं न विद्यते॥५॥

dharmādharmau na vidyete kriyādīnām asaṃbhave |
dharme cāsaty adharme ca phalaṃ tajjaṃ na vidyate ||5||

若無作等法 則無有罪福
罪福等無故 罪福報亦無

ruò wú zuò děng fǎ zé wú yǒu zuì fú
zuì fú děng wú gù zuì fú bào yì wú

།བྱ་བ་ལ་སོགས་མི་རིགས་ན། །ཆོས་དང་ཆོས་མིན་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།ཆོས་དང་ཆོས་མིན་མེད་ན་ནི། །དེ་ལས་བྱུང་བའི་འབྲས་བུ་མེད།།

| bya ba la sogs mi rigs na | | chos daṅ chos min yod ma yin |
| chos (3)daṅ chos min med na ni | | de las byuṅ ba'i 'bras bu med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - Without these functions, etc. [doer, deed], there can be no factors (dharma) and non-factors (adharma) of experience. Without factors and non-factors there can be nothing arising out of them.

JONES (Skt):
[5] Without activity, an actor, and a means of action, there are no correct or incorrect actions. And if there are no correct or incorrect actions, effects cannot arise from them.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
With the non-occurrence of activity, etc., good and bad are also not evident. When both good and bad do not exist, a fruit arising from these would also not be evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Neither [action] in accord with the teaching nor [action] not in accord with the teaching occurs in the existence of activity, etc.
The effect does not exist in [action] in accord with the teaching nor in [action] not in accord with the teaching, so it does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. The coexistence of the Universe and the non-Universe are never recognized,
And relating with their Real Practice and so forth, their real situations, and so forth, are not so clear.
Even inside the Universe there is no fact of existence, and even in the outside of the Universe there is no fact of existence at all.
Therefore what are called Results, and what has been born from Results, are not recognized as real existences at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 If activity, agent and means are impossible there would be no right and no wrong. If there is neither good nor ill deed no fruit can arise from them.

STRENG (Skt):
5. If the producing action, etc. do not exist, then neither can the true reality (dharma) nor false reality (adharma) exist. If neither the true reality nor the false reality exists, then also the product (phala) born from that does not exist.

BOCKING (Ch):
8v5 If there are no dharmas of doing,
Then there is no sin or merit
Where there is no sin or merit
No recompense for sin or merit exists either.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If activity etc. did not appear, dharma and adharma would not be evident. If dharma and adharma did not exist, there would be no fruit that comes from them.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If action and so forth are unreasonable,
There can be no Dharma and non-Dharma,
And without Dharma and non-Dharma,
Their effects do not exist either. [VIII.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. If activity, etc., are not possible,
Entities and nonentities are not possible.
If there are neither entities nor nonentities,
Effects cannot arise from them.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. If such things as action were not possible,
The virtuous and vicious would not be possible.
If there were neither the virtuous nor the vicious,
Effects could not arise from them.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.5 Without activity, agent, and action, neither elements nor non-elements of experience appear. Without these, the fruits of these will also not appear.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

5ab *If activity, agent and means are impossible there would be no right and no wrong.*

The thought here is that if Devadatta is an actual agent because, of his own free will, he engages in the activity of refraining from taking life, he gives rise to the activity of refraining from taking life because of a freely chosen purpose and through the appropriate means. In this way a meritorious deed has arisen for him. This can be applied to the remainder of the ten favourable paths of action which are produced by favourable activities and also to the favourable observances laid down such as honouring the triple jewel (fn 6 The Buddha, the (Buddhist) Truth and the community of Buddhist monks), one's mother and father, other worthy people and so on. And in the case of wrongdoing as well, that is the taking of life and so on, the opposite of the favourable paths, it should be emphasized that the consequence will necessarily follow that, if there are no activities, no agents and no means, there are no deeds. If, in this sense, there is no good deed and no ill deed then they can obviously have no moral consequences.

Nagarjuna expounds this saying

5cd *If there is neither good nor ill deed no fruit can arise from them.*

If neither good nor ill deed (*dharmadharma*) exists there could be no fruit, no moral consequences (*phala*), whether desirable or undesirable, born of good and ill deeds. Hence

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Inada's rendering of this verse clearly indicates his faithful adherence to the transcendentalist interpretation of Nagarjuna offered by previous interpreters like Stcherbatsky, Murti, Conze, and most of the Japanese scholars. In spite of Kumarajiva's very clear rendering into Chinese, Inada translates dharma and adharma as factors and non-factors respectively (). While it is true that the term dharma is used in the Buddhist texts, both in an ontological sense (referring to "phenomena") and in a more ethical sense (meaning "good"), there is no evidence at all that the negative term a-dharma was ever used in the former sense. A careful examination of the contexts in which it occurs provides sufficient evidence that the term meant "bad" and, hence synonymous with akusala. Furthermore, of all the terms used to refer to an effect, the term phala occurring in this verse is invariably used in the sense of "fruit," having a moral connotation.

The present verse, therefore, provides unmistakable evidence that Nagarjuna was upholding the moral philosophy advocated by the Buddha in his first discourse-the Dhammacappavattana-sutta-which lays down a middle path between the two extremes, which in its turn is based upon the philosophical middle position presented in the "Discourse to Katyayana ."

The belief in substantial existence or eternalism (atthita , sassata) leads to self-denial (attakilamathanuyoga) and the idea of nihilistic non-existence or annihilationism (n'atthita ,uccheda) contributes to self-indulgence (kamasukhallikanuyoga) (see Introduction). Verses VIII. 3-4 refer to the substantialist and annihilationist views of karma, both of which lead to the abandoning of a moral life (including moral responsibility) as understood by the Buddha. Having spoken of artha (effect, fruit, consequence) in relation to pratyaya (cause, condition) in Chapter I, Nagarjuna is here addressing himself to the question regarding the "fruit of action" (karma-phala), a detailed treatment of this problem being reserved for a later occasion (Chapter XVII). In the present chapter, Nagarjuna's intention is to explain the non-substantiality of the "agent" and the "action," rather than settle the question of moral responsiblity. However, he could not help referring to the "fruits of action," primarily because the metaphysical notions of "agent" and "action" contributed to their very denial.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. If there were no action, then since entities arise from the action of previous events, there would be no entities and no effects. In short, without making sense of the possibility of actions and agency as empty, we can't account for the existence of any phenomena.

Kārikā VIII.6

फलेऽसति न मोक्षाय न स्वर्गायोपपद्यते।
मार्गः सर्वक्रियाणां च नैरर्थक्यं प्रसज्यते॥६॥

phale ’sati na mokṣāya na svargāyopapadyate |
mārgaḥ sarvakriyāṇāṃ ca nairarthakyaṃ prasajyate ||6||

若無罪福報 亦無有涅槃
諸可有所作 皆空無有果

ruò wú zuì fú bào yì wú yǒu niè pán
zhū kě yǒu suǒ zuò jiē kōng wú yǒu guǒ

།འབྲས་བུ་མེད་ན་ཐར་པ་དང་།།མཐོ་རིས་འགྱུར་པའི་ལམ་མི་འཐད།
།བྱ་བ་དག་ནི་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱང་།།དོན་མེད་ཉིད་དུ་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| ’bras bu med na thar pa daṅ | | mtho ris ’gyur pa’i lam mi ’thad |
| bya ba dag ni thams cad kyaṅ | | don med ñid du thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - When there is no effect there will be no way of arriving at liberation or the heavens. For all doings or functions will fall into purposelessness.

JONES (Skt):
[6] If there is no effect, neither the way to release from the cycling of rebirth or to the heavens exists. From this follows the futility of all activity.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When the fruit does not exist, the path of release or of heaven is not appropriate. This would imply the futility of all activity.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where the effect does not exist, the path goes not to heaven and
not to liberation, and the purposelessness of all activities follows.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. Not being grasped by result does not mean being in freedom.
And the situation called “as if it were living in the Paradise”, does not appear at all.
Morals are all belonged to what have been done actually,
And so all actions, which have been done as morals, are never attached by Praja-pati at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 In the absence of moral consequences such as fruition a path leading to heaven or to liberation is unintelligible. It follows that all activities whatsoever are without purpose.

STRENG (Skt):
6. If there is no real product, then there also exists no path to heaven nor to ultimate release. Thus it logically follows that all producing actions are without purpose.

BOCKING (Ch):
8v6 Where there is no recompense for sin or merit,
There is also no nirvana.
And whatever one may do
Is completely vacuous and without effect.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there were no fruit, the path of liberation and higher states would not be appropriate. Also it would follow that all activities are meaningless.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Without such effects, paths to liberation
And to the higher realms do not make sense.
All activities would indeed
End up entirely meaningless. [VIII.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If there are no effects, liberation and
Paths to higher realms will not exist.
So all of activity
Would be without purpose.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If there were no effects, liberation and
Paths to higher realms would not be possible.
The absurd consequence would follow
That all action would be pointless.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.6 If there are no fruits then neither the path nor liberation are intelligible. Thus all intentional activity would be futile.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

8/6 If you fall into causelessness, all dharmas become causeless and effect-less. A dharma which is able to produce is called a 'cause', and the dharma which is produced is called an effect. If these two are non-existent, then because these two do not exist there will be no doing and no doer, and no dharma of deed involved. Also there will be no sin or merit, and because there is no sin or merit there will be no recompense or retribution for sin and merit and thus no path to nirvana. Therefore, there cannot be causeless production.

(12c14) Question: What is wrong in saying that the doer is not fixed, and that he does a non-fixed deed?

Reply: Even if one element is missing, it is impossible to begin a deed. How much more so when both are lacking! It is like an apparition which has its abode in apparent space, existing merely as a designation without any doer or deed.

Question: If there is no doer and no deed, there cannot be anything done, but if there is a doer and there is a deed, there should be doing. Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

6ab *In the absence of moral consequences such as fruition a path leading to heaven or to liberation is unintelligible.*

If there were desirable or undesirable consequences on the lower path (*laukika marga*) which aims at composed insight beyond phenomena through meditation, that is to say, heaven, then the spiritual pursuit of the lower path would be the best means of achieving this and it would include the fruits of renouncing the kinds of action which conduce to a wasted life. And if *nirvāṇa*, understood as liberation, were a fruit of action then with it in view the spiritual pursuit of the higher path (*lokottara marga*), the eightfold path of the wise, would bear fruit. But as there are no fruits of action, in the absence of moral consequences as fruition, a path leading to heaven or to liberation is unintelligible.'

If in this way there is no fruit, what then?

6cd *It follows that all activities whatsoever are without purpose*.

Further, such activities as farming, commerce and governing are taken up with a view to their fruits; all such activities as well, if there are no fruits, will be unintelligible. In this sense it would follow that all activities as such are without purpose. But they are not without purpose. That is why this theory is the source of the poisonous growth of all the fallacies. It denies both heaven and liberation, it is the source from which hell arises and the great troubles which descend on us, it contradicts both the seen and the unseen reasons for things. This being so the thesis that an agent subject who is not actual gives rise to deeds which are not actual is a debased theory and is to be rejected by the wise (fn 7 This sweeping rejection of the non-actual agent because of causal inefficacy, reminds of Aristotle's rejection of the separate, i.e. 'non- actual' existence of Plato's forms. Madhyamika cannot tolerate the claim to existence of anything other than the actual; and, of course, even that claim is merely commonsensical.).

Exhaustion of the formal possibilities

Having in this way established the two theses Nagarjuna now says that an agent subject by nature both actual and non- actual does not give rise to a product which is by nature both actual and non-actual.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Not only is Nagarjuna interested in the "ultimate fruit" (paramartha), i.e., freedom from suffering (moksa), he is also concerned with the fruits (artha, phala) that actions can generate as human beings proceed along the moral path (marga) gradually leading to that "ultimate fruit." Hence his interest in "heaven" (svarga), so often discussed in the "discourses" as the "fruits" enjoyed by the "wayfarer." As far as Nagarjuna is concerned, human actions are rendered "fruitless" or "meaningless" (nir-artha), if one were to adhere to either a theory of eternalism or of annihilationism.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. And all of this has a moral and a soteriological dimension as well. For if there are no acts and no effects, then the practice of morality and of the Buddhist path will make no sense. There would be no point to life if human action is impossible. And again, its impossibility follows straightforwardly from the reification of either agent or action. It is ironic that it is the urge to guarantee more reality and significance for ourselves than emptiness appears to allow that leads to a view of life as perfectly impossible and pointless. That is, though we are led to ascribe inherent, independent existence to ourselves and to the world of phenomena we cherish - in part, in order to assign them the greatest possible importance - this very importance would be completely undermined by such inherent existence and independence. For in that case, all activity and all consequences of activity would be impossible. The resultant life would be static, detached, and utterly meaningless. Only in the context of emptiness - what might appear to be the greatest threat to meaningfulness - can a meaningful life be understood.

Kārikā VIII.7

कारकः सदसद्भूतः सदसत्कुरुते न तत्।
परस्परविरुद्धं हि सच्चासच्चैकतः कुतः॥७॥

kārakaḥ sadasadbhūtaḥ sadasat kurute na tat |
parasparaviruddhaṃ hi sac cāsac caikataḥ kutaḥ ||7||

作者定不定 不能作二業
有無相違故 一處則無二

zuò zhě dìng bù dìng bù néng zuò èr yè
yǒu wú xiàng;xiāng wéi gù yī chǔ zé wú èr

།བྱེད་པ་པོར་གྱུར་མ་གྱུར་པ།།གྱུར་མ་གྱུར་དེ་མི་བྱེད་དེ།
།ཡིན་དང་མ་ཡིན་གྱུར་ཅིག་ལ།།ཕན་ཚུན་འགལ་བས་ག་ལ་ཡོད།།

| byed pa por gyur ma gyur pa | | gyur ma gyur de mi byed de |
| yin daṅ ma yin (4)gyur cig la | | phan tshun ’gal bas ga la yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - A completed-incompleted doer cannot create a completed-incompleted deed. For, how could the mutually conflicting completed and incompleted states co-exist as one?

JONES (Skt):
[7] An actor who is both truly real and not truly real does not perform an action that is both truly and not truly real, for “real” and “unreal” are opposed to each other - how could they exist together simultaneously?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
An agent who is both existent and non-existent does not perform an action that is both existent and nonexistent, for they are self-contradictory. Where can existence and non-existence co-exist?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
A true or untrue agent does not do what is true or untrue, because existence and nonexistence are indeed mutually contradictory.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Doing something is coexistence of the real and the unreal.
But something real and something unreal do not create anything concrete.
Because something real and something unreal are contrasting against with each other,
The Real and the Unreal do never be identified at any place at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 An agent subject both actual and non-actual does not give rise to a product both actual and non-actual. As to exist and not to exist are reciprocally contradictory1 how can they hold of one and the same thing?

STRENG (Skt):
7. And a real-non-real producer does not produce in a real-non-real manner. For, indeed, how can "real" and "non-real," which are mutually contradictory, occur in one place?

ROBINSON (Skt):... Since they are mutually contradictory; where are there both real and unreal in the same place?

BOCKING (Ch):
8v7 A doer, whether fixed or not fixed,
Cannot do two kinds of deeds.
For, since existence and non-existence are mutually opposed,
The two cannot exist together.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
One who exists and does not exist as an actor does not do what exists and does not exist [as an act]. Since existence and non-existence are mutually contradictory in one [thing], where can they exist?

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which both is and is not an agent
Does not perform something that both is and is not.
Since being and not being are incompatible in one thing,
How could this ever be the case? [VIII.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. An existent and nonexistent agent
Does not perform an existent and nonexistent action.
Existence and nonexistence cannot pertain to the same thing.
For how could they exist together?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. That which is and is not an agent
Does not perform that which is and is not an action.
The same thing cannot both be and not be so.
Since they are contradictory, how could it be like that?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.7 An existent non-existent agent does not perform an existent non-existent action for such would be contradictory. Where could existence and nonexistence occur together?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

8/7 A doer, whether fixed or unfixed, cannot perform either fixed or unfixed deeds, and why? Because existence and nonexistence are mutually opposed, and the two cannot exist in one place. Existence is fixed, non-existence is non-fixed, but one person is one entity, so how can he be both existent and nonexistent?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

7ab *An agent subject both actual and non-actual does not give rise to a product both actual and non-actual.*

Here a product both actual and non-actual means a product which is both conjoined with and not conjoined with the activity of being produced. An agent subject who is both actual and non-actual does not give rise to such a product. Because

7cd *As to exist and not to exist are reciprocally contradictory* (fn 8 Parasparaviruddha. One of the many passages explicitly stating the law of non-contradiction.) *how can they hold of one and the same thing?*

That one and the same thing at one and the same time can be both conjoined with the activity of being produced and not so conjoined is clearly nonsensical. Therefore an agent subject actually both existing and not existing does not give rise to a product actually both existing and not existing either. The thought is that they are not real (*avidyamana*).

Having exposed in this way the faultiness of the homogeneous form (fn 9 That is, where agent and deed are both either actual or non-actual or both. In the heterogeneous form the agent will be existent while his deed will be non-existent, and so on.) of the three theses, Nagarjuna, wishing to repudiate the heterogeneous form of the three theses as well says

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

After criticizing the substantialist as well as the annihilationist views relating to agent and action, Nagarjuna examines the theory that attempts to combine them. This follows the criticism at I.13. For Nagarjuna, contradictory predicates such as existence (sat) and non-existence (asat) cannot be applied to the same thing.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. There is no way to escape from this dilemma by trying to have it both ways: The agent cannot be existent as an actor, but nonexistent as one who undergoes the action. Nor can the action be existent as an entity, but nonexistent as dependent upon the agent.

Kārikā VIII.8

सता च क्रियते नासन्नासता क्रियते च सत्।
कर्त्रा सर्वे प्रसज्यन्ते दोषास्तत्र त एव हि॥८॥

satā ca kriyate nāsan nāsatā kriyate ca sat |
kartrā sarve prasajyante doṣās tatra ta eva hi ||8||

有不能作無 無不能作有
若有作作者 其過如先說

yǒu bù néng zuò wú wú bù néng zuò yǒu
ruò yǒu zuò zuò zhě qí guò rú xiān shuì

།བྱེད་པ་པོར་ནི་གྱུར་པ་ཡིས། །མ་གྱུར་ལས་ནི་མི་བྱེད་དེ།
།མ་གྱུར་པས་ཀྱང་གྱུར་མི་བྱེད། །འདིར་ཡང་སྐྱོན་དེར་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར། །

| byed pa por ni gyur pa yis | | ma gyur las ni mi byed de |
| ma gyur pas kyaṅ gyur mi byed | | ’dir yaṅ skyon der thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - A completed doer cannot create an incompleted deed nor can an incompleted doer create a completed deed. For, (if the above conditions are not accepted), thereupon all fallacies will follow.

JONES (Skt):
[8] And an actor who is truly real does not perform an act that is not truly real, nor can a truly real act be performed by an actor who is not truly real - if that were the case, all the errors relating to action and the one who acts would follow.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A non-existent action is not performed by a presently existing agent. Not is an existent action performed by a presently non-existent agent. Indeed, if that were to be the ease, all errors relating to the agents [mentioned earlier] would follow.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
An existent [act] is not done by a nonexistent agent and a nonexistent [act] is not done by an existent agent.
Indeed, in that case, all these errors follow.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Relying upon the Reality, the Unreality is never created ,
And relying upon the Unreality, the Reality is never produced.
Everything can be intended for a while,
Because even bad conducts at the place are also the same as concrete facts there.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 A non-actual product is not produced by an actual agent subject, nor is an actual product produced by a non-actual agent subject. All the previous fallacies will necessarily follow.

STRENG (Skt):
8. A real producer (kartra) does not produce what is non-real, and a non-real producer does not produce what is real. From that indeed, all the mistakes must logically follow.

BOCKING (Ch):
8v8 An existent cannot do the non-existent.
A non-existent cannot do the existent.
As to there being both a doing and a doer
That error is as previously explained.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
One who exists as an actor does not do an act which is not existent. One who does not exist [as an actor] also does not do what exists [as an act]. Here too faults will follow for one.

DOCTOR (Tb):
One that is an agent does not perform
Something that is not an action,
Nor does one that is not perform something that is
Because the same flaws would ensue. [VIII.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. An actual agent
Does not perform a nonactual action.
Nor by a nonactual one is an actual one performed.
From this, all of those errors would follow.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. That which is an agent
Does not perform that which is not an action.
Nor does that which is not perform that which is.
From this all of those errors would follow.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.8 A truly existent agent does not perform a non-existent action. Nor does a non-existent agent perform an existent action. If this were the case, then all the errors mentioned above would follow.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

8/8 If the doer exists but the deed does not, how can there be anything which is done? If the doer is non-existent and the deed is existent, how again, can there be anything done? Why is this? As previously explained in regard to existence, if the deed pre-existed, what more would there be for the doer to do? If the deed was not pre-existent, how could he accomplish the deed? In this way one would negate sin and merit, causality, recompense and retribution. Therefore he says in the verse; 'An existent cannot do the non-existent, A non-existent cannot do the existent. As to there existing both a doing and a doer, That error is as previously explained. '

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

8ab *A non-actual product is not produced by an actual agent subject, nor is an actual product produced by a non-actual agent subject.*

A non-actual product, not actual as product, that is not conjoined with the activity of being produced, is not produced by an actual agent, one existing as agent, that is one engaged in the activity of producing. Because

8cd *All the previous fallacies will necessarily follow.*

'If there is no activity of producing in an actual agent the product would be without agent.' In this sense an actual agent does not produce a product. But neither is a non-actual product produced by one such. A non-actual product would be an uncaused (*ahetuka*) product. That is why 'In the absence of the causal principle there can be no cause and no effect.' From this all fallacies ensue.

And so, as the grounds are exactly the same as given before, the reason for the faultiness of the heterogeneous form of the thesis will not be adduced again. Even as it has been shown how an actual agent subject cannot give rise to an actual product, it should be shown, by following the method given, how a non-actual agent subject, that is one not connected with the activity of production, does not give rise to an actual product. Having thus far pointed out the fault in the heterogeneous form of the thesis by relating the terms singly, Nagarjuna now points out the fault in each term by relating them in pairs.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Existence (sat) and non-existence (asat) applied to the agent and action will produce some other alternative theories than those mentioned earlier, e.g.: i. A presently existent agent (santa) performs a non-existent (asat) action, and ii. a presently non-existent agent (santa) performs an existent (sat) action. Here, the agent is described by means of a present participle (santa).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. Nor is it coherent to suppose that the agent is existent, but the action nonexistent. For then there would be no reason to call the agent an agent. An agent, after all, is someone who performs an action. The next two verses put this point and those made in the opening verses together:

Kārikā VIII.9

नासद्भूतं न सद्भूतः सदसद्भूतमेव वा।
करोति कारकः कर्म पूर्वोक्तैरेव हेतुभिः॥९॥

nāsadbhūtaṃ na sadbhūtaḥ sadasadbhūtam eva vā |
karoti kārakaḥ karma pūrvoktair eva hetubhiḥ ||9||

作者不作定 亦不作不定
及定不定業 其過如先說

zuò zhě bù zuò dìng yì bù zuò bù dìng
jí dìng bù dìng yè qí guò rú xiān shuì

|བྱེད་པ་པོར་ནི་གྱུར་པ་དང་||བཅས་པ་ལས་ནི་མ་གྱུར་དང་|
|གྱུར་མ་གྱུར་པ་མི་བྱེད་དེ||གཏན་ཚིགས་གོང་དུ་བསྟན་ཕྱིར་རོ||

| byed pa por ni gyur pa daṅ | | bcas pa las ni ma gyur daṅ |
| gyur ma gyur pa mi byed de | | gtan (5)tshigs goṅ du bstan phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - A completed doer cannot create an incompleted deed nor that of a completed-incompleted deed. This is according to the reason expounded in previous verses (i.e., verses 2 and 3).

JONES (Skt):
[9] And for the reasons already given, an actor who is truly real cannot perform an action that is truly real or that is both truly real and not truly real.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
For reasons stated above, an agent who has come to be existent does not perform an action that is nonexistent or both existent and non-existent.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
No true agent does an untrue or both true and untrue act
for the reasons above.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. It is not the unreal world, or it is not the real world.
It is just the world, which is fusion of the unreal world and the real world.
Doing something is Action,
And before talking, we are also relying upon reasons.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 An actual agent subject, for the reasons already given, gives rise neither to a non-actual product nor to one both actual and non-actual.

STRENG (Skt):
9. The producer, who is neither real nor non-real, does not produce a product which is either real or non-real, Because of the reasons which have been advanced earlier.

BOCKING (Ch):
8v9 A doer does not do a fixed deed
Neither does he do a non-fixed deed,
Nor a fixed-and-non-fixed deed.
Those errors have already been explained.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
One who exists as an actor does not do what does not exist as an act and what neither exists or not [as an act], because of what was demonstrated by the proof above.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The agent involved does not
Perform any nonaction,
Or something that both is and is not an action.
The arguments have already been given. [VIII.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. An existent agent
Does not perform an action that
Is unreal or both real and unreal
As we have already agreed.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. That which is an agent with activity
Does not perform that which is not9
Or that which is and is not an action.
We have already presented the arguments.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.9 Thus an existent agent performs neither a non-existent nor both an existent and non-existent action.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

8/9 A 'fixed deed' has already been refuted, as has a 'non-fixed deed', and a deed which is both fixed and non-fixed. Now, wishing to refute all these at once, he utters this verse. Therefore, a doer cannot do these three kinds of deed. Now, the three kinds of doer also cannot do a deed, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The very agent subject who is actual does not produce a non-actual product nor one both actual and non-actual. Why? Nagarjuna says 'for the reasons already given'. As if there is no activity of production in an actual agent subject', an actual agent subject does not produce. Because of the difficulties adduced: 'a non-actual product is not produced'; 'such a product would be uncaused'; 'if there is no causal principle there can be no cause and no effect' - and so on. In short, a product both actual and non-actual cannot be produced. To quote again: 'As to exist and not to exist are reciprocally contradictory how can they hold of one and the same thing?' And so an actual agent subject can give rise neither to an actual product nor to one both actual and non-actual.

Now Nagarjuna says that a non-actual agent subject as well can produce neither an actual product nor one both actual and non-actual:

Kārikā VIII.10

नासद्भूतोऽपि सद्भूतं सदसद्भूतमेव वा।
करोति कारकः कर्म पुर्वोक्तैरेव हेतुभिः॥१०॥

nāsadbhūto ’pi sadbhūtaṃ sadasadbhūtam eva vā |
karoti kārakaḥ karma pūrvoktair eva hetubhiḥ ||10||

作者定不定 亦定亦不定
不能作於業 其過如先說

zuò zhě dìng bù dìng yì dìng yì bù dìng
bù néng zuò yū;yú;wū yè qí guò rú xiān shuì

།བྱེད་པ་པོར་ནི་མ་གྱུར་པས།།ལས་ནི་གྱུར་དང་བཅས་པ་དང་།
།གྱུར་མ་གྱུར་པ་མི་བྱེད་དེ།།གཏན་ཚིགས་གོང་དུ་བསྟན་ཕྱིར་རོ།།

| byed pa por ni ma gyur pas | | las ni gyur daṅ bcas pa daṅ |
| gyur ma gyur pa mi byed de | | gtan tshigs goṅ du bstan phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - An incompleted doer also cannot create a completed deed nor that of a completed-incompleted deed. This is according to the reason expounded in previous verses (i.e., verse 4, 5, and 6).

JONES (Skt):
[10] Nor, for the same reasons, does an actor who is not truly real perform an action that is truly real or an action that is not truly real and not truly real.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
For reasons stated above, an agent who has come to be non-existent does not perform an action that is existent or both existent and non-existent.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Also no untrue agent does an act that is real or
both a real and unreal act for the reasons above.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. The unreal world does never produce the Real World,
The Real World and the unreal world are also two.
Doing something is just Action,
And before talking, we are also relying upon reasons.

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 A non-actual agent subject does not give rise to an actual product nor one both actual and non-actual for the reasons already given.

STRENG (Skt):
10. The non-real producer does not produce a product which is not real, nor both real-and-non-real, Because of the reasons which have been advanced earlier.

BOCKING (Ch):
8v10 A doer, whether fixed, or non-fixed,
Or both-fixed-and-non-fixed,
Cannot do a deed.
Those errors have already been explained.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
One who does not exist as an actor does not do what exists as an act and what neither exists or not [as an act], because of what was demonstrated by the proof above.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which is not an agent
Does not perform any action,
Or something that both is and is not an action.
The arguments have already been given. [VIII.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. A nonexistent agent
Does not perform an action that
Is unreal or both real and unreal
As we have already agreed.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. That which is not an agent with activity
Does not perform that which is an action
Or that which is and is not.
We have already presented the arguments.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.10 Thus, a non-existent agent performs neither an existent nor both an existent and non-existent action.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

8/10 A doer, whether fixed, not fixed, or both fixed-and-not-fixed, cannot do a deed, and why? It is for the same reasons as the earlier kinds of error, which we should explain at length here. Thus, wherever you search for a doer and a deed, you will be utterly unable to find them.

Question: If you say that there is no deed and no doer, then you in turn fall into causelessness.

Reply: Deeds arise from causality. They are conventionally termed 'existent', but they have no fixed (nature), and are not as you describe them. Why is this?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

An agent subject who was not actual would be without causal efficacy (*nirhetuka*); so, because of the fallacy already given, if there is no causal principle there can be no cause and no effect', a non-actual agent subject cannot produce. It follows from the statement if there is no productive activity of an agent subject actual as such the agent subject would be without a product' that an actual product is not produced. No more is a product produced which is both actual and non- actual: 'As to exist and not to exist are reciprocally contradictory how can they hold of one and the same thing?'

And now Nagarjuna expounds how it is that even an agent subject who is, singly and jointly, both actual and not actual does not give rise to a product of such different attributes as to be both actual and non-actual.

Kārikā VIII.11

[Robinson states that this kārikā has no correlate in the Chinese translation.]

करोति सदसद्भूतो न सन्नासच्च कारकः।
कर्म तत्तु विजानीयात्पूर्वोक्तैरेव हेतुभिः॥११॥

karoti sadasadbhūto na san nāsac ca kārakaḥ |
karma tat tu vijānīyāt pūrvoktair eva hetubhiḥ ||11||

[n/a]

[n/a]

|བྱེད་པ་པོར་གྱུར་མ་གྱུར་ནི||ལས་སུ་གྱུར་དང་མ་གྱུར་པ|
|མི་བྱེད་འདི་ཡང་གཏན་ཚིགས་ནི||གོང་དུ་བསྟན་པས་ཤེས་པར་བྱ||

| byed pa por gyur ma gyur ni | | las su gyur daṅ ma gyur pa |
| mi byed 'di yaṅ gtan tshigs ni | | goṅ du bstan pas (6)śes par bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - A completed-incompleted doer cannot create either a completed or incompleted deed. That is to be known by the reason stated previously (i.e., Verse 7).

JONES (Skt):
[11] So too, for the same reasons, we should understand that an actor who is both truly and not truly real cannot perform an action that is both truly and not truly real.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
An agent that has come to be both existent and non-existent does not perform an action that exists and does not exist. This too should be understood in terms of the reasons adduced above.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
A true or untrue agent does not do a real or unreal act.
This too is understood from the reasons above.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. The Real World and the unreal world are working,
Reality and unreality both are never producing anything.
Action itself is also some kind of theory or dogma,
And before discussions, there is some kind of problem, which should be considered theoretically.

SPRUNG (Skt):
11 An agent subject both actual and non-actual does not give rise to a product both actual and non-actual; this should be realized for the reasons already given.

STRENG (Skt):
11. And a real-non-real producer does not produce a product which is neither real nor non-real. This is evident from the reasons which have been advanced earlier.

BOCKING (Ch):
[n/a]

BATCHELOR (Tb):
One who neither exists nor does not exist as an actor does not do that which exists and does not exist as an act. Here too this is to be known through the proof demonstrated above.

DOCTOR (Tb):
One that both is and is not an agent
Does not perform an action or a nonaction.
Here as well it should be understood
That the arguments have already been given. [VIII.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. An existent and nonexistent agent
Does not perform an action that
Is unreal or both real and unreal
As we have agreed.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. That which is and is not an agent
Does not perform
That which is and is not an action.
This also should be understood from what has been presented earlier.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.11 An agent that is both existent and non-existent does not perform an action that both exists and does not exist. This too should be understood for reasons stated in verse seven.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The reference is 'As to exist and not to exist are reciprocally contradictory how can they hold of one and the same thing?' So an agent subject both actual and not actual does not produce anything. It follows from the statement 'If there is no activity of production in an actual agent subject as actual agent subject does not produce' that an actual product is not produced. Nor is a non-actual, uncaused product produced because of the fallacy given in the statement 'If there is no causal principle there can be no cause and no effect.'

Conclusion: the self-existence of things is without sense

In this way, in both the homogeneous form of the thesis and in the heterogeneous form, the existence of both the agent subject and his product his doing, his deeds is, however taken, without sense. It follows that what was said earlier, namely, 'The compound elements of existence consciousness and the rest — do exist in fact it being their nature to exist as compounded; this is because their cause, the agent subject and his doing, exists in fact' (fn 10 P. 115. The opponent's view.) does not make sense.

You may ask: Do you assert positively that things do not exist? Indeed we do not. But for you, who hold the view that things have their being in themselves, the rejection of all things as real becomes possible just because they are denied self- existence. We, however, because things arise in dependence, discern no self-existence in anything at all. Of what then would we deny self-existence (fn 11 This puts the Madhyamika position succinctly: he is not a disillusioned realist, therefore he is not a nihilist.).

As is said in the *Ratnavali*: 'One who takes a mirage to be water and who, arriving at the spot, persuades himself that the water is non-existent, is befuddled. The basic illusion is to hold that the personal world, this mirage, either exists or does not exist. So long as this illusion persists there is no freedom. At first the imaginings of ignorance, later the disclosure of the truth of things. If one does not insist on the reality of things what could their unreality be?'

This being so, how could the existence of things, whose nature is to be without self-existence, be established in any of the three ways? So, Nagarjuna says, it is by succumbing to conventional misbelief and accepting the real dependence of one thing on another, and not in any other way, that the existence of everyday illusory things, which are thought constructs like the water of a mirage, becomes acceptable.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

While VIII.8 utilized the present participle to refer to the agent, the present verses employ the past participle: (i) an agent who has come to be existent (sadbhuta); (ii) an agent who has come to be non-existent (asadbhuta), and (iii) an agent who has come to be both existent and non-existent (sadasadbhuta). VIII. 10 is not found in the Chinese version.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. Nāgārjuna now moves to assert his positive position on this matter: Agent and action are interdependent. Neither is logically or ontologically prior to or independent of the other. What it is to be an agent is to be performing an action. What it is to be an action is to be the action of an agent:

Kārikā VIII.12

प्रतीत्य कारकः कर्म तं प्रतीत्य च कारकम्।
कर्म प्रवर्तते, नान्यत्पश्यामः सिद्धिकारणम्॥१२॥

pratītya kārakaḥ karma taṃ pratītya ca kārakam |
karma pravartate nānyat paśyāmaḥ siddhikāraṇam ||12||

因業有作者 因作者有業
成業義如是 更無有餘事

yīn yè yǒu zuò zhě yīn zuò zhě yǒu yè
chéng yè yì rú shì gèng;gēng wú yǒu yú shì

།བྱེད་པ་པོ་ལས་བརྟེན་བྱས་ཤིང་།།ལས་ཀྱང་བྱེད་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་ལ།
།བརྟེན་ནས་འབྱུང་བ་མ་གཏོགས་པ།།འགྲུབ་པའི་རྒྱུ་ནི་མ་མཐོང་ངོ་།།

| byed pa po las brten byas śiṅ | | las kyaṅ byed po de ñid la |
| brten nas ’byuṅ ba ma gtogs pa | | ’grub pa’i rgyu ni ma mthoṅ ṅo |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - The doer is dynamically related to the deed and the deed to the doer in order to arise. We cannot perceive any other cause for their establishment or completion.

JONES (Skt):
[12] An actor is dependent upon an action, and the action proceeds dependent upon an actor - we cannot see any other way to establish them.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
An agent proceeds depending upon action and action proceeds depending upon the agent. We do not perceive any other way of establishing [them].

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The agent depends on action and that depends on an agent.
We see no other established reason action sets in motion.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. The truth is just Doing, that is the Real Truth, which is the Action itself.
That is just the Real Truth and Doing something.
The Action does never pervade into the different area,
And it is looking for the methods to get the Highest Happiness actually.

SPRUNG (Skt):
12 An agent subject can be held to exist only on the presupposition of a product, and a product can be held to exist only on the presupposition of an agent subject. We discern no other basis for establishing their existence.

STRENG (Skt):
12. The producer proceeds being dependent on the product, and the product proceeds being dependent on the producer. The cause for realization (i.e. Nirvana) is seen in nothing else.

BOCKING (Ch):
8v11 The doer exists by virtue of the deed,
The deed exists by virtue of the doer,
This is how we establish the meaning of 'deed'
There is nothing to add beyond this.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
An actor depends on acts and acts too occur in dependence on an actor. Apart from this, one does not see a cause which is established.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Agent comes about in dependence on action,
And action, in turn, in dependence on agent.
Apart from that we do not see
Any cause of their establishment. [VIII.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. Action depends upon the agent.
The agent itself depends on action.
One cannot see any way
To establish them differently.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. Agent depends upon action.
Action depends on the agent as well.
Apart from dependent arising
One cannot see any cause for their existence.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.12 An agent depends upon an action, and an action depends upon an agent. There is no other way to see it.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
An actor exists in dependence upon an action,
An action exists in dependence upon an actor,
And apart from that,
No reason for their existence can be seen. (12)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

8/11 A deed is non-fixed from the beginning. A deed originates because of a person, and by virtue of the deed, he is a 'doer'. The doer is not fixed, it is because there is a deed that he is designated a 'doer'. It is through the combination of these two elements that deed and doer are established. If something arises from a combination then it has no self-nature, and having no self-nature it is empty. Because it is empty there is nothing which is produced, but in accordance with the thinking of ordinary unenlightened people we make distinctions, saying 'there is a deed' or 'there is a doer'. But in the highest sense there is no deed and no doer. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

That is because an agent subject who is unrelated to a product cannot be productive; but an agent subject related to a product is productive. There is no product something done not resulting from the activity of an agent because the term product is reserved for what is produced or done. The product exists as such in dependence on the producing agent. In this way, except for a proof of the existence of agent and product which depends on their reciprocality (*parasparapeksa*), 'We discern no other basis for establishing their existence.'

Extension of conclusion to all things

The idea that the proof of the existence of agent and product depends on their reciprocality Nagarjuna extends to other things.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

After criticizing the metaphysical interpretations of agent (karaka) and action (karma), Nagarjuna gives a positive description of both in terms of the principle of "dependent arising" (pratityasamutpada). Indeed, a more positive assertion such as, "We do not perceive any other way of establishing [them]" (nanyat siddhikaranam pasyamah), is rarely met with in the Karikas.

Kārikā VIII.13

एवं विद्यादुपादानं व्युत्सर्गादिति कर्मणः।
कर्तुश्च कर्मकर्तृभ्यां शेषान् भावान् विभावयेत्॥१३॥

evaṃ vidyād upādānaṃ vyutsargād iti karmaṇaḥ |
kartuś ca karmakartṛbhyāṃ śeṣān bhāvān vibhāvayet ||13||

如破作作者 受受者亦爾
及一切諸法 亦應如是破

rú pò zuò zuò zhě shòu shòu zhě yì ěr
jí yī qiè zhū fǎ yì yīng rú shì pò

།དེ་བཞིན་ཉེར་ལེན་ཤེས་པར་བྱ། །ལས་དང་བྱེད་པོ་བསལ་ཕྱིར་རོ།
།བྱེད་པ་པོ་དང་ལས་དག་གིས། །དངོས་པོ་ལྷག་མ་ཤེས་པར་བྱ།།

| de bźin ñer len śes par bya | | las daṅ byed po bsal phyir ro |
| byed pa po daṅ las dag gis | | dṅos po lhag ma śes (7)par bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - Thus, by way of the refutation of the (static concepts of the) doer and the deed, the concept of seizing or clinging (upddana) can be known. And basing the analysis on both the doer and the deed, various other entities (i.e., phenomena) can be understood.

JONES (Skt):
[13] From this dependency, we should grasp the abandonment of the ideas of "actor" and "action." Through this analysis of "actor" and "action," all remaining entities should be understood.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Following this method of the rejection of agent and action, one should trod stand grasping. The remaining existents should be critically examined in terms of the concepts of action and agent.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Thus from the "rejection" of the agent and of actions and agents, the
method for knowledge of clinging and all the rest about beings should come to light.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. Therefore giving up some kinds of sacrifices,
And leaving from giving up we get some parts jobs by ourselves,
Relying upon the assistances, or the alternates,
The left parts of existent works, might be solved as far as possible.

SPRUNG (Skt):
13 One should grasp the factors of personal existence in the same way by giving up the idea of the agent subject and his doing. One should think of all other things on the model of agent subject and his doing.

STRENG (Skt):
13. In the same way one should understand the "acquiring" (i.e. of karma - upadana) on the basis of the "giving up," etc. of the producer and the product. By means of this analysis of the product and the producer all other things should be dissolved.

BOCKING (Ch):
8v12 In the same way that we negate deed and doer,
So (we refute) reception and the recipient.
All other dharmas too
Should be negated thus.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Likewise, one should understand clinging, because act and actor are dispelled. Remaining things too should be understood by means of actor and act.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Appropriation should be understood in the same way,
As here action and agent have been excluded.
Agent and action mill provide
Understanding of the remaining issues. [VIII.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. From this elimination of agent and action,
One should elucidate appropriation in the same way
Through action and agent
All remaining things should be understood.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. One should understand appropriation in the same way,
Following the elimination of agent and action.
Through action and agent
All remaining things should be understood.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
8.13 Thus, as action and agent are refuted, should grasping be understood. By means of this analysis should all things be understood.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

8/12 Just as deed and doer cannot be separated from each other and, not being separable, are therefore non-fixed, and having no fixed (nature) therefore have no self-nature, so it is with reception and the receiver. Reception stands for the body of the five skandhas; the recipient is the person. There are no five skandhas apart from the person, and no person apart from the five skandhas, which merely arise from causality. Just as with receiving and the recipient, so it is with all other dharmas, which should be negated in the same way.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

13abc *One should grasp the factors of personal existence in the same way by giving up the idea of the agent subject and his doing.*

'In the same way' refers to the immediately preceding terms 'agent subject' and his 'product'. 'Factors of personal existence' (*upadana*) means appropriation (*upatti*). Nagarjuna uses the expression 'factors of personal existence' as a synonym for the activity of appropriation. This, in its concrete realization, embraces the agent subject as appropriator and his doing as the appropriating. Precisely as for agent subject and his doing the appropriator and what is appropriated can be established as reciprocally dependent, but not as self-existent. They cannot be established as self-existence because of 'giving up the idea of the agent subject and his doing'. The quotation marks indicate the reason; 'giving up the idea' means renouncing. The sense of the verse can be given thus: It should be understood that the reasons for rejecting the appropriator and what is appropriated are precisely those given for renouncing the agent subject and his doing. But it should be understood that the refutation of the agent subject and his doing is not the proof that only these two are reciprocally dependent, but further, that

13d *One should think of all other things on the model of agent subject and his doing.*

'One' means the wise man. The wise man, seeking freedom for the sake of release from the bonds of birth, ageing and death, having discredited the self-existence of agent subject and his doing would realize that they can be established only in utter dependence on reciprocality. 'All other things' are all those things without exception other than agent subject and his doing and appropriator and what is appropriated, such as, what is born and what gives birth, what moves and movement, what is seen and seeing, the subject of attribution and attributes, what is produced and the producer; and as well whole and part, quality and substance, means of knowledge and object of knowledge.

A detailed investigation of these topics can be had in the Madhyamakavatara and other works. You may think it is not necessary to mention appropriation a second time as the phrase 'One should think of all other things' comprehends both appropriation and appropriator. This is true, yet for the purpose of making clear their importance for the investigation into the way things truly are they are mentioned separately. Indeed, in the chapters still to come there will be repeated investigation of these two terms.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna began the chapter with the problem of grasping (upadana). If he were to accept the substantialist notions of agent and action, he could not explain grasping. During the course of this chapter, he was able to the metaphysical (and, therefore, unacceptable) implications of the substantialist views such as the denial of moral responsibility and freedom. The abandoning (vyutsarga) refers to the giving up of such metaphysical views. After giving up such metaphysical views, he presented an alternative view, namely, dependent arising of both agent and action (VIII. 12). Such a view allows for a satisfactory explanations of "grasping" (upadana). A life with reduced grasping contributes to worldly fruits such as the attainment of "heavenly" bliss. The complete elimination of grasping culminates in perfect freedom (moksa) or the ultimate fruit.

This does not mean that Nagarjuna has no conception of an agent or an action or moral responsibility or freedom. It is merely the renunciation of wrong views and the adoption of more appropriate explanations of these phenomena. Such explanations, Nagarjuna concludes, should be extended to all phenomena.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

13. By “appropriation,” Nāgārjuna indicates any cognitive act by means of which one takes an attribute or entity as one’s own, or as part of one’s self. That includes the grasping of the aggregates as the self or of one’s mental states as part of one’s identity or of one’s possessions as central to one’s being. Appropriation in this broad sense is, hence, a. central object of concern for Buddhist philosophy and psychology, and the relation between the appropriator and the act of appropriation is an important object of analysis. For in many ways the self that is constructed through appropriation presents itself as the subject of appropriation. But it is merely constructed, and its substantial reality is illusory. Then what indeed does the appropriation? And where there is no appropriator, how does appropriation occur? Nāgārjuna here suggests that this account of the relation between agent and action provides a model for understanding that relation. That is, this analysis provides a perfect paradigm for understanding the nature of subjectivity. In all cases of the relation between an agent of any kind and an act of any kind, the identity of the two will be seen to be mutually dependent, and each will come out as conventionally real, though not as inherently existent. We will see this paradigm articulated over the next five chapters as Nāgārjuna argues that we cannot make any sense of the self as an entity independent of its actions, perceptions, and interactions. Nor can we make any sense of the ontology of these phenomena as independent of the subject. This is a natural extension of the analysis of emptiness of the external world and demonstrates Nāgārjuna’s determination to treat all phenomena on the same basis.

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Chapter IX

पूर्वपरीक्षा नवमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀本住品第九(十二偈)

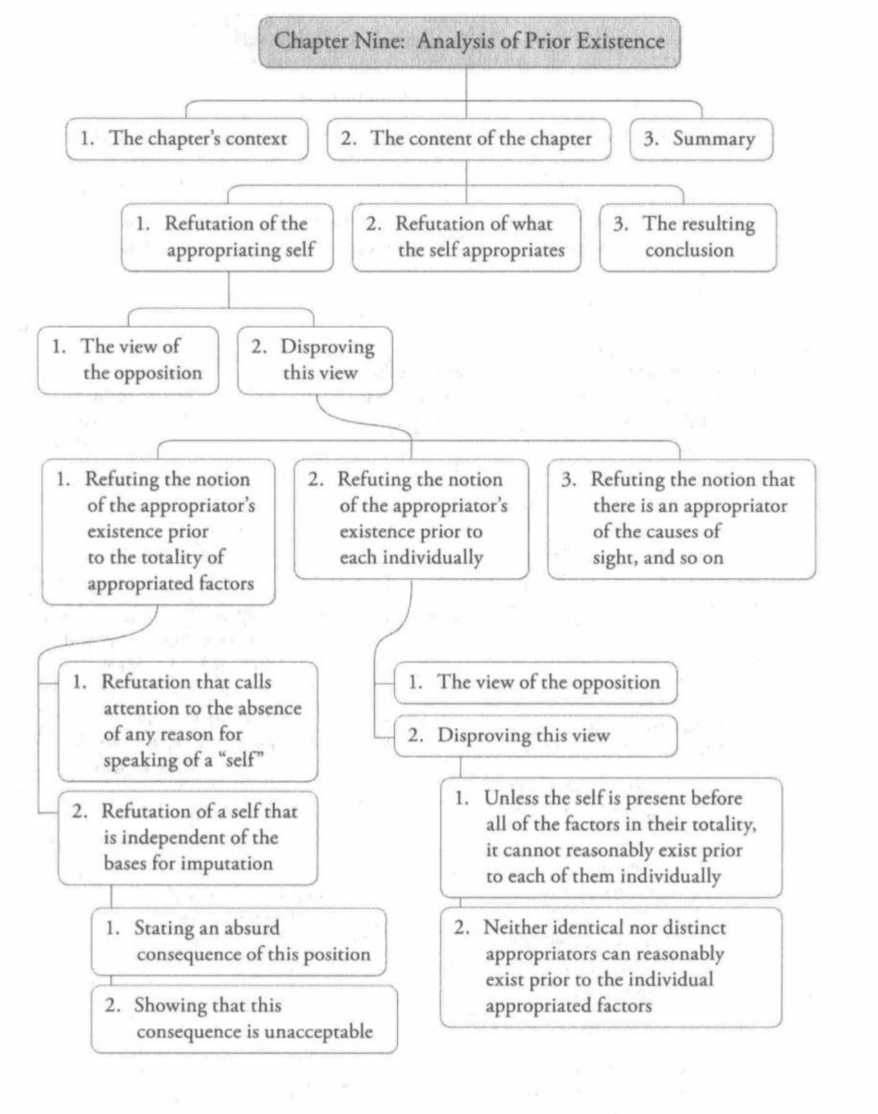
།སྔ་རོལ་ན་གནས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་དགུ་པའོ།།

pūrvaparīkṣā nāma navamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter IX: Examination of the Prior Entity

Chapter IX

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We have now completed the discussion of the selflessness of phenomena. The second part of the section on the distinct explanations of the selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of the person is the explanation of the selflessness of the person. It has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the person and the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of the person. This chapter is the first of these two parts.

EXPLANATION:

The first section has two parts: presenting the opponent's position and its refutation.

SUMMARY:

Having ascertained that if that to which the statements, "the appropriator of this body is this person" and "that which is appropriated by this person are the phenomena," refer existed as they are grasped—as existing inherently—and were not merely posited by nominal convention, then there could not be any convention with regard to appropriator and appropriated, one should contemplate the consistency of these two in virtue of their being merely nominally imputed and dependently originated.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER IX - Examination of the Antecedent State of the Self

The chapter examines the antecedent state of the self (atman). It can be conveniently analyzed in terms of the upadatr (subject, perceiver, percipient) and the upadana (act of perceiving, seizing, clinging, or perception).

The distinction actually issues forth another term in the process involved which is that of upadeya (the perceptual realm). From the above it is clear that upadatr and upadana are internal elements or aspects in the perceiving function while upadeya gives an external spread of such a function. And the total process is a triadic relationship. The Madhyamika standpoint here is to destroy the wholly formal, logical, or conceptual notions concerning the process involved in perception. Thus the examination is not solely restricted to former states of the perceiver but also concerns with the present and future states. This is the import of the last verse.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

9. *Antecedent state* (of the self) (*purva*). If there were to be no substantial action and agent, except the empirically given action and agent which are the results of dependence, how is it that metaphysicians came to assume the existence of such an eternal self or personality?

In Chapter IX, Nagarjuna undertakes to show how the belief in a permanent and eternal entity arises as a result of the recognition of the existence of a personality *prior* (*purva*) to his experiences such as seeing, hearing, and feelings (IX.1). In other words, the Buddhist metaphysicians, following a method similar to that adopted by Descartes in Western philosophy, were positing a substantial entity and then proceeding to attribute the functions of seeing and hearing to that entity. It is hard to believe that a philosopher like Nagarjuna was unaware that the Buddha's notion of non-substantiality (*anatman*) was the direct result of his rejection of such a perspective, very clearly expressed by the Buddha in a passage in the *Sutta-nipata* : "Let him destroy the entire root of obsession, [namely, the belief] 'I think, [therefore] I am," (*manta asmiti).80*

This indeed is an unequivocal rejection of the "cogito ergo sum" (*manta asmi*) which contributed to the substantialist thought of the *Upanisads* as well as later Indian thought. Nagarjuna's arguments shows how self-destructive such an assertion is. The implication of this assertion, as Nagarjuna perceives, is that such a personality has to be separated from the experiences that emerge subsequently. Nagarjuna wants to know how such a personality could be made known (*parjnapyate*) independent of such experiences (IX.3) thus implying that the sum (*aham asmi*) is dependent. If these experiences can be separated from the personality, it follows that they could occur even without such a personality (IX.4).

Having explained certain other implications of this metaphysical position, all of which he considers to be unsatisfactory, Nagarjuna maintains that with regard to such a personality the concepts of existence and non-existence are not validly applicable.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Already

Am I already here
Before I see and taste and feel?
If not, how could I see and taste and feel?
How can I know if I'm already here or not?

If I were here without them,
They could he here without me.
I reveal them and they reveal me.
How can I be here without them?
How can they be here without me?

I am not already here
Before experience as such:
Seeing reveals just the seer,
Tasting just the taster,
Feeling just the feeler.

If I'm not already here before them all,
Could I be here before each one?
Can the seer taste?
Can the taster feel?

Were they different,
I would be legion.
Nor am I tucked inside the elements
Whence seeing and tasting and feeling unfold.

If 1to whom these things belong
Cannot be found,
How can they be found?
I do not precede them.
Nor am I with them.
Nor do I follow them.

Let go of "I am."
Let go a of "I am not."

JONES (COMMENTARY)

9. The Prior Entity

This chapter tackles the issue of an entity or person existing prior to the property or act by which it gains an attribute - e.g., there can be no "mover" existing prior to the act of moving by which he or she becomes labeled "a mover." A "cause" cannot exist prior to its "effect" since it is labeled "a *cause"* only in its relation to an effect. Nagarjuna's argument involves the interconnection of concepts and also the claim that different labels make different entities (w. 8-9) - e.g., a "seer" is not a "hearer" - which, he argues, would follow from a self-existence metaphysics.

Verse 3 says, in effect, that an entity existing prior to seeing and the other senses could only be known by seeing or otherwise sensing it. The conclusion in verse 4 follows only if we see the person and his or her faculties in terms of distinct entities. which is how Nagarjuna thinks his opponent must see things.

For these reasons, we should abandon the fabrications of "is" and "is not" when it comes to an entity and its properties (v. 12).

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

9

An Examination of What Comes First

In the sutras, the Buddha taught:

Composite things are empty of the self of the individual and the self of phenomena.

And:
Sentient beings do not exist, so no life force can be found either—
These phenomena are like bubbles of foam and banana trees,
Like illusions, like lightning in the sky,
Like water-moons, like mirages.

THE WORDS IN THIS SECOND VERSE are beautiful—it would be very good if you memorized it.

In this chapter, Nagarjuna will explain these passages and prove their validity with logical reasoning. Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to the members of the five out of the eighteen sub- schools of the Shravakayana that claimed that the "self of the individual," meaning the self of the individual sentient being, substantially exists (fn The Shravakayana (vehicle of the hearers) and the Pratyekabuddhayana (vehicle of the solitary buddhas) compose the Hinayana, the foundational vehicle of Buddhism, whose views and practices are based on the first turning of the wheel of Dharma.). Nagarjuna analyzes the self of the individual and shows that it does not substantially exist, but rather is a mere appearance that manifests due to the coming together of causes and conditions.

This chapter contains many logical reasonings that refute the view that the self exists substantially. The twelfth and final verse summarizes them all in the following way:

The one who experiences perceptions does not exist
Before, during, or after the experiences of seeing and so forth.
Knowing this, all thoughts of an experiencer of perceptions either existing or not existing are reversed.

The one who sees form cannot exist before—that is, independent of—the experience of seeing the form, for if she did, it would absurdly follow that she would always see that form. The reason for this is that if an individual is called a "seer of form," it is obviously because she actually sees some form, and thus if the seer of form existed independent of the experience of seeing it, the self who was called the seer of form would always see the form in order to earn that name. The same would be true with the other objects of the senses and the ones who experience them—if the experiencer existed before the experience itself, it would follow that the experiencer would always have that experience. Thus, if the hearer of a particular sound existed before the hearing of it, then that individual would always hear that sound. If the smeller of a particular smell existed before experiencing the smell of it, then that individual would always smell the same smell. If the taster of a particular taste existed before tasting it, then that self would always taste the same taste. Finally, if the experiencer of bodily sensation existed before the feeling of it, then that individual would always experience that same sensation.

Therefore, no self can exist before the perceptions of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations it experiences, because if it did, and it were one self, then it would be the seer of form before it saw anything, the hearer of sound before it heard anything, the smeller of odors before it smelled anything, and so forth. It would be having all of the future experiences at once because it would be the experiencer of all those experiences before it experienced them. If it so happened that the experiencers of the different perceptions were different from each other, then if all of those existed before the experiences themselves, there would be that many selves existing at the same time in one individual, which would be illogical.

Furthermore, if the self who sees something existed after the experience of seeing ceased, there would be a self who sees without any seeing occurring, which would also be logically impossible. Finally, if the self who experienced perception existed only at the same time as the sense perception and not before or after it, that self would just all of a sudden come into existence at that moment of perception and then would cease to exist once that moment was over.

Someone might say, "Even if the experiencer of any particular perception does not exist before the experience of it, but rather at the same time it occurs, it does not mean that the self who is the experiencer just came into being at that very moment, because in one moment the self may be the experiencer of form, then in the next moment the experiencer of sound, and so forth."

The question then becomes, is the self who is the hearer of a sound in one moment the same as or different from the self who is the seer of a form in the next moment? If it were the same self in both moments, meaning that the self with all its qualities were the same from moment to moment, then again there would be the logical flaw that the self who had the quality of being the one that saw a form would exist before that experience of seeing that form occurred. On the other hand, if the selves in each moment were different from each other, then in each moment there would be a completely different self who would instantaneously arise and cease and would have no connection with any of the selves that came before or after it. This, however, would totally contradict our notion of the self as continuing its existence over the entire period of this life, not to mention past and future lives. Therefore, this argument is also illogical.

Thus, the self cannot truly exist before, during, or after the experience of perceptions; but then, what is the self who appears to experience things? It is a dependently arisen mere appearance, just like the self who appears to experience things in dreams. When we analyze this self we cannot find it, so we cannot say that it exists, and since there is a mere appearance of it, we cannot say that it is completely nonexistent either. Therefore, the true nature of the self is appearance and emptiness inseparable, beyond the fabrications of existence, nonexistence, and whatever else we might think it to be.

We should apply this line of reasoning to other aspects of our existence as well. For example, we need to ask, does the one who gives rise to faith exist before the faith itself, or not? Does the one who has wrong views exist before the wrong views, or not? If the self does exist before those experiences, is it one self or different selves? Examine this and see.

We can also apply this analysis to the life of someone like the great Dharma king Ashoka, who first did a lot of negative things and later did a lot of positive things. Did the one who performed positive actions and the one who acted negatively exist before those specific actions themselves? If the one who acted positively and the one who acted negatively did exist before those actions, did they exist at the same time, in the same individual as different selves? How did they exist?

If someone is going to go for refuge, we can ask the question, does the one who goes for refuge exist before the act of going for refuge, or not? If she does so exist, then do

the self who goes for refuge and the self who has not gone for refuge exist at the same time, or not?

This is a very profound and subtle way to analyze, and it is also an easy way to analyze, so we should use it a lot! We can apply it to a worldly situation, to someone who is out of work and then gets work. There is the self who is out of work and then the self who gets work—are they the same self? Are the out-of-work self and the working self the same, or are they different? Does the out-of-work self exist at the same time as the working self, and if so, are they one and the same, or are they different selves existing at the same time? Or are they different selves existing at different times?

When we analyze in this way, we can come to an extraordinary certainty in the emptiness of the self of the individual and in the union of appearance and emptiness that is beyond conceptual fabrication. To put this into verse for you:

When you think, "I exist" or "I don't exist,"
That's how you fall into realism or become a nihilist.

To know your true nature, think of a clear sky at night
And on a beautiful lake, a moon that shines so bright!
Appearance and emptiness, no one can separate—
This is how you have to meditate!

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter IX

पूर्वपरीक्षा नवमं प्रकरणम्। pūrvaparīkṣā nāma navamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀本住品第九(十二偈) **zhōng lùn guān běn zhù pǐn dì jiǔ (shí èr jié;jì)**

|ཕྱ་རོལ་ན་གནས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་དགུ་པའོ|| | sṅa rol na gnas pa (6)brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa dgu pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER IX - Examination of the Antecedent State of the Self

JONES (Skt):
9. The Prior Entity

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of the Prior Entity

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
9. Analysis of Prior Existence

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[9] Examination of the Moment Just Before the Present (12 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Self as Subject of Perception

STRENG (Skt):
Section 9 - An Analysis of "the Pre-existent Reality" (grasper and grasping) In 12 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
9. the pre-existent.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 9 Contemplation of a substrate 12 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of the Presence of Something Prior

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER IX - Analysis of Prior Existence

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter IX: Examination of the Prior Entity

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER IX - Examination of the Prior Entity

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Nine - Examination of the Prior Entity

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 9: AN EXAMINATION OF WHAT COMES FIRST

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/0 Question: Some people say;

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter X]

The personalist thesis

Some may object that the *kārikā* in the previous chapter, 'One should grasp the factors of personal existence in the same way by giving up the idea of the agent subject and his doing', does not make sense, because

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Nine Examination of the Prior Entity (Purva-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter IX Examination of the Prior Entity

Now one can surely imagine an opponent responding to the argument of the previous chapter by granting that agency and its corelative phenomena might be empty, yet still denying that awareness itself - the subjectivity that grounds perception - could be empty. For, one might argue, the emptiness of all phenomena still requires that there be a subject for whom they *are* phenomena. Nāgārjuna articulates this response in the opening verses of this chapter:

Kārikā IX.1

दर्शनश्रवणादीनि वेदनादीनि चाप्यथ।
भवन्ति यस्य प्रागेभ्यः सोऽस्तीत्येके वदन्त्युत॥१॥

LVP 192,5-6 - LVP 201,10-11
darśanaśravaṇādīni vedanādīni cāpy atha |
bhavanti yasya prāg ebhyaḥ so ’stīty eke vadanty uta ||1||

眼耳等諸根 苦樂等諸法
誰有如是事 是則名本住

T1564: vol 30, pg 13b3
yǎn ěr děng zhū gēn kǔ lè děng zhū fǎ
shuí yǒu rú shì shì shì zé míng běn zhù

།ལྟ་དང་ཉན་ལ་སོགས་པ་དང་།།ཚོར་སོགས་དང་ཡང་དབང་བྱས་པ།
།གང་གི་ཡིན་པ་དེ་དག་གི།།སྔ་རོལ་དེ་ཡོད་ཁ་ཅིག་སྨྲ།།

Tg tsa 6a7 - Tg tsa 6b5-6
|| lta daṅ ñan la sogs pa daṅ | | tshor sogs daṅ yaṅ dbaṅ byas pa |
| gaṅ gi yin pa de dag gi | sṅa rol de yod kha cig smra |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - Of the existence of an entity which sees, hears, etc. or which feels, etc., some people assert that it exists prior to its functions.

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection*:1] Some say that whatever has seeing, hearing, and the other senses and also feelings and the other mental components exists prior to these things.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
"For whomsoever there exists seeing, hearing, etc., and feeling, etc., he exists prior to these." So do some declare.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Some say: “He, whose seeing, hearing, etc., and also feeling, etc.,
exist, exists prior to these.”

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. Function to see something, function to listen to something, and so forth,
Those miscellaneous sense perceptions just exist at the present moment.
And proceeding such a perception, it is said that something concrete exists really,
Just as some momentary accident, which appears only once.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 Some hold that prior to seeing, hearing and the other kinds of perceiving as well as to feeling and the other factors of personal existence, the one whose they are must exist.

STRENG (Skt):
1. Certain people say: Prior to seeing hearing, and other sensory faculties together with sensation and other mental phenomena Is that to which they belong.

BOCKING (Ch):
9v1 The faculties of eye, ear etc.,
The dharmas of pain and pleasure etc.,
Who has such things as these?
Such a one is called the 'substrate'.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Some say that whatever is involved in seeing, hearing etc. and feeling etc. exists prior to them.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Some assert that sight, hearing, and the rest,
As well as sensation and so forth,
Are in the possession of, and belong to,
Something that precedes them. [IX.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Since sight and hearing, etc., and
Feeling, etc., exist,
He who has and uses them
Must exist prior to those, some say.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Since such things as seeing, hearing,
And such things as feeling also exist,
In virtue of them, he who has them
Also exists prior to them, some say.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.1 Some people say that before seeing, hearing, and the other sensory faculties (including sensation and other mental phenomena) exist, the ones to whom these belong must exist.

INADA FOOTNOTE

- Note: The functions are distinguished between the five faculties of perception which are darsana (seeing), sravana (hearing), ghrana (smelling), rasana (tasting), and sparsana (touching), and the five constituent elements of being (pancaskandhas) which are rupa (bodily or material form), vedana (feeling, sensation), samjna (awareness, perception), samskara (aggregate of formations or mental conformations), and vijnana (conscious or discriminative thought faculty.)

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

It is the view of the Samitiyas that seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and the other kinds of perceiving as well as feeling, touch, ideation and the other factors of personal existence are of an appropriating perceptor (*upadata*) and that he exists prior to appropriative percepting (*upadana*). What is their argument? This:

Kārikā IX.2

कथं ह्यविद्यमानस्य दर्शनादि भविष्यति।
भावस्य तस्मात्प्रागेभ्यः सोऽस्ति भावो व्यवस्थितः॥२॥

若無有本住 誰有眼等法
以是故當知 先已有本住

།དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།ལྟ་བ་ལ་སོགས་ཇི་ལྟར་འགྱུར།
།དེ་ཕྱིར་དེ་དག་སྔ་རོལ་ན།།དངོས་པོ་གནས་པ་དེ་ཡོད་དོ།།

kathaṃ hy avidyamānasya darśanādi bhaviṣyati |
bhāvasya tasmāt prāg ebhyaḥ so ’sti bhāvo vyavasthitaḥ ||2||

ruò wú yǒu běn zhù shuí yǒu yǎn děng fǎ
yǐ shì gù dāng zhī xiān yǐ yǒu běn zhù

| dṅos po yod pa ma yin na | | lta ba la sogs ji ltar ’gyur |
| (6b1)de phyir de dag sṅa rol na | | dṅos po gnas pa de yod do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - How is it that seeing, etc. come to be of a presently non-existing entity? Consequently, the entity (seemingly) exists abidingly prior to its functions.

JONES (Skt):
[2] For how can there be seeing and so forth by a nonexistent entity? Therefore, an entity existing prior to them is established.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can there be seeing, etc. of an existent who is not evident? Therefore, it is determined that, prior to these things, such an existent is.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, how will there be seeing, etc., belonging to one not present?
Therefore, prior to these, he exists as a being that is present.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. Because there is nothing, which does not exist,
The perceptive function to see, and so forth, will be possible to exist even in future.
Therefore even the moment just before can exist,
And so the existence of the moment just before actually exists in the very stable conditions.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 How can seeing and the other kinds of perceiving belong to a non-existent entity? Therefore a determinate entity exists prior to these.

STRENG (Skt):
2. They reason: How will there be seeing, etc. of someone (i.e. as the subject seeing) who does not exist? Therefore, there exists a definite (vyavasthita) entity before that seeing, etc..

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
IX.2 How can seeing and so forth belong to something that is not found? Therefore there is an independently existing thing (*bhāvo vyavasthita*) which is earlier than those [sensory faculties].

BOCKING (Ch):
9v2 If there were no substrate
Who would have the dharmas of eye etc.?
We should realize from this
That there is a pre-existent substrate.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If [that] thing is not evident, how can there be seeing etc? Therefore, the presence [of that] thing [must] exist before them.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there was no thing,
How could there be sight and so forth?
Hence, prior to these factors,
There is an abiding entity. [IX.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. If there were no existent thing,
How could seeing, etc., arise?
It follows from this that prior to this,
There is an existent thing.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. If there were no existent thing
How could such things as seeing also occur?
Therefore, prior to this
There must be an enduring thing.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.2 If there were no one who sees, etc., how could seeing arise? Therefore it must be concluded that, prior to these things, such an existent is.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/2 'The functions of eye, ear etc. ' means the functions of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and life. 'The dharmas of pain and pleasure etc. ' means dharmas of the mind and mental configurations such as reception of pain, reception of pleasure, reception of neither pain nor pleasure, conception, volition, remembrance etc.

Some authors say, 'before the dharmas of eye, etc. come into existence, there must surely be some substrate, and it is dependent on this substrate that the functions of the eye, etc. develop. If there were no substrate, on what would the functions of body and eye, etc. depend for their development? Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The thought is that it is an existing Devadatta who effects possession of wealth not the non-existent son of a barren woman. Similarly, in this sense, if there were no person (*pudgala*) existing as such (*vyavasthita*) prior to seeing and the other kinds of perceiving he would not have been able to appropriate seeing and the other kinds of perceiving as his own (fn 1 This pleonasm seems appropriate.). Therefore, even as Devadatta clearly existed as such prior to his wealth, the person exists prior to perceiving as the one who effects possession of it.

Madhyamika critique of the personalist thesis

We reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

While the previous chapter is devoted to the refutation of the Cartesian enterprise adopted later on by some of the Buddhist metaphysicians, the present chapter seems to be taking up specifically the Kantian project, namely, the assumption of a primordial condition for all forms of knowledge, including the cogito. Hence the question regarding prior existence (purva).

He could not have been unaware of the Buddha's attitude toward the problem of the past (pubbanta). For a radical empiricist like the Buddha, knowledge of the past (atitamse nana) is as important as any other knowledge (D 3.275). Indeed, knowledge of "dependent arising" (paticcasamuppada) is invariably based upon such knowledge. Yet, when the pursuit of that knowledge is attempted beyond its limits, that is, when one tries to achieve absolute certainty with regard to such knowledge, one ends up in speculations regarding the past (pubbantanuditthi) rather than knowledge (nana). The Brahmajala-suttanta. refers to a whole host of metaphysical views presented by those who were involved in such speculations (D 1.13 ff., pubbanta-kappika = purvanta-kalpika). Nagarjuna was thus convinced that the concepts of the cogito, the atman or svabhava were formulated by the metaphysicians who were attempting to know the past with certainty. No other explanation would satisfy their yearning for certainty regarding the past. Permanent self, eternal substance, pie-existing cogito, a transcendental unity of apperception-these could account for any breaks or interruptions in human experience as well as their continuity. The symbolism of the charioteer (Katha Upanisad 3.3-6) as well as the example of the two birds, one enjoying the fruit, the other watching (Mundaka Upanisad 3.1.1), adopted so enthusiastically by the Brahmanical thinkers, were gradually making inroads into Buddhist philosophical thinking. The Sammitiyas (if not identical with, at least related to the Sautrantika school) were accused of permitting such a belief into the Buddhist fold. So says Candarkirti. Yet, Sarvastivada, with its svabhava-metaphysics is no less culpable of this deviation than the Sammitiyas with their pudgala-metaphysics or even the later Theravadins with the bhavanga-metaphysics. Nagarjuna begins the present chapter with a statement, not only of this theory, but also of the rationalizations of those who formulated such a theory.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. That is, without a subject of experience, there can be no experience and no experienced objects. This argument has familiar instances in Descartes and Kant. But Nāgārjuna, siding with Hume on this issue, begins by asking how this entity could be an object of knowledge:

Kārikā IX.3

दर्शनश्रवणादिभ्यो वेदनादिभ्य एव च।
यः प्राग्व्यवस्थितो भावः केन प्रज्ञप्यतेऽथ सः॥३॥

darśanaśravaṇādibhyo vedanādibhya eva ca |
yaḥ prāg vyavasthito bhāvaḥ kena prajñapyate 'tha saḥ ||3||

若離眼等根 及苦樂等法
先有本住者 以何而可知

ruò lí yǎn děng gēn jí kǔ lè děng fǎ
xiān yǒu běn zhù zhě yǐ hé ér kě zhī

|ལྟ་དང་ཉན་ལ་སོགས་པ་དང་||ཚོར་བ་ལ་སོགས་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ནི|
|སྔ་རོལ་དངོས་པོ་གང་གནས་པ||དེ་ནི་གང་གིས་གདགས་པར་བྱ||

| lta daṅ ñan la sogs pa daṅ | | tshor ba la sogs ñid kyi ni |
| sṅa rol dṅos po gaṅ gnas pa | | de ni gaṅ gis gdags par bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - If the entity exists abidingly prior to its functions of seeing, hearing, etc., or feeling, etc., then by what means is it known?

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply*:3] But by what means would an entity existing prior to seeing, hearing, and the other senses, and prior to feelings and so forth be made known?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever existent is determined as existing prior to seeing, hearing, etc., and also feeling, etc., by what means is he [it] made known?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Whichever being present previous to seeing, hearing, etc., and to feeling, etc., by what means is he caused to be discerned?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Relying upon seeing, hearing, and so forth,
And furthermore relying upon knowledge, and so forth,
The moment just before, exists in the very harmonized situations,
And then with what kind of method, is it possible for Reality to be found actually?

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 How can this determinate entity which exists prior to seeing, hearing and the other kinds of perceiving and to feeling and the other factors of personal existence be spoken and thought of sensibly at all?

STRENG (Skt):
3. But that definite entity is previous to sight, hearing, etc., and sensation, etc – How can that entity be known?

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
IX.3 The independent thing which is earlier than seeing, hearing, and so forth, and [also earlier than] feeling and so forth [i.e., the self], by which means is it known?

BOCKING (Ch):
9v3 If, separate from the functions of eye etc.,
And the dharmas of pain and pleasure,
There were a pre-existent substrate,
How could we know it?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
What configures/makes known that thing which is present before seeing and hearing etc. and feeling etc.?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Before sight, hearing, and the rest,
And before sensation and so on,
What are your grounds for speaking
Of that abiding entity's existence? [IX.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. How is an entity existing prior to
Seeing, hearing, etc., and
The felt, etc.,
Itself known?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. If something existed prior to
Such things as
Seeing, hearing and feeling,
How could it be designated?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.3 How can an existent who exists prior to seeing, hearing, etc., be known?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/3 If, separate from the functions of eye, ear etc. and the dharmas of pain, pleasure etc., there were a pre-existent substrate, how could it be described, and how could we know about it? External dharmas such as pots, clothes etc., can be known by the function of the eye, etc. Winner dharmas can be known by the functions of pain and pleasure etc. As it says in the sutras, 'perishability is the characteristic of material form; the ability to receive is the characteristic of reception; to be able to know is the characteristic of consciousness'. You say that there is a pre-existent substrate separate from eye and ear, pain and pleasure, etc.. but how can we know about it or say that it exists? Question:

(13b22) Some writers say that breathing in and out, looking and winking, lifespan, thinking, pain and pleasure, hate, love, excitation and so on are characteristics of a soul. Without a soul, how could there be characteristics such as breathing in and out, etc? Therefore we should accept that there is a preexistent substrate apart from the functions of eye, ear, etc., and the dharmas of pain and pleasure.

Reply:

(13b25) If such a soul does exist, then it must be either inside the body, like a pillar within a wall, or outside the body, like armour worn by a man. If it were inside the body, then the body could not be perishable, since the soul would always be dwelling inside it. Therefore to say that a soul dwells in the body is mere words, absurd and unfounded. If it dwells outside the body, covering the body like armour, then the body ought to be invisible, because the soul would closely cover it. Moreover, it should not be perishable, yet we can see now that in reality the body does decay. Therefore we must know that there is no other pre-existing dharma, separate from pain and pleasure, etc.

(13c2) If you say that when an arm is cut off the soul shrinks back inside and cannot be cut off, then when the head is cut off (the soul) should also shrink back in and one should not die, but in fact one does die. Therefore we must know that (to speak of) a soul which is pre-existent and separate from pain and pleasure etc., is mere words, absurd and unfounded.

(1 3c5) Moreover, if you say that where the body is big, the soul is big, and where the body is small the soul is small, just as when a lamp is big its light is big, and where a lamp is small its light is small, then if the soul follows the body in this way it should not be permanent. If it accords with the body, then when there is no 75ody there will be no soul, just as when a lamp is extinguished the light is extinguished. If the soul is impermanent, then it is the same as the eye, the ear, pain and pleasure etc. Therefore we should know that there is no distinct soul pre-existing and separate from eye and ear, etc.

(13c10) Moreover, suppose that a man who is crazy, who is not responsible for himself, does something which he should not do. If there is a soul which is master of all one's actions, how can we say that the man is not responsible for himself? If madness does not afflict the soul, then it must be something which acts separately from the soul. Seeking thus in various ways for something which is separate from the functions of eye and ear, and the dharmas of pain and pleasure etc, we find no such pre-existent substrate. Even though you insist that there is a pre-existent substrate apart from the function of eye and ear and the dharmas of pain and pleasure, no such entity exists, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In what way can one speak and think sensibly (*prajnapyate*) about this determinate person who exists prior to perceiving, as perceiving is the basis for the idea (*prajnapti*) of person? If he is imagined to exist as such prior to perceiving then he would exist independently of it, as cloth is independent of a clay pot. But what is not related to its own material cause, for example wealthy persons who have no relation to wealth, is without a basis in reason. What is more,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As usual, Nagarjuna's first objection against positing such an entity that exists prior to the experiences such as seeing, hearing, etc. as well as feeling, etc., is epistemological. This objection should serve as warning against those who believe that Nagarjuna recognizes a special intuitive non-sensuous experience through which the so-called "ultimate reality" (paramartha?) is known. In fact, this question on the part of Nagarjuna is a clear indication of the fact that he was quite aware of the sort of empiricism advocated by the Buddha, especially in his "Discourse on Everything (Sabba-sutta, S 4.15; see also Kalupahana, "A Buddhist tract on empiricism," in PEW 19 (1969):65-67).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. So first, Nāgārjuna points out, we have no direct evidence for the existence of such an entity because evidence of it would require that it could be an object, but is supposed by its proponent to be . purely subjective. Moreover, Nāgārjuna points out, it is supposed to be independent of and ontologically prior to perception and the perceived. So:

Kārikā IX.4

विनापि दर्शनादीनि यदि चासौ व्यवस्थितः।
अमून्यपि भविष्यन्ति विना तेन न संशयः॥४॥

vināpi darśanādīni yadi cāsau vyavasthitaḥ |
amūny api bhaviṣyanti vinā tena na saṃśayaḥ ||4||

若離眼耳等 而有本住者
亦應離本住 而有眼耳等

ruò lí yǎn ěr děng ér yǒu běn zhù zhě
yì yīng lí běn zhù ér yǒu yǎn ěr děng

|ལྟ་བ་ལ་སོགས་མེད་པར་ཡང་། །གལ་ཏེ་དེ་ནི་གནས་གྱུར་ན། །
|དེ་མེད་པར་ཡང་དེ་དག་ནི། །ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར་བར་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མེད། །

| lta ba la sogs med par yaṅ | | gal te de ni gnas gyur na |
| de med par yaṅ de (2)dag ni | | yod par 'gyur bar the tshom med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - If the abiding entity could exist apart from the functions of seeing, etc., then undoubtedly the functions too could exist without the entity.

JONES (Skt):
[4] In addition, if the entity is established as existing without seeing and so forth, then undoubtably those faculties would also exist without that entity.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If he is determined as existing even without seeing, etc., undoubtedly even these [i.e., seeing, etc.] will exist without him.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If this [being] is present without seeing, etc.,
these will doubtless exist without him.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. In the case when there were no way to see, and so forth,
The situation here and now might continue to exist in the state of completely harmonized situation.
And those kinds of stuation, might exist even in future.
And without such situations, the moment just before the present would never be continuing even in future.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 If this person exists as such even without seeing and the other kinds of perceiving these will quite certainly exist without him.

STRENG (Skt):
4. And if that entity is determined without sight and other sensory faculties, Then, undoubtedly, those sensory faculties will exist without that entity.

BOCKING (Ch):
9v4 If, apart from eye and ear etc.,
There were a substrate
Then also, without a substrate
Eyes and ears, etc., should exist.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If it were present even without seeing etc., there would be no doubt that they would exist even without it.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If this remains in the absence
Of sight and these other factors,
Then they will undoubtedly be present
Even in the absence of that. [IX.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. If it can abide
Without the seen, etc.,
Then, without a doubt,
They can abide without it.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. If it can endure
Without such things as seeing,
Then, without a doubt they also
Can exist without it.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.4 If an abiding entity could exist apart from the functions of seeing, etc., then undoubtedly, such functions could exist without such an abiding entity.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/4 If there were a pre-existent substrate, separate from the functions of eye and ear etc., and the dharmas of pain and pleasure etc., then the functions of eye and ear etc., and the dharmas of pain and pleasure etc. should likewise exist apart from this substrate.

Question: It could be that the two things are separate from each other, perhaps only the substrate existing. Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If you think a so-called person exists prior to perceiving, he will appropriate for himself the appropriative activities of seeing and the other kinds of perceiving. Now if this is so, perceiving will, incontestably, exist without the person.

As a wealthy Devadatta, existing prior to any connection with and apart from wealth in the usual sense, would have to appropriate wealth of a different kind attained in a special way, so the appropriator would have to appropriate a different sort of perceiving because it would be other than usual. But Nagarjuna says this is impossible.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

After questioning the empirical validity of such an assumption, Nagarjuna is here raising a logical objection. If a prior existing entity can be determined without depending upon its experiences such as seeing, then it should also be logically possible that such experiences as seeing can be determined without a prior entity. Indeed, this logical conclusion seems to be so strong that Nagarjuna is willing to use the term asamsaya ("without doubt") to describe it.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. That is, independence is a two-way street. If the self is independent of its perceiving and perception, then its perceiving and perception are independent of it. Now there is one reading of this claim on which it is straightforwardly and foolishly fallacious. Nāgārjuna is *not* arguing that all relations are symmetric. It does not follow from the fact that this book is on your table that your table is on the book, and Nāgārjuna is not foolish enough to think that it does. The point is, rather, once again the Humean one that whatever is indeed logically independent is separable. The opponent wants to argue that the self is logically independent of its perceptions and their contents. But if so, then they are separable, and we can imagine not only a nonperceiving subject, but also unperceived perceptions. Just as we can imagine a clear table and a book not on a table. But, Nāgārjuna suggests, the idea of unperceived perceptions is both absurd on its face and contradictory to the opponent's theoretical framework.

Kārikā IX.5

अज्यते केनचित्कश्चित् किंचित्केनचिदज्यते।
कुतः किंचिद्विना कश्चित् किंचित्कंचिद्विना कुतः॥५॥

ajyate kenacit kaścit kiṃcit kena cid ajyate |
kutaḥ kiṃcid vinā kaścit kiṃcit kiṃcid vinā kutaḥ ||5||

以法知有人 以人知有法
離法何有人 離人何有法

yǐ fǎ zhī yǒu rén yǐ rén zhī yǒu fǎ
lí fǎ hé yǒu rén lí rén hé yǒu fǎ

|ཅི་ཡིས་གང་ཞིག་གསལ་བར་བྱེད||གང་གིས་ཅི་ཞིག་གསལ་བར་བྱེད|
|ཅི་མེད་གང་ཞིག་ག་ལ་ཡོད||གང་མེད་ཅི་ཞིག་ག་ལ་ཡོད||

| ci yis gaṅ źig gsal bar byed | | gaṅ gis ci źig gsal bar byed |
| ci med gaṅ źig ga la yod | | gaṅ med ci źig ga la yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - An entity is made manifest by its attendant functions and, vice versa, the functions are known by way of the entity to which they belong. How is it possible for an entity to be without its functions and the functions without their entity?

JONES (Skt):
[5] Someone is manifested by some feature, and some feature is manifested by someone. Without some feature, how can someone exist? Without someone, how can some feature exist?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Someone is made known by something. Something is made known by someone. How could there be someone without something and something without someone?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Someone is driven by something, something is driven by someone.
Where is there someone without something, and where is there something without someone?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Relying upon some kind of method, something goes ahead.
And something might be driven by something perhaps.
In the case of there is nothing, where is it possible for something to exist somewhere?
How is it possible for anything to exist anywhere when there is no existent possibility?

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 Every effect implies a cause, every cause implies an effect; how can there be an effect without a cause, how can there be a cause without an effect?

STRENG (Skt):
5. Someone becomes manifest by something (i.e. like vision); something is manifest by someone. How would someone exist without something? How would something exist without someone?

BOCKING (Ch):
9v5 Because of dharmas we know that there is a person.
Because of the person, we know that there are dharmas.
Apart from dharmas, how can there be a person?
Apart from a person, how can there be dharmas?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is illuminated by them; they are illuminated by it. How could it exist without them? How could they exist without it?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Something manifests somebody,
And somebody manifests something.
How could somebody exist in the absence of anything?
How could something exist in the absence of anybody? [IX.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. Someone is disclosed by something.
Something is disclosed by someone.
Without something how can someone exist?
Without someone how can something exist?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. By what is someone disclosed?
By whom is something disclosed?
Without something, how can someone exist?
Without someone, how can something exist?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.5 Someone is disclosed by something. Something is disclosed by someone. Without something how can someone exist? Without someone how can something exist?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/5 'Dharmas' means eye, ear, pain, pleasure etc. 'Person' means this substrate. You say that we know there is a person by virtue of there being dharmas, and we know that there are dharmas because there is a person. Now, how can there be a person apart from the dharmas of eye and ear etc., and how can there be dharmas of eye and ear etc., apart from the person?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The thought here is that by virtue of a cause, for example a seed, some effect or other, for example a sprout, becomes evident, and by the effect some cause or other is clearly implied: the seed being the cause of the sprout and this being the effect of the seed. Similarly, if by virtue of appropriative perceiving a self-existent person is clearly implied, he would be the appropriator of such perceiving. And if, by virtue of a person, appropriative perceiving is clearly implied, this being what the person appropriates, then in such case the reciprocal dependence of appropriator and what is appropriated would be established. So long as perceiving is accepted as existing in a special way, without the appropriator, then, being without dependence, it would be simply non-existent. It follows that neither of the two has been established. In sum, it makes no sense to say that a determinate (avasthita) appropriator exists separate from seeing and the other kinds of perceiving.

A separate subject for each kind of perceiving

You may counter the statement 'How can this determinate entity which exists prior to seeing, hearing and the other kinds of perceiving and to feeling and the other elements of personal existence be spoken and thought of sensibly at all?' (*kārikā* 3 above) by urging that it would be an error to suppose that a determinate subject exists prior to all perceiving in general. If however,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here then is Nagarjuna's method of explaining (vyakhyana) the relationship between substance and attribute. It is a relation of dependence and neither the substance nor the attribute can be understood properly if they were to be conceived of as independent entities, each having its own nature.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. (Something is disclosed by someone" fn 58. The Sanskrit strongly suggests that the "someone" is to be understood as the appropriator (in the sense discussed in the previous chapter) and that the "something" is to be understood as the appropriated object. Later commentators (e.g., Candrakīrti and Tsong Khapa see esp. pp. 210-11) generally treat the verse this way. This would be a reminder that perception is a special case of appropriation. (I thank the Yen. Gareth Sparham for pointing this out.))

Nāgārjuna here emphasizes the corelativity and interdependence of subject and object. (fn 59. But not their identity. Though subject and object as well as internal and external objects are, for Nāgārjuna, all ultimately empty and, in important senses, . interdependent, they are not identical. Physical objects are, as Kant would emphasize, empirically external to the mind in a way that pains are not; and the conventional perceiver is not one with the perceived. When 1 see an elephant, it is not, thereby, the case that I have a trunk!) Subjectivity only emerges when there is an object of awareness. Pure subjectivity is a contradiction in adjecto. Moreover, the idea of an object with no subject is contradictory. The very concept of being an object is that of being the object of a subject. The affinities to Kant and Schopenhauer here are quite strong, but should not be pushed too far. Nāgārjuna would clearly have no truck with the substantialist flavor of their analysis of the subject and object.

Kārikā IX.6

सर्वेभ्यो दर्शनादिभ्यः कश्चित्पूर्वो न विद्यते।
अज्यते दर्शनादीनामन्येन पुनरन्यदा॥६॥

sarvebhyo darśanādibhyaḥ kaścit pūrvo na vidyate |
ajyate darśanādinām anyena punar anyadā ||6||

一切眼等根 實無有本住
眼耳等諸根 異相而分別

yī qiè yǎn děng gēn shí wú yǒu běn zhù
yǎn ěr děng zhū gēn yì xiàng;xiāng ér fēn bié

།ལྟ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི།།སྣ་རོལ་གང་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་མིན།
།ལྟ་སོགས་ནང་ནས་གཞན་ཞིག་གིས།།གཞན་གྱི་ཚེ་ན་གསལ་བར་བྱེད།།

| lta la sogs pa thams cad kyi | | sṅa rol gaṅ źig yod pa min |
| lta sogs naṅ (3)nas gźan źig gis | | gźan gyi tshe na gsal bar byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - (The opponent contends) No entity could exist prior to all its functions of seeing, etc- By means of the different functions of seeing, etc., the entity appears in different moments.

JONES (Skt):
[6] No one is found prior to all acts of sensing (i.e., seeing and so forth). At other times, one is manifested by another act of sensing.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Someone is not evident prior to all of seeing, etc. Again, on different occasions, one could be made known by things different from seeing, etc.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Someone does not occur prior to all, to seeing, etc.
Again, by contrast, he is driven by means of seeing, etc.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. Even though relying upon all kinds of sense perceptions, for example vision,
It is completely impossible for us to see anything before the time of present moment.
But because being driven by seeing and so forth,
Because of relying upon the time of different before, there is another time.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 No one subject exists prior to seeing and other perceiving in general; Each kind of perceiving implies a different prior subject at different times.

STRENG (Skt):
6. The opponent admits: Someone does not exist previous to (purva) sight and all the other faculties together. Rather, he is manifested by any one of them: sight, etc., at any one time.

BOCKING (Ch):
9v6 In all the functions of eye, ear etc.,
There is truly no substrate.
All the functions of eye and ear etc.,
With different characteristics, discriminate.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is not evident prior to the totality of seeing etc. From among seeing etc. a different one illuminates [it] at different times.

DOCTOR (Tb):
This is not present before
The totality of sight and so forth.
Yet each factor among sight and the rest
Individually makes it manifest. [IX.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. While prior to all of seeing, etc.,
That prior entity doesn't exist,
Through seeing, etc., by another one,
That other one becomes disclosed.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. Nothing exists prior to
All of such things as seeing.
Another one of such things as seeing
Discloses another at another time.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.6 The opponent contends: No one exists before seeing and all the other sense faculties combined, but surely one exists before each separate sensation.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/6 In all the functions of eye and ear etc. and all the dharmas of pain and pleasure etc., there is truly no substrate. With, the eye as its cause, and form as its condition, seeing consciousness is produced. We know of the existence of all the functions of eye, ear etc. by means of this combination of causes and conditions, and not through some substrate. This is why it says in the verse, "In all the functions of eye, ear etc., there is truly no substrate. " Each of the functions of eye, ear etc., can discriminate individually. Question:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

6ab *No one subject exists prior to seeing and other perceiving in general;*

but rather prior to each kind of perceiving singly ; if this is so then

6cd *Each kind of perceiving implies a different prior subject at different times.*

If a subject of seeing (*drasta*) is implied by seeing he is not in that case to be thought of as presupposing hearing and the other kinds of perceiving apart from seeing. Your earlier reproach is therefore inappropriate.

Madhyamika critique

We reply. This is not tenable either because it is impossible for something to exist which is bereft of seeing and the other kinds of perceiving, which does not appropriate, lacks causal efficacy (*nirhetuka*) (fn 2 Or, 'lacks any basis in reason'.) and cannot manifest itself.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

While rejecting the view that there is an entity prior to all forms of experiences such as seeing, Nagarjuna is, at the same time, trying to avoid the other extreme of assuming two different entities when the experiences are different. Avoiding a metaphysical notion of identity does not mean that one is invariably committed to an equally metaphysical notion of difference. Just as much as identity can be explained on the basis of an empirical notion of dependence, Nagarjuna seems to assert that difference can and need to be accounted for on an empirical basis.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. An opponent might at this point argue that although there is no continuous prior entity that endures through time and stands behind all perception, we must posit an entity as the basis of each individual perceptual episode. The self on this model would be a succession of momentary but inherently existent subjects of moments of experience. But, Nāgārjuna argues in the next verse, the same argument against positing a single prior entity can be mobilized against each punctal prior entity:

Kārikā IX.7

सर्वेभ्यो दर्शनादिभ्यो यदि पूर्वो न विद्यते।
एकैकस्मात्कथं पूर्वो दर्शनादेः स विद्यते॥७॥

sarvebhyo darśanādibhyo yadi pūrvo na vidyate |
ekaikasmāt kathaṃ pūrvo darśanādeḥ sa vidyate ||7||

若眼等諸根 無有本住者
眼等一一根 云何能知塵

ruò yǎn děng zhū gēn wú yǒu běn zhù zhě
yǎn děng yī yī gēn yún hé néng zhī chén

།ལྟ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི། །སྔ་རོལ་གལ་ཏེ་ཡོད་མིན་ན།
།ལྟ་ལ་སོགས་པ་རེ་རེ་ཡི། །སྔ་རོལ་དེ་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་ཡོད།།

| lta la sogs pa thams cad kyi | | sṅa rol gal te yod min na |
| lta la sogs pa re re yi | | sṅa rol de ni ji ltar yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - (Nagarjuna asserts) If the entity does not exist prior to all its functions of seeing, etc., then how could it exist prior to each of the functions?

JONES (Skt):
[7] If no one is found prior to all acts of sensing, how can someone existing prior to each such act be evident?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If someone existing prior to all of seeing, etc. is not evident, how can someone existing prior to each of seeing, etc. be evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If someone does not occur prior to all, to seeing, etc.,
how does he occur prior to a single seeing, etc.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Relying upon all kinds of function to see, and so forth,
It is impossible for us to recognize the moment just before the present.
Leaving from one by one, how is it possible the moment just before the present to exist?
Relying upon only total oneness of all sense perceptions, the moment just before the moment can be perceived.

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 If there is no subject prior to seeing and other kinds of perceiving in general, How can there be a different subject prior to each kind of perceiving?

STRENG (Skt):
7. Nargarjuna answers: But if nothing exists previous to sight and all the other faculties together, How could that being exist individually before sight, etc.?

BOCKING (Ch):
9v7 If in all the functions such as eye etc.,
There is no substrate.
How can eye etc., functioning separately,
Know objects?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If it is not evident prior to the totality of seeing etc., how can it be evident prior to [each of them] seeing etc. individually?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Unless it precedes the totality
Of sight and the rest,
How could it possibly precede
Each of them individually? [IX.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. If prior to all of seeing, etc.,
No prior entity exists,
How could an entity prior
To each seeing exist?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. If it does not exist
Prior to *all* of such things as seeing,
How could it exist
Prior to *each* of such things as seeing?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.7 Nagarjuna answers: If no one exists before seeing and all the other sense faculties combined, how can one exist before each separate sensation?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/7 If there is no substrate in all the functions of eye and ear etc., and all the dharmas of pain and pleasure etc., then how can these individual functions know objects? There is no thinking in the functions of seeing and hearing etc., so they should not have knowledge, yet-in fact they do know objects. We must realize (from this) that in addition to the functions of eye and ear etc., there is something which has the capacity to know objects.

Reply: If this were so, then either this knowing agent will inhere in each individual function, or there will be one knower in all the functions, but both ideas are erroneous, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

7ab *If there is no subject prior to seeing and other kinds of perceiving in general,*

if this is supposed,

7cd *How can there be a different subject prior to each kind of perceiving?*

What cannot be a subject (*yah*) prior to (*purvah*) all perceiving in general cannot be a subject prior to each kind of perceiving singly either. There is for example no forest before all the trees nor before each of the trees singly; and oil is not extracted from sand in general nor is there oil in any one grain of sand.

What is more, a subject prior to each singly must be accepted as no less prior to all as well; because there is no totality apart from single particulars. That is why it does not make sense to say that the subject is prior to each kind of perceiving singly.

There is a further absurdity.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

It seems that here Nagarjuna is referring to an interesting assumption underlying an identity theory. The notion of self (atman) or substance (svabhava) would generally be presented in order to account for the continuity in a large number of dissimilar experiences. Taking that premise, Nagarjuna is arguing that if it is not possible to discover someone or entity that pre-exists all forms of different experiences, then such a person or entity would not be available even in the case of individual experiential situations. A momentary cogito would be as impossible as a permanent and eternal self (atman).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. That is, given that there is no need to identify an independent self as the basis of all seeing, there is no need to establish one as a basis for each one independently. The same arguments for the relativity and relational character of perception apply, mutatis mutandis, for each perceptual episode. Moreover, even if we did posit such entities, they would get us nowhere toward positing the self that the reifier of self really cares about - a continuous self with which we can really identity and whose fate we can care about.

———

Kārikā IX.8

द्रष्टा स एव स श्रोता स एव यदि वेदकः।
एकैकस्माद्भवेत्पूर्वं एवं चैतन्न युज्यते॥८॥

draṣṭā sa eva sa śrotā sa eva yadi vedakaḥ |
ekaikasmād bhavet pūrvam evaṃ caitan na yujyate ||8||

見者即聞者 聞者即受者
如是等諸根 則應有本住

jiàn zhě jí wén zhě wén zhě jí shòu zhě
rú shì děng zhū gēn zé yīng yǒu běn zhù

།ལྟ་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་ཉན་པོ་དེ།།གལ་ཏེ་ཚོར་པོའང་དེ་ཉིད་ན།
།རེ་རེའི་སྔ་རོལ་ཡོད་གྱུར་ན།།དེ་ནི་དེ་ལྟར་མི་རིགས་སོ།།

| lta po de ñid ñan po de | | gal te tshor po'aṅ de ñid na |
| re re'i sṅa rol yod gyur na | | de ni (4)de ltar mi rigs so |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - If (it is granted that) an entity which sees is concomitantly an entity which hears or feels, then that entity will exist prior to its functions. But such a situation could not be in accordance with reason.

JONES (Skt):
[8] If the same one is simultaneously the seer, the hearer, and the feeler, that person would arise prior to each one of these, and this is not admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If a seer is, at the same time, a hearer and feeler, then someone would exist prior to each one [of the functions]. But this is not proper.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If he is a seer while he is a hearer and while he is a feeler,
he would be prior to each single one and that is not reasonable.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. A person, who looks at something, is real, and at the same time a person, who listen to, was also real.
And then such situations become real relying upon information.
Leaving from the method of one by one, it is possible for the moment just before the moment to exist,
But just at that time this Real World is never be harnessed at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 If the subject of seeing is the same as the subject of hearing and it the same as the subject of feeling it would be prior to each singly. But this makes no sense either.

STRENG (Skt):
8. Further, if that being were the "seer," that being were the "hearer," that being were the one who senses,
Then one being would exist previous to each.
Therefore, this hypothesis is not logically justified.

BOCKING (Ch):
9v8 "The one who sees is the one who hears.
The one who hears is the one who receives.
All the functions are like this,
Consequently there must be a substrate".

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the seer itself [were] the hearer and the feeler [were] it too, if it existed prior to each, in that way it would not make sense.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If that which sees were that which heat's,
And what hears were that which senses,
This would exist before every one of them,
Yet that does not make sense. [IX.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. If the seer itself is the hearer itself,
And the feeler itself, at different times,
Prior to each of these he would have to arise.
But this makes no sense.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. If the seer itself is the hearer itself,
And the feeler, then
For it to exist prior to each of these
Would make no sense.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.8 If the one who sees is simultaneously the one who hears and the one who feels, then such a one must be prior to each singly. But this makes no sense.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/8 "If the one who sees is also the one who hears, and the one who hears is also the one who receives, then there is one soul. Since all the functions of eye and ear etc., are like this, there must be a pre-existent substrate". Form, sound, fragrance, etc., not having a fixed, knower, perhaps (the substrate) could use his eye to hear sounds, like a man seeing sounds in six ways152 according to his will? If the hearer and seer were one, he could see sounds at will with the eye function etc., but this is not the case.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

8ab *If the subject of seeing is the same as the subject of hearing and it the same as the subject of feeling*

then

8c *it would be prior to each singly.*

It makes no sense to say that the seeing subject is the same as the hearing subject. If this were so then the subject of hearing would be a subject of seeing even without the activity of seeing and the subject of seeing would be a subject of hearing even without the activity of hearing. But we never observe a seer devoid of the activity of seeing nor a hearer devoid of the activity of hearing. That is why Nagarjuna says:

8d *But this makes no sense either.*

How could this be as there is a different agent (*karaka*) for each and every activity (*pratikriya*), is what Nagarjuna was explaining. And so this thought as well is tenable.

Buddhapalita explained it this way. If there is only one self (atman), it follows that the subject must move from one sense to the other like someone moving from one window to another. Bhavaviveka faulted that explanation in this way: if the self is all-pervasive it need not move from one sense to another, so Buddhapalita's criticism does not hold. But this itself does not hold because the context of Buddhapalita's refutation was the doctrine of the separate person (*pudgala*) as conceived by our fellow Buddhists who do not accept the all-pervasiveness of the self. Thus the fault we pointed out does stand.

Again, if, attempting to escape the difficulty pointed out, one supposes that

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Only if the seer, hearer, and experiencer are absolutely identical, then he will pre-exist each individual experiential situation. Nagarjuna rightly denies any such absolute identity. He was probably assuming that even in the act of seeing the same object at different times, there cannot be absolute identity, let alone in the acts of seeing different objects. The reason is not that human experiences or even the objects of experience change every moment, but that the circumstances under which such experiences take place could vary. (For a discussion of the perceptual flux, see William James, Some Problems of Philosophy, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979, p.)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. Moreover, since this proposal is for a distinct prior entity for each perceptual episode, we would need distinct subjects for, for example, hearing and seeing. But as we can do these things at the same time, it would follow that there are multiple simultaneous selves. The unity of experience that is the putative explanandum and motivation for positing this entity in the first place (emphasized in the first two lines) would dissolve. Nāgārjuna emphasizes this conclusion at IX: 9:

Kārikā IX.9

द्रष्टान्य एव श्रोतान्यो वेदकोऽन्यः पुनर्यदि।
सति स्याद् द्रष्टरि श्रोता बहुत्वं चात्मनां भवेत्॥९॥

drasṭānya eva śrotānyo vedako 'nyaḥ punar yadi |
sati syād drasṭari śrotā bahutvaṃ cātmanāṃ bhavet ||9||

若見聞各異 受者亦各異
見時亦應聞 如是則神多

ruò jiàn wén gè;gě yì shòu zhě yì gè;gě yì
jiàn shí yì yīng wén rú shì zé shén duō

།གལ་ཏེ་ལྟ་པོ་གཞན་ཉིད་ལ། །ཉན་པ་པོ་གཞན་ཚོར་གཞན་ན།
།ལྟ་པོ་ཡོད་ཚེ་ཉན་པོར་འགྱུར། །བདག་ཀྱང་མང་པོ་ཉིད་དུ་འགྱུར།

| gal te lta po gźan ñid la | | ñan pa po gźan tshor gźan na |
| lta po yod tshe ñan por 'gyur | | bdag kyaṅ maṅ po ñid du 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - If again (granted that) the entity which respectively sees, hears, and feels is individually distinct, then as there will be an entity which sees there will also be an entity which hears. But this situation would impose many forms on the entity.

JONES (Skt):
[9] But if the seer is one, the hearer another, and the feeler a third, then when there is a seer there may also be a hearer, and there would be a plurality of selves.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If seer and hearer and feeler are different, then, when there is a seer, there also would be a hearer, and as such there would be a plurality of selves.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, if a different seer, a different hearer, a different feeler exists,
a hearer would be where there is a seer and there would be a plurality of selves.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. Not a person, who look at things well, or not a person, who listen to sounds well,
And a person, who is not skillful to tell informations to others.
Therefore perhaps it might be related with listening to something, but at the same time it is related with looking at, too.
And so because of both much volume and individual personality might exist.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 The subject of seeing, the subject of hearing and the subject of feeling are each different, The subject of hearing would exist at the same time as the subject of seeing and there would be a plurality of selves.

STRENG (Skt):
9. On the other hand, if the "seer" were someone else, or the "hearer" were someone else, or the one who senses were someone else, Then there would be a "hearers when there was already a "seer," and that would mean a multiplicity of "selves" (atma).

BOCKING (Ch):
9v9 If the seer and the hearer are each separate,
And the one who receives is also separate,
Then when seeing, there should also be hearing,
And thus the soul would be multiple.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the seer were different, the hearer different, the feeler different, at the time the seer exists, there would be a hearer. Many selves would come about.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the seer, the hearer, and the one that senses
Were all different from each other,
The hearer could be present at the time of the seer
And there would be multiple selves. [IX.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. If the seer itself is distinct,
The hearer is distinct and the feeler is distinct,
Then when there is a seer there would also be a hearer,
And there would have to be many selves.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. If the seer is distinct,
The hearer is distinct, and the feeler is distinct,
Then when there is a seer there would also be a hearer,
And there would have to be many persons.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.9 If the one who sees is not the one who hears or feels, then there is a seer when there is a hearer, and there would be a multitude of selves.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/9 If the seer, the hearer and the receiver are different from each other, then at the time of seeing there should also be hearing, and why? Because the hearer would exist separately from the seer, and in the same way souls ought to be operating simultaneously in the nose, the tongue and the body. If this were so, though the individual were one, his souls would be many, and he would be knowing the world via all his functions simultaneously, but in reality this is not the case. Therefore a seer, a hearer and a recipient are not employed together.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

9ab *The subject of seeing, the subject of hearing and the subject of feeling are each different,*

that would not make sense because if one wished to think in that way,

9cd *The subject of hearing would exist at the same time as the subject of seeing and there would be a plurality of selves.*

For example, a horse is other than a cow. But it is not the case that because a cow exists a horse cannot exist at the same time. So if the subject of hearing were other than the subject of seeing he would have to be able to exist at the same time as an existing subject of seeing; but this is not what one wished to establish. Thus subjects are not totally different. What is more, on this thesis the plurality of selves is implied because each of the subjects of seeing, hearing and feeling is established entirely separately. Thus there is nothing whatsoever called a person existing prior to seeing and the other kinds of perceiving each taken singly, either.

The concrete individual as subject

At this point you may object: There is indeed a self prior to all the activities of seeing and the other kinds of perceiving generally. Earlier it was asked 'If there is such how will it be spoken and thought of?' This should be explained. It is accepted that, prior to seeing and the other kinds of perceiving, the four elements (*mahabhuta*) (fn 3 Earth, air, fire, water) exist in the form of a potential individual as a body-mind entity (*namarupavastha*). In their turn the six sense faculties, seeing, hearing and the rest, based in the potential individual, arise out of these elements. Therefore the four elements do exist prior to seeing and the other kinds of perceiving as their base.

Madhyamika critique

But this is not tenable either.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If absolute identity is not a possibility, absolute difference also would be impossible, for in that case within each stream of experience there would be plurality of distinct selves or entities corresponding to the different experiences.

Kārikā IX.10

दर्शनश्रवणादीनि वेदनादीनि चाप्यथ।
भवन्ति येभ्यस्तेष्वेष भूतेष्वपि न विद्यते॥१०॥

darśanaśravaṇādīni vedanādīni cāpy atha |
bhavanti yebhyas teṣv eṣa bhūteṣv api na vidyate ||10||

眼耳等諸根 苦樂等諸法
所從生諸大 彼大亦無神

yǎn ěr děng zhū gēn kǔ lè děng zhū fǎ
suǒ cóng shēng zhū dà bǐ dà yì wú shén

།ལྟ་དང་ཉན་ལ་སོགས་པ་དང་།།ཚོར་བ་དག་ལ་སོགས་པ་དང་།
།གང་ལས་འགྱུར་བའི་འབྱུང་དེ་ལའང་།།དེ་ནི་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| lta daṅ ñan la sogs pa daṅ | | tshor ba dag la sogs pa daṅ |
| gaṅ las 'gyur ba'i 'byuṅ de la'aṅ | | de ni yod pa ma yin (5)no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - Of the arising of the functions of seeing, hearing, feeling, etc. out of the Elements, the entity too cannot be found to exist. - Note: Reference is made to the Four Great Elements of earth, water, fire and wind.

JONES (Skt):
[10] In addition, a prior entity is not found in the elements out of which seeing, hearing, and so forth and feelings and so forth come.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
It [i.e., the self] is not evident in the elements from which seeing, hearing, etc., and feeling, etc. come to be.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Seeing, hearing, etc., and feeling, etc., also exist,
but [the self] does not occur from them or in these existents.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. Action to look at something, or action to listen to something, and so forth,
Announcing, and so forth, is just at the present moment,
And many kinds of pursuits are totally possible to exist just in front of us.
However, it is perfectly impossible for what has past to exist really at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 Nor does a self exist in the elements from which seeing, hearing and the other kinds of perceiving and feeling and the other personal factors arise.

STRENG (Skt):
[10] [missing?]

BOCKING (Ch):
9v10 All the functions of eye and ear etc.,
And all the dharmas of pain, pleasure etc.,
The elements from which they are produced
Those elements have no souls.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Also it is not evident in the elements from which seeing and hearing etc. and feeling etc. occur.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Sight, hearing, and the rest,
As well as sensation and so forth—
Among the causes from which these emerge,
There is no existence of that. [IX.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. Seeing and hearing, etc.,
And feeling, etc.,
And that from which these are arisen:
There is no existent there.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. Such things as seeing, hearing,
And feeling,
And the elements from which they are arisen:
These do not exist.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.10 A self is not found in the elements from which seeing, hearing, and feeling, etc., arise.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/10 If someone says that there is a separate substrate apart from the functions of eye, ear, etc., and the dharmas of pain, pleasure etc., this has already been refuted. Now, as for the four elements which give rise to eye and ear etc., there is no substrate contained in these four elements.

Question: Even if it is true that there is no substrate in all the functions of eye and ear, etc.. and all the dharmas of pain and pleasure, surely the functions of eyes ear etc., and the dharmas of pain and pleasure exist?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

That is, seeing and the other kinds of perceiving arise from the four elements; but a subject of perceiving which would both exist in the elements and yet be the agent of perceiving them makes no sense for the reason given earlier. This is Nagarjuna's thought. We may quote the earlier line 'How can there be an effect without a cause, how can there be a cause without an effect?' It fits here exactly. A subject which could exist prior to the perceiving of the four elements would be the base of the four elements. But this cannot be so because such a subject would be without any causal efficacy. How can what does not exist appropriate the four elements? As the difficulty of appropriating the four elements is the same as pointed out in the appropriating of seeing, it need not be gone into again.

Perceiving itself proves the existence of the subject

You may object that although in this way the self has been disproved, perceiving exists because it has not been disproved. There is no necessity of seeing and the other kinds of perceiving connected with things whose nature it is to have no self, like pots and such things. It follows that that with which there is this essential connection, namely the subject as self (*atman*), does exist.

We reply that there would be a subject as self if there were perceiving. But there is no perceiving. If the one for whom perceiving functions does not exist as we have shown, then as this appropriating subject itself does not exist, how, Nagarjuna asks, can perceiving, which is appropriative by nature, exist.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

In the Chapter V on the "elements" (dhatu), Nagarjuna examined the theories presented by the metaphysicians relating to the physical foundations of human experiences such as seeing, hearing, etc. Even though the Abhidharma classified the fast five sensory organs as well as their objects under the category of derived matter (upada rupa), there was no indication that this involved the assertion of any self or substance in the individual elements that go to constitute these sensory organs and objects. The interpreters of the Abhidharma, as reiterated earlier, were responsible for such metaphysics. Nagarjuna is here going back to the analysis in the discourses as well as in the Abhidharma where, not only in the combination of aggregates or elements, but also in each individual element, there is no recognition of such a metaphysical self or substance (see also Chapter IV).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. However, one should not be tempted to try to ground perception, the perceived object, and the perceiver in some more fundamental ontological ground - some intrinsically identical basis for their existence. For the need to develop a substantial foundation for these phenomena should vanish once one sees that not only do they have no ultimate ontic status, but that they need none. They, like all phenomena, emerge relationally and dependently.

Kārikā IX.11

दर्शनश्रवणादीनि वेदनादीनि चाप्यथ।
न विद्यते चेद्यस्य स न विद्यन्त इमान्यपि॥११॥

darśanaśravaṇādīni vedanādīni cāpy atha |
na vidyate ced yasya sa na vidyanta imāny api ||11||

若眼耳等根 苦樂等諸法
無有本住者 眼等亦應無

ruò yǎn ěr děng gēn kǔ lè děng zhū fǎ
wú yǒu běn zhù zhě yǎn děng yì yīng wú

།ལྟ་དང་ཉན་ལ་སོགས་པ་དང་། །ཚོར་བ་དག་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཡང་།
།གང་གི་ཡིན་པ་གལ་ཏེ་མེད། །དེ་དག་ཀྱང་ནི་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| lta daṅ ñan la sogs pa daṅ | | tshor ba dag la sogs pa yaṅ |
| gaṅ gi yin pa gal te med | | de dag kyaṅ ni yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - If the entity which sees, hears, etc., or which feels, etc. cannot be found, then the functions themselves cannot also be found to exist.

JONES (Skt):
[11] If the one to whom there is seeing, hearing, and so forth and feelings and so forth is not found, then they too are not found.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If he, to whom belongs seeing, hearing, etc. and feeling, etc., is not evident, then even these would not be evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If he whose seeing, hearing, etc., and feeling, etc., does not occur
then these are also not observed. ‘

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. Action to look at something, or action to listen to something, and so forth,
Announcing, and so forth, is just at the present moment,
And if such a kind of scenery hasn't been seen yet actually,
It is completely impossible for everyone to look at the excellent effect of Buddhist monk training in their behavior at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
11 If the subject of seeing, hearing and the other kinds of perceiving, and of feeling and the other factors of personal existence does not exist, these do not exist either.

STRENG (Skt):
11. When he to whom seeing, hearing, etc., and feeling, etc. belong does not exist, Then certainly they do not exist.

BOCKING (Ch):
9v11 If the functions of eye and ear, etc.,
And the dharmas of pain and pleasure
Have no substrate.
Then the eye, etc. should not exist either.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If that to which seeing and hearing etc. and feeling etc. belong is not evident, they too could not be evident.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Sight, hearing, and the rest,
As well as sensation and so forth—
If there is no one to whom these belong,
Then they do not exist either. [IX.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. Seeing and hearing, etc.,
And feeling, etc.,
If that to which they belong does not exist,
They themselves do not exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. Such things as seeing, hearing,
And feeling:
If that to which they belong does not exist,
They themselves do not exist.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.11 If the one who sees, hears, and feels cannot be found, then these functions, too, are not found.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/11 If the dharmas of eye and ear, pain and pleasure etc., have no substrate, who has this eye and ear etc., and by what means do they exist? Therefore eye and ear etc., are also non-existent. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If the one of whom seeing and the other kinds of perception are imagined to be does not exist as has been argued, then it has been made evident that seeing and the other kinds of perception do not exist. It follows therefore that because perceiving does not exist the subject as self does not exist.

Conclusion. The subject neither exists nor does not exist

You may ask whether indeed we are certain that there is no subject as self. We explained this in what was just said, namely that because perceiving does not exist there is no perceiving subject as self either. This we said but you have not adequately grasped the purport of the statement. It was that the perceiving subject conceived of as an ontic entity (*bhavarupa*) cannot have self-existence. What was said was solely to dissipate obstinate clinging to its self-existence. It was a counter-argument using the false concept (*viparyasa*) 'non-existence' (*asad*). But it is not to be thought of as non-existent (*abhava*). Both the obsession with things as realities and the obsession with things as unrealities are to be repudiated.

As Aryadeva said (*Catuhsataka*, X, 3), 'What for you is self for me is non-self; the self does not exist because it is beyond grasping. Is speculation not born among perishable things?' Expounding precisely the same point Nagarjuna says

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna starts with the negation of an opponent's view that there is a prior entity to which the experiences such as seeing and hearing belongs. The implication of the opponent's view is that the experiences of seeing, etc. are independent elements appropriated by an equally independent prior entity. As such, for Nagarjuna, it is not merely the prior entity that is unacceptable, but also the experiences themselves as conceived of by the opponent. This, therefore, is not a simple denial of any and all forms of description of experience. Rather, it is a particular type of discrimination resorted to by the metaphysician that is rejected.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. Not only has this analysis refuted the inherent existence of the self as a basis for experience, but in virtue of so doing, it has refuted the inherent existence of perception and the perceptual faculties.

Kārikā IX.12

प्राक् च यो दर्शनादिभ्यः सांप्रतं चोर्ध्वमेव च।
न विद्यतेऽस्ति नास्तीति निवृत्तास्तत्र कल्पनाः॥१२॥

prāk ca yo darśanādibhyaḥ sāṃprataṃ cordhvam eva ca |
na vidyate ’sti nāstīti nivṛttās tatra kalpanāḥ ||12||

眼等無本住 今後亦復無
以三世無故 無有無分別

yǎn děng wú běn zhù jīn hòu yì fù wú
yǐ sān shì wú gù wú yǒu wú fēn bié

།གང་ཞིག་ལྟ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཡི།།སྔ་རོལ་ད་ལྟ་ཕྱི་ན་མེད།
།དེ་ལ་ཡོད་དོ་མེད་དོ་ཞེས།།རྟོག་པ་དག་ནི་ལྡོག་པར་འགྱུར།།

| gaṅ źig lta la sogs pa yi | | sṅa rol da lta phyi na med |
| de la yod do med do źes | | rtog pa dag ni ldog par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - Of an entity which does not exist prior to, concomitantly, or posterior to the functions of seeing, etc. the notions of existence and non-existence are unnecessary. - Note: Prak, samprata, and urdhva are translated by Kumarajiva as the three temporal existences i.e., past, present and future.

JONES (Skt):
[12] For whomever there is nothing prior to. nor simultaneous with, nor after seei ng and so forth, such fabrications as “is” and “is not” are abandoned.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Wherein someone prior to, simultaneous with or posterior to, seeing, etc. is not evident, therein thoughts of existence and non-existence are also renounced.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
He who is prior to, simultaneous with, or posterior to seem. g, etc., does not occur and thereby,
fictions concerning existence and nonexistence are renounced.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. And such a kind of scenery has existed before it has been influenced by seeing, and so forth,
So the sceneries exist as the situations, which has been established by the harmony with the time.
Even though it is impossible for us to know the distinction whether such situations exist, or not,
The very vague scenery exists there, which might be perhaps a product by human conjectures probably.

SPRUNG (Skt):
12 Speculations concerning existence and non-existence are silenced in the face of something which exists neither before, at the same time as, nor after seeing and the other kinds of perceiving.

STRENG (Skt):
12. For him who does not exist previous to, at the same time, or after seeing, etc. The conception "He exists," "He does not exist," is dissipated.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
IX.12 Where something prior to, simultaneous with, or after seeing and so forth [which could be regarded as a self] is not evident, there conceptions “it exists,” “it does not exist” [with *svabhāva*] have ceased.

BOCKING (Ch):
9v12 In eyes, etc. there is no substrate,
Now and in the future there will be none.
Since there is none in the three periods of time,
There is no distinction between existence and non-existence.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Reject the concepts “it exists,” “it doesn’t exist” about that which is not evident prior to, now or after seeing etc.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which does not exist
Before, together with, or after sight and the rest
Will no longer be thought about
As existent or nonexistent. [IX.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. For whomever prior to,
Simultaneous with, or after seeing, etc., there is nothing,
For such a one, assertions like "it exists" or "it does not exist" -
Such conceptions will cease.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. That which does not exist prior to,
Simultaneous with, or after seeing does not exist.
Conceptions such as “it exists” or “it does not exist”
Will cease.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
9.12 Notions of existence and non-existence will cease when an existent one is not found either before, during, or after seeing, etc.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
The one who experiences perceptions does not exist
Before, during, or after the experiences of seeing and so forth.
Knowing this, all thoughts of an experiencer of perceptions either existing or not existing are reversed. (12)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

9/12 (Though we) contemplate and search for a substrate, it never existed in the eye etc., and does not exist now, or in the future. Not existing in any of the three periods of time, it, is the nirvana of non-arising, in which there should be no obstacles. If there is no substrate, then how can there be the eye, etc? Debates and vain arguments such as these consequently cease, and when vain arguments have ceased, all dharmas are empty.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In the first place there is no subject as self prior to seeing and the other kinds of perceiving because it would lack a *raison d'etre* (*astitvabhavat*). Nor is there a subject simultaneously with seeing and the other kinds of perceiving because one never experiences simultaneous existence of two things each of which by itself does not exist, like the two horns of a rabbit: subject and perceiving do not exist by themselves, independent of each other. So simultaneity is not possible either. No more is there a subject subsequently. If there were first perceiving and in a later moment a subject, then it would be possible. But it is not so because no act can be without an agent. After a searching investigation it is clear that there is no perceiving subject as self either before, after or simultaneously with seeing and the other kinds of perceiving. What man of insight would in such case ontologize about the existence or non-existence of something whose very nature it is never to be perceived (*anupalabdha*)? The conclusion is that, exactly like the agent subject and his doing, the subject of appropriation and the activity of appropriating can exist only in reciprocal dependence, not each in its own right (*svabhaviki*).

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The existence of an independent entity in the experiential process, whether it be prior to experience, simultaneous with it, or posterior to it, is rejected by Nagarjuna . This does not mean that he was willing to accept the independent occurrence of impressions coming one after another in rapid succession with no causal connectoins, as the Sautrantikas believed. In these particular contexts (tatra), Nagarjuna is ready to abandon the thoughts (kalpana) of existence and non-existence (asti nastiti) in the way they were understood by the metaphysicians.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

12. Nāgārjuna here generalizes the point and offers a diagnosis of the confusion he has worked to resolve: Just as we want to say that the self as pure subject does not exist - nor do perception or perceptual objects exist as entities - yet want to affirm the conventional reality of perception, perceivers, and perceiveds, in general, we want to deny the inherent existence of phenomena and affirm their conventional reality. Just as we want to say that the self neither exists inherently nor that it is nonexistent inherently, we want to refrain from attributing inherent existence or inherent nonexistence to all entities. The apparent paradox involved in saying that things both exist and do not exist in one breath and saying that they neither exist nor do not exist in another - indeed of refusing in another sense to permit even these predications in another mood - arises, Nāgārjuna points out, from the conceptual imputation of inherently existent bases for these predications, which then have to be thought of as having contradictory properties. Absent the bases, we can see these assertions merely as useful analytical tools in various dialectical contexts to help us to see the ultimately empty and conventionally real nature of phenomena; And Nāgārjuna concludes this chapter by asserting that once one ceases hypostasizing the subjective self - that entity that might seem to be, as Descartes notes, the most obviously existent and most easily known entity of all - the temptation to hypostasize other entities dissolves.

⁂

Chapter X

अग्नीन्धनपरीक्षा दशमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀燃可燃品第十(十六偈)

།མེ་དང་བུད་ཤིང་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་པའོ།།

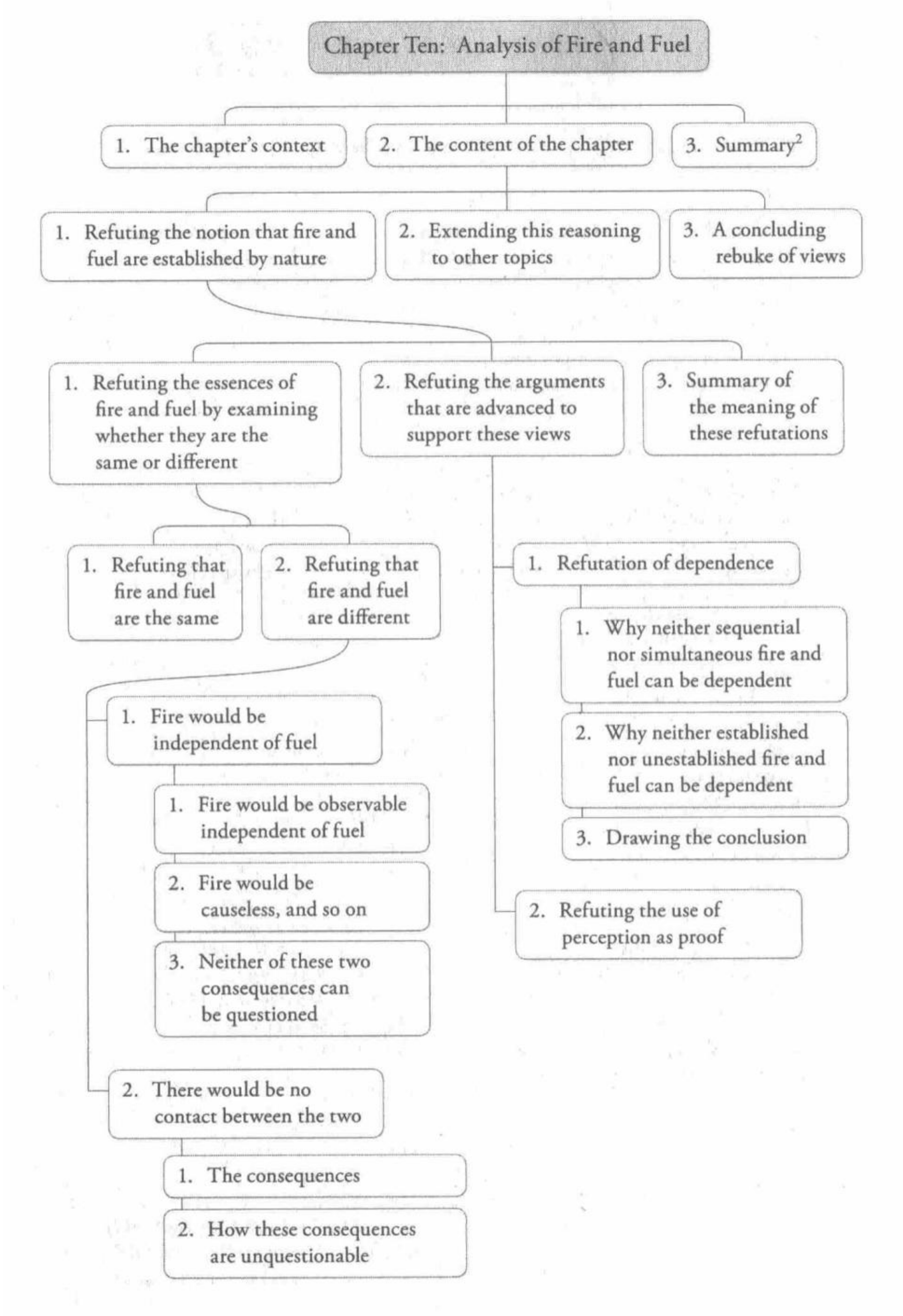
agnīndhanaparīkṣā nāma daśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter X: Examination of Fire and Fuel

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter X

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the second part of the second major portion of the text, the extensive explanation of the two selflessnesses, and within that, the distinct explanations of the selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of the person. We are in the second section of that part—the explanation of the selflessness of the person. We have completed the first of its two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the person. We are now beginning the second part: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of the person. This section has two parts: The

refutation of the example in the premises and the refutation of the reasoning in the premises. This chapter is the first of these two parts.

EXPLANATION:

Here someone might say it does not make sense to say that the appropriator and appropriated do not exist inherently in virtue of being mutually dependent, **[219]** because dependent entities are seen to exist inherently. Although fire arises in dependence on fuel, the essences of heat and combustibility are seen as the effect; and although fuel depends upon fire, that which is burned has the essence of the four great elements. Therefore, like fire and fuel, both that which is appropriated and the appropriator also exist inherently.

The refutation of this has three parts: the refutation of the inherent existence of fire and fuel, applying this reasoning to other phenomena, and condemnation of their view of the point of the refutation.

SUMMARY:

So, when the self and that which is possessed by the self, and such things as cause and effect and part and whole, are established as identical or different, using the example of fire and fuel, one might ask, “Are these established as existing inherently, or are they established through the power of nominal convention?” Then, if one analyzes using the previously explained arguments in the first case, realizing that there would be no grounds for designating anything as that which is to be burned and the burner, etc., grasping them as truly existent is refuted. But in the latter case, realising that all these conventions are completely tenable, it should be ascertained that they are dependently arisen.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER X - Examination of Wood and Fire

This chapter is one of the more significant expositions of the central concept of pratityasamutpada. The terms, fire and wood, are critically analyzed into whether they are the same or different. In other words, a pair of terms relating to the Madhyamika Credo, i.e., anekartham anandrtham, is under review. The Credo comes to full light in this chapter but, as the 15th verse indicates, the same critical analysis thus employed can be extended to other entities, notably that of the self and its seizing or grasping function.

Special mention must be made here with respect to a novel job of interpreting the meaning of the technical term mutual togetherness as used in this chapter by Prof. Y. Ueda. He is the first scholar to interpret and employ a principle which he claims to be central or basic to the unique type of "logic" employed in Madhyamika philosophy. The unique logical principle in brief is that of any two concepts, e.g., fire and wood, there are inherent conditions in each such that their ultimate relationship into a whole or unity entails a mutual denial of each other. With this principle he arrives at the solution to the baffling statement that nothing is identical or differentiated as expressed in the Credo.

The germ of this logical thought had already been hinted at by Chinese as well as Japanese scholars, especially by those in the field of Zen, but this is not entirely a surprise because of the closeness or perhaps an ultimate identity, in the final analysis, of the foundations of Zen and Sunyavada. D. T. Suzuki, for example, speaks of the logic of immediate negation, H, Ui speaks of the logic of immediate negation-affirmation and even as far back as the 12th Century A.D., Dogen, the patriarch of Japanese Soto Zen, remarks on the union of the self and the other self Despite these antecedent thoughts, due credit must go to Prof. Ueda for carrying out a clear and systematic exposition of the peculiar, if not unique, type of logic in use.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

10. *Fire and fuel* (*agnindhana*). The futility of employing the example of the fire (*agni*) and fuel (*indhana*) in order to illustrate the relationship between a substantial action and a substantial agent is shown in Chapter X. It is indeed the most important metaphor used by the substantialists to establish the conception of a metaphysical person. The manner in which the Pudgalavadins utilized this metaphor is explained in detail by Vasubandhu in the final chapter of his *Abhidharmakosa-bhasya* (see annotation on Chapter X). Finally he refuses to recognize those who admit the reality of a self (*atman*, *pudgala*) as well as those who uphold discrete substantial entities (*bhava*), as people who are conversant with the true meaning of the Buddha’s teachings (X. 16). It is clear that the reference here is not to the non-Buddhist metaphysicians, but rather to the Buddhist metaphysicians who claimed themselves to be the true interpreters of the Buddha-word, namely the Sautrantikas (= *pudgalavadins*) and the Sarvastivadins (= *svabhavavadins).*

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Fire

Were the fire its flames,
Act and actor would be one.
Were flames something else,
They could not have lit this fire.

Independent and alone,
Eternal flames would burn forever –
Actors with no acts.

Were the fire a fire
Only when it burns -
How could you light this fire?

Were your flames something else,
They would never touch my fire,
ever light it and never die.
They would burn and burn and burn.

Though they are different,
Flames touch fires
As a woman touches a man
And a man a woman.
Flame and fire merge.
They unite despite being different.

If flames depend on fires
And fires upon flames,
What comes first?
Were the fire already there,
The flame that lit it would flare again
Or that fire would flicker flamelessly.

If what flames depend on
Depend on flames,
What depends on what?
How can flames-to-be
Depend on anything?
What would do the depending?

Flames do not depend on fires
Nor are they independent of them.
Fires do not depend on flames
Nor are they independent of them.

Flames and fires explain everything:
The self and what it grasps
And also jugs and rolls of cloth.
Identity and difference? Of self? Of things?

JONES (COMMENTARY)

10. Fire and Fuel

This example comes from the Buddhist Pudgala-vadins who used it to illustrate the relation of the person *(pudgala)* to the various physical and mental bodily aggregates (v. 16). But in Nagarjuna's characterization of self-existence metaphysics, fire and fuel in the process of burning are either *identical* or *distinct.* They cannot be identical - the wood that is labeled "fuel" exists independently of being on fire. But if they are distinct, then one could exist without the other, and clearly fire cannot exist without fuel.

Verses 1-5 show how Nagarjuna sees the world if self-existence prevails. If fire and fuel are real, then they are distinct entities, and one would occur without the other since real entities do not depend on any other entities. Thus, fire would be eternal since it does not depend on having fuel. And conversely, fuel would be untouched by fire and thus never consumed, and so it too would last forever.

The double dependency of verse 9 is this: in order for fuel to be "fuel," a fire must already exist. Thus, to claim that the fire is dependent upon fuel would be to claim that the fire exists dependently upon something that already presupposes the existence of the fire.

Verse 10 means that if entity A is dependent upon entity B for its existence, then establishing the existence of A establishes the existence of B – but to Nagarjuna, this makes *entity B dependent upon entity A.* So then, he asks, what is dependent upon what? This is true for both the idea of "establishing" and of "dependence."

Examples amenable to this analysis include the relation of a pot to the clay that it is made of and the relation between a cloth and the threads that comprise it (v. 15)· for example, a clay pot is more than simply any old pile of clay molecules - it also has a particular structure. But the pot is *not different from* the clay material either. So, if we bifurcate the pot in our mind by our conceptualizations into two distinct entities - the clay and the pot – then we end up with the same sort of problems as with fire and fuel.

10

An Examination of Fire and Firewood

In the sutras, the Buddha explained:

When one's hands, two sticks, and one's effort of rubbing the sticks come together,
From these conditions, fire arises,
And after arising and performing its function, it quickly ceases.
But when the wise ones ask,
"Where did it come from and where did it go?"
They look in all directions, but never find any occurrence of its coming or going.

So it is with the aggregates, sources of consciousness, and potentials—
They do not exist inside and they do not exist outside;
All are free of self-entity,
And they do not abide anywhere.
The defining characteristic of phenomena is that they are of the essence of space.

WHEN OUR HANDS rub two sticks together, that produces a fire that will eventually cease, but this fire does not come from anywhere to the sticks when it first begins to burn them and it does not go anywhere when it goes out. Fire is empty of coming and going.

Similarly, ignorance, clinging to the belief in self, mental afflictions, and suffering do not come from anywhere and they do not go anywhere. We can apply this to the experience of dreams as well and see that whatever appears in dreams, whatever happiness or suffering, it does not come from anywhere and it does not go anywhere. In the very same way, all phenomena are empty of coming and going.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to those who did not accept his refutation of the self of the individual from the last chapter. These people claimed that the self exists in relation to the five aggregates in the same way that fire exists in relation to the wood that it burns, lust as the fire is the burning agent and firewood is the object burned, so it is that the self is the appropriator and the aggregates are the objects that it appropriates. In order to help these people abandon their belief that the self was real, Nagarjuna therefore had to examine fire and firewood and demonstrate that they do not truly exist.

One way that Nagarjuna does this is by showing that two things like fire and firewood (fn The term *firewood* here means wood that is actually being consumed by fire.) that must depend upon each other for their existence cannot truly exist. This is the topic of verse ten:

If something exists in dependence upon something else,
But that thing upon which it depends
Must also depend upon it,
Then which one of these exists in dependence upon which?

If fire and the wood that it burns truly exist, they have to exist either independently or dependently—there is no third alternative. The fire and the wood that it burns cannot exist independent of each other, however, because if they could, then fire could exist even in the absence of anything to burn, and burning wood could exist without any fire burning it. So the first possibility is eliminated.

The fire and firewood cannot actually exist dependently either. If they did, then one of the two would have to first exist and then serve as a cause to bring the other into existence. Neither fire nor the wood that it burns can fulfill that function, however, because each depends upon the other for its own existence. Fire can exist only if there is something burning, but that burning substance (the firewood) cannot exist unless there is some fire burning it! So even though the fire relies on the burning wood for its existence, the burning wood itself cannot exist first and then bring the fire into existence, because for it to exist there must be a fire burning it in the first place. Similarly, the fire cannot first exist and then serve as a supporting cause to bring the burning wood into existence, because the fire itself cannot exist unless there is some wood burning in the first place. In his commentary, Mipham Rinpoche gives the example of two rocking boats—since neither boat is steady to begin with, it is impossible for either one to be the cause of steadying the other. Similarly, when one thing must depend upon another for its existence, but that other one must in turn depend on the first for its own existence, in genuine reality it is impossible for either one to be the support for the other's existence. Therefore, neither one of them truly exists—they are mere interdependent appearances.

Another way to prove that fire and firewood lack inherent existence is to examine the five possible ways that fire and firewood could exist in relation to one another, and see that in fact none of them are possible. This is what Nagarjuna does in verse fourteen:

The firewood itself is not the fire,
There is no fire that exists apart from the firewood,
The fire does not possess the firewood,
The fire does not support the firewood, and the firewood does not support the fire.

The first possibility is that fire and the firewood it burns would be the same thing. This would be illogical, however, because actors and the objects of their actions are not the same thing. For example, an ax is not the same thing as the wood it chops, a pen is not the same thing as the letters it writes, and so forth.

Second, it is impossible for the fire and the firewood to be different things, because if they were, they would exist independent of each other. Fire could burn in the sky without burning anything at all, and wood would burn without any fire burning it.

The last three possibilities—that the fire possesses the firewood, that the fire supports the firewood, or that the firewood supports the fire—all depend upon the fire and firewood being different entities, because there have to be two different things in order for one to possess or support the other. Since fire and firewood cannot be different entities, however, these last three possibilities are also impossible.

Thus, all five relationships that fire and firewood could possibly have with each other are logically untenable, and therefore, fire and firewood do not truly exist.

The next step is to apply this analysis to the self, the appropriator, and the five aggregates that it appropriates. Then we can apply it to all other phenomena as well. Nagarjuna does this in verse fifteen:

This examination of fire and firewood
Refutes the self and the aggregates it appropriates in all five ways.
Similarly, examining vases, blankets, and so forth,
It is perfectly explained that none of them exist in any of these five ways.

Just as fire and firewood cannot exist in relation to each other in any of the five possible ways, the same is true for the self and the aggregates it appropriates. The self is not the same as the aggregates, because it would be illogical for the appropriator and the objects it appropriates to be the same thing. Nor can the self be different from its aggregates, because the self cannot exist apart from the aggregates, which compose its body and mind, and these aggregates cannot exist apart from the self, for if they did they would be a body and mind that did not belong to anyone. The remaining three possibilities are all variants of the second one, so they too are logically untenable (fn For further explanation of why the self does not truly exist because it cannot exist as the same as or different from the five aggregates, see the first verse of chapter 18, "An Examination of Self and Phenomena.").

If we go through the five possibilities one by one with regard to the aggregate of forms, we would say:

The self is not forms,
The self is not something different from forms,
The self does not have or possess any forms,
The self does not exist in dependence upon forms,
And forms do not exist in dependence upon the self.

If we connect this with the other four aggregates of feelings, discriminations, formations, and consciousnesses, then we have twenty-five different ways to analyze the selflessness of the individual. It would be very good for you to go through them on your own.

We should also apply the same analysis to vases, blankets, our own bodies, our possessions, friends, enemies, causes, results, and so forth. Whatever it is, it does not truly exist because it cannot exist in relation to the parts that compose it in any one of these five possible ways. Therefore, all composite things are only dependently existent mere appearances—just like fire and firewood, just like the self and the aggregates that compose it. All phenomena are therefore empty of self-nature—their defining characteristic is that they are of the essence of space.

What is it like for yogis and yoginis who directly realize this? Their realization brings them incredible power and freedom, as the Buddha taught in the King of Samadhi Sutra:

Fire can blaze hot for hundreds of aeons
But it will never be able to burn space.
Similarly, fire will never be able to burn
Those who know that phenomena are equivalent to space.

When you dream and you know that you are dreaming, harmful things may appear, but they will not harm you. You can sit in the middle of a rushing river or in the middle of a blazing fire and not get hurt in the slightest way. Yogis and yoginis who directly realize the union of appearance and emptiness have this same experience during the day—the biographies of the great siddhas are filled with stories of how they performed such miraculous feats for the benefit of others. That they had such power was a direct result of their realization of emptiness, and the first step toward achieving that direct realization is to gain certainty in emptiness using our intelligence, our power of analysis. The reasonings Nagarjuna presents in his *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* help us to do that, and that is why they are so important.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter X

अग्नीन्धनपरीक्षा दशमं प्रकरणम्।

agnīndhanaparīkṣā nāma daśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀燃可燃品第十(十六偈)

zhōng lùn guān rán kě rán pǐn dì shí (shí liù jié;jì)

|མི་དང་བུད་ཤིང་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་པའོ||

| me daṅ bud śiṅ brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa bcu pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER X - Examination of Wood and Fire

JONES (Skt):
10. Fire and Fuel

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Fire and Fuel

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
10. Analysis of Fire and Fuel

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[10] Examination of the Fusion of Fire and Combustion (16 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Fire and Fuel

STRENG (Skt):
Section 10 - An Analysis of Fire and Kindling (Fire and Fuel) In 16 Verses)

ROBINSON (Skt):
10. fire and fuel.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 10. Examination of fire and fuel 16 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Fire and Firewood

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER X - Analysis of Fire and Fuel

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter X: Examination of Fire and Fuel

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER X - Examination of Fire and Fuel

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of Fire and Fuel

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 10: AN EXAMINATION OF FIRE AND FIREWOOD

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/0 Question: Surely receiving and a recipient exist, like fire and fuel, the recipient being the fire, and what is received being the fuel, which is to say the five skandhas.

Reply: This is not so, and why? Because neither fire nor fuel can be established. Fire and fuel may either be established as one dharma or established as two dharmas, but neither can (in fact) be established.

(14b18) Question: Let us leave aside for now the unity or difference of (these) dharmas, for if you say that fire and fuel are nonexistent, how can you refute them by means of the characteristics of unity or difference? It is like a hare's horns or a tortoise's hair; being non-existent they cannot be refuted. We can see with our worldly eyes that things do exist, and we can subsequently examine them, just as there is metal, which can then be heated and forged. If there were no fire or fuel, we would not be able to examine them in terms of identity and difference. If you allow that there is unity and difference of dharmas, then you must recognize that fire and fuel exist, and if you allow that they exist, then this is to consider them as already existent.

Reply:

(14b24) In terms of conventional worldly expression, there would be no error, but whether one speaks of fire and fuel as one, or as different, they are not to be considered as (one) receiving (the other). Apart from conventional worldly expressions, there is nothing with which to argue. If we did not speak of fire and fuel, how could anything be refuted? If nothing is spoken about, then meanings cannot be clarified. Thus, if a commentator wishes to refute existence and non-existence, inevitably he has to speak of existence and non-existence. He takes up (the terms) existence and non-existence but does not thereby accept

existence and non-existence. He is following conventional worldly usage so there is no error involved. If putting words in one's mouth was at once to accept them, then for you to say 'destroy' would constitute self destruction. It is the same with 'fire' and 'fuel'. Although the expressions exist, these are not accepted either. Therefore we may consider whether fire and fuel are one dharma or different dharmas, (and say) that neither can be established, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter XI]

The initial alternative: identical or different

Some may object that what we have just stated, 'Exactly like agent subject and his doing, neither the subject of appropriation nor the activity of appropriating exists in its own right', does not make sense. This is because even dependent things are observed to be self-existent; fire (*agni*) is dependent on fuel (*indhanam*) yet it is not lacking self-existence, as heat and the capacity to burn something are directly experienced as its peculiar effects. In the same way fuel is dependent on fire, yet it is not lacking in self-existence because the four material elements are self-existent. Similarly the subject of appropriation, though dependent on what is appropriated, exists in his own right; and what is appropriated is dependent on the appropriator like fuel and fire. These two, appropriator and appropriated, exist as a pair.

We reply that this would be so if fire and fuel existed as such; but they do not. How is that? The thinking is that if fire and fuel exist they must be either identical with (*ekatva*) or different from (*anyatva*) one another. But Nagarjuna says that neither makes sense:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Ten Examination of Fire and Fuel (Agnindhana-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter X Examination of Fire and Fuel

This chapter, the only one in this set of chapters ostensibly addressing an external phenomenon, is in fact concerned entirely with a standard counterexample to the kind of arguments Nāgārjuna offered in the two previous chapters on subjectivity in action and in perception. Recall that in those discussions Nāgārjuna argues that subject and object cannot be intrinsically and distinctly identified as entities because of their mutual dependence. Buddhist schools asserting substantial identity in the context of dependent coorigination, such as Vaibhāsika and Sautrāntika schools, used the example of fire and fuel to demonstrate the compossibility of substantial independent identity and dependent origination, as well as the possibility of the one-way dependence relation that these schools assert that actions and perception bear to the self. Just as fire depends on fuel but not vice versa, they would argue, and just as fire and fuel have distinct identities despite the fact that the former depends for its existence on the latter, action and perception can depend on the subject but not vice versa. Despite this dependence, proponents of this view would argue each relatum can be individually established as an entity. (fn 60. See Tsong Khapa's comments on this verse (p. 219).) In this chapter, Nāgārjuna undertakes the task of demonstrating that the example does not demonstrate those possibilities. ..

Kārikā X.1

यदिन्धनं स चेदग्निरेकत्वं कर्तृकर्मणोः।
अन्यश्चेदिन्धनादग्निरिन्धनादप्यृते भवेत्॥१॥

LVP 202,11-12 - LVP 217,15-16
yad indhanaṃ sa ced agnir ekatvaṃ kartṛkarmaṇoḥ |
anyaś ced indhanād agnir indhanād apy ṛte bhavet ||1||

若燃是可燃 作作者則一
若燃異可燃 離可燃有燃

T1564: vol 30, pg 14b14
ruò rán shì kě rán zuò zuò zhě zé yī
ruò rán yì kě rán lí kě rán yǒu rán

།བུད་ཤིང་གང་དེ་མེ་ཡིན་ན། །བྱེད་པ་པོ་དང་ལས་གཅིག་འགྱུར། །
།གལ་ཏེ་ཤིང་ལས་མེ་གཞན་ན། །ཤིང་མེད་པར་ཡང་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར། །

Tg tsa 6b6 - Tg tsa 7a7
|| bud śiṅ gaṅ de me yin na | | byed pa po daṅ las gcig ’gyur |
| gal te śiṅ las me gźan na | | śiṅ med par yaṅ ’byuṅ bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - If wood is the same as fire, then likewise the doer and his deed will be identical. If fire is distinct from wood, then it will exist without wood.

JONES (Skt):
[1] If fire is the fuel, then the action and actor are one. If fire is *other than* the fuel, then fire would occur without the fuel.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If fire were to be fuel, then there would be identity of agent and action. If fire were to be different from fuel, then it would exist even without the fuel.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If fuel is fire, there is identity of agent and action.
If fire is different from fuel, then it would surely exist without fuel.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. When what is called burning is actually fire,
And what has become into one, is oneness of a person, who ignites, and an effort to ignite itself.
What is different from burning is fire,
Just leaving from burning, something, which is moving on, is going.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 If fire is fuel that would be identity of agent and act. If fire is wholly other than fuel then it could exist even without fuel.

STRENG (Skt):
1. If fire is identical to its kindling, then it is both producer and product. And if fire is different from kindling, then surely fire exists without kindling (i.e. separate).

ROBINSON (Skt):
If the fire is identical with the fuel, then there is oneness of agent and affectee. If the fire were different from the fuel, then the fire would exist even without the fuel.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v1 If fire is the same as fuel,
Then the deed and the doer are one
If fire is different from fuel
Then fire would exist without fuel.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If firewood were fire, actor and act would be one. If fire were other than wood, it would occur even without wood.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If fuel were the same as fire,
Then agent and object would be the same.
If fire were different from fuel,
Then it would burn even without it. [X.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. If fuel were fire
Then agent and action would be one.
If fire were different from fuel,
Then it could arise without fuel.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. If fuel were fire,
Agent and object would be one.
If fire were different from fuel,
Then it could arise without fuel.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If fire were to be fuel, then there would be identity of agent and action. If fire were to be different from fuel, then it would exist even without the fuel.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/1 'Fire' is the flames, 'fuel' is the firewood. 'The doer' is the person, 'the deed' is the act. If fire and fuel are one, then doer and deed also should and deed are one, then the potter and his pot being the potter and the deed being the pot. is not the pot and the pot is not the potter, regarded as one? Therefore, because the doer not one, fuel and fire are also not one. be one. If doer are one, the doer (but) the potter so how can they be and the deed are

(14c10) If you say that, oneness being impossible, they must be different, this too is incorrect, and why? If fire and fuel are different, then there should be fires which exist quite separately from fuel. If we distinguish this thing as a fire and that thing as fuel, then everywhere there would be fires without fuel, but in reality this does not happen, and consequently, they cannot be different.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In this argument fuel is what is ignited and consists of wood and such things which are to be burned. That which burns the fuel is the agent, fire. If one thinks that the fuel itself is the fire then agent and act would be identical. But things are not taken this way because the untenable consequence would be the identity of the pot and the potter and of the woodcutter and the wood, and because this is not commonly found to be so.

On the other hand it is no better if they are wholly other (*anyatva*). If fire were wholly other than fuel then we would directly perceive fire as being independent of fuel. There is no cloth, wholly other than a pot, which is not seen to be independent of it. But fire is not independent of fuel in this way and so this does not make sense. Furthermore, if fire were wholly other than fuel then

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter IX, as pointed out, was devoted to an examination of the cause or foundation of the speculations that eventually led to the belief in metaphysical notions such as "self" (atman) or "substance" (svabhava). Such speculations per-mined to the "past" (purva). Why should that analysis be followed by an examination of the metaphor of "fire and fuel" (agnindhana)? What is its relevance?

Only a glance at the controversies going on during Nagarjuna's day can provide justification for this chapter. Once again, Vasubandhu comes to our assistance. In his Abhidharmakosa-bhasya, he was recording a controversy among the Buddhists that was continued for centuries before him. And that controversy could not have escaped the attention of Nagarjuna.

The ninth chapter of the Abhidharmakosa is an appendix (Akb p; translated into English by T. I. Stcherbatsky, The Soul Theory of the Buddhists, in the Bulleting de l'Academie des Sciences de Russie, Petrograd, 1920, reprinted 1970, Bharatiya Vidya Prakasan, Varanasi). It deals with the controversial views of the Vatsiputriyas (considered to be the same as the Arya-Sammitiyas, see Sakv) who propounded the view that there is a "real person" (santam pudgalam). In the discussion that follows, the Vatsiputriyas are made to admit that this "person" is neither a substance (dravya), like material form (rupa), etc., nor a mere designation (prajnapti), a mere name like "milk" (ksira), this latter being nothing more than an aggregate of substances (dravya). When the Sautrantika Vasubandhu pressed his questions as to whether the person is real or nominal, the Vatsiputriyas fell back upon the metaphor of "fire and fuel" (agnindhana) in order to illustrate their point of aview (Akb). This metaphor is then discussed at length and seems to have been the most important means by which the Vatsiputriyas attempted to justify their conception of a "person."

Therefore, it is understandable why Nagarjuna, after dealing with the question regarding a substantial agent (karaka, Chapter VIII) and also the motivation for such a theory (namely, the desire to trace one's identity to the past, purva, Chapter IX), would settle down to an examination of a singularly important metaphor used by the substantialists to justify their conception of an agent.

It may be necessary to keep in mind that Vasubandhu, who wrote the Abhidharmakosa, was a Sautrantika who believed that a "person" (pudgala) is a mere designation (prajnapti) without any reality. Hence his agreement with the nominalist position (Akb , atha prajnaptih, vayam apy evam brumah). The substantialist position (dravya-vada) was therefore identified with the Sarvastivada view. Even though the Sarvastivadins did not actually propound a substantialist theory of a person, their conception of

substance (svabhava) could not escape such implications (see Sakv , svabhavata ity atmatah).

However, even if by implication, the Sarvastivada theory were to be identified with the substantialist view of a person (pudgala), what sort of conception were the Vatsiputriyas upholding? They were looking for a middle position between substantialism (dravya) and nominalism (prajnapti). The discussion in terms of the metaphor of "fire and fuel" was, therefore, intended to overcome such duality.

The argument follows thus: "Without fuel, there would be no designation of fire. Yet, fire cannot be designated as something different from fuel, nor as something identical," (Akb , Na hi vinendhanenagnih prajnapyate , na canya indhanad agnih sakyate prajnapayitum napy ananyah). Similarly, a person is neither identical nor different from the aggregates. (If we are to accept the negative interpretation of the Nagarjunian dialectic, as is often presented by most modern scholars, the Madhyamika position would be no different from that of the Vatsiputriyas as described above.) When the question was raised as to which of the six sense organs provide knowledge of the "person," the Vatsiputriyas answered: "By means of all six," (sadbhir api, Akb). They argued: "A 'person' is recognized depending upon visually cognized material form (caksur-vijneyani rupani). As such a person should be declared as being visually cognizable and visually not cognizable; it is neither material form nor not material form."

These and other arguments seem to indicate that the Vatsiputriyas were following a dialectical method at arriving at a higher synthesis by avoiding the dichotomies of thesis and antithesis. This, unfortunately, is the view attributed to Nagarjuna . The contents of the present chapter needs to be carefully evaluated in the light of the Vatsiputriya conception of a person. When the Vatsiputriyas maintained that fire and fuel are neither identical nor different, they were actually admitting both. For them, both fire and fuel are each constituted of four substances (ubhayam astadharmakam), the only difference is that in the case of fire the heat element (usnam) predominates, whereas in the fuel it is latent. In this way, they are both identical or non-different. Yet they are different in terms of the difference in time (bhinnakalatvat). Thus, the negative description of the Vatsiputriyas is not meant as a negation of metaphysical views, as it was in the case of Nagarjuna (see above, commentary on the dedicatory verses), but an assertion of both identity and difference in order to arrive at a higher synthesis. No such move is found in Nagarjuna when he criticizes the identity of fire and fuel in the above verse. For him identity of fire and fuel means identity of agent and action. If they were different, then each could be independent.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. ("Then it could arise without fuel" fn 61. The intended sense of "fuel" here is material that is actually burning - not, for instance, firewood neatly stacked outside.)

The opponent does not want to assert the identity of fire and fuel, first, since it would contradict common sense, but second, since that, by the intended analogy, would identify agent and action, self and perception. On the other hand, if they are identified as intrinsically different - as having distinct and independent essential identities - they should be able to arise independently. Fuel should count as fuel even if there were no fire; fire should be possible without fuel. This follows from drawing the distinction at the level of intrinsic identity. Of course, distinguishing them conventionally permits their mutual dependence, but fails to establish the intrinsic identity intended by the reificationist.

Kārikā X.2

नित्यप्रदीप्त एव स्यादप्रदीपनहेतुकः।
पुनरारम्भवैयर्थ्यमेवं चाकर्मकः सति॥२॥

nityapradīpta eva syād apradīpanahetukaḥ |
punarārambhavaiyarthyam evaṃ cākarmakaḥ sati ||2||

如是常應燃 不因可燃生
則無燃火功 亦名無作火

rú shì cháng yīng rán bù yīn kě rán shēng
zé wú rán huǒ gōng yì míng wú zuò huǒ

།རྟག་ཏུ་འབར་བ་ཉིད་དུ་འགྱུར། །འབར་བྱེད་རྒྱུ་ལས་མི་འབྱུང་ཞིང་།
།རྩོམ་པ་དོན་མེད་ཉིད་དུ་འགྱུར། །དེ་ལྟ་ཡིན་ན་ལས་ཀྱང་མེད། །

| rtag tu ’bar ba ñid du ’gyur | | ’bar byed rgyu las mi ’byuṅ źiṅ |
| rtsom pa don med ñid (7)du ’gyur | | de lta yin na las kyaṅ med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - If there is no cause for burning, then fire should burn constantly. And there will be no purpose in fire to start (i.e., to burn) again and it will then be without a function.

JONES (Skt):
[2] The fire would be eternally aflame without the cause of being lit. In addition, lighting it would be rendered pointless and would be a nonaction.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A burning without a cause would be eternally aflame. Furthermore, its commencement will be rendered meaningless [useless]. When that happens, it will be without a function.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
A permanent burning would be without a cause for igniting.
But thus the beginning is without purpose and no action exists.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. The natural burning might be just understandable,
But what is separated from natural co, might be more reasonable.
Therefore it might be useless to begin burning newly again,
And in those situations, there might be just something, which does not have any meaning.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 It would flame forever uncaused by bursting into flame; to re-kindle it would be pointless, an act without action.

STRENG (Skt):
2. A fire which is perpetually burning would exist without a cause, which is kindling, Since another beginning would be pointless; in this case fire is without its object i.e., burning of kindling.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v2 In that case fire would exist eternally
Arising without fuel as its cause
Then burning would have no result
And we would call it ineffectual fire.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
[Fire] would burn permanently and would not arise from causes for burning. Starting [a fire] would be meaningless. If it were like that, there would also be no act.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Fire would burn forever,
It would not arise from what causes it to burn,
Trying to light it would be pointless,
And it would not relate to any object. [X.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. It would be forever aflame;
Flames could be ignited without a cause.
Its beginning would be meaningless.
In that case, it would be without any action.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. It would be forever aflame;
Ignition could occur without a cause.
Effort regarding it would be pointless.
In that case, it would also be without any action.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
A burning without a cause would be eternally aflame. Furthermore, its commencement will be rendered meaningless [useless]. When that happens, it will be without a function.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/2 If fire and fuel were different, then fires would burn permanently without depending on fuel. If they burned permanently they would be self-subsistent and not dependent on causes and conditions, and human effort would be in vain, (but in fact) human effort may, by feeding a fire cause it to burn; this effect157 manifestly exists, and therefore we know that the fire is not different from the fuel. Moreover, if fire were different from fuel then fire would be ineffectual, for what is burnt by a fire apart from its fuel? If this were so, fire would be ineffectual, but no such thing as ineffectual fire exists.

(14c22) Question: Why is it that, if fire arose independent of causes and conditions, human effort would also be in vain?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If fire is conceived of as existing independently (*prthagbhuta*) of fuel then it would burn forever; and it would not be caused by rekindling; it would be pointless to start it afresh. In such case it would be an act that did not act on anything.

Desiring to explain this very meaning Nagarjuna says

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The identity of fire and fuel recognized by the Vatsiputriyas (as explained in terms of the eight elements, astadharmaka, see above) would lead to the view that both fire and fuel are burning all the time (nitya-pradipta), for the caloric element (usna) is found in both, the difference being quantitative rather than qualitative. This further leads to the denial of the empirical fact of starting a fire. If fire and fuel are always burning, then fire would be deprived of any specific function. Indeed, the Buddha's use of the metaphor of the fire at M 1.487 is non-substantialist in implication. He wanted to show that just as fire is not stored up anywhere when it is extinguished, even so a "freed one" (tathagata) does not exist in eternal bliss after death (param marana). Nagarjuna's criticism of the metaphor of "fire and fuel" seems to follow closely the Buddha's own explanation of the phenomenon of fire.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. The second and third verses spell out the consequences of attributing inherent existence to fire: It would be independent of all conditions, including its fuel; it would burn causelessly, since there would be no condition under which it would not burn. So all fire would, in that case, be eternal. Moreover, it would not consume anything, having no connection to the presence or absence of fuel. Moreover, Nāgārjuna asserts in the final two lines of X: 3, the activity of starting a fire would be nonsensical:

Kārikā X.3

परत्र निरपेक्षत्वादप्रदीपनहेतुकः।
पुनरारम्भवैयर्थ्यं नित्यदीप्तः प्रसज्यते॥३॥

paratra nirapekṣatvād apradīpanahetukaḥ |
punarārambhavaiyarthyaṃ nityadīptaḥ prasajyate ||3||

燃不待可燃 則不從緣生
火若常燃者 人功則應空

rán bù dài kě rán zé bù cóng yuán shēng
huǒ ruò cháng rán zhě rén gōng zé yīng kōng

|གཞན་ལ་ལྟོས་པ་མེད་པའི་ཕྱིར། །འབར་བར་བྱེད་རྒྱུ་ལས་མི་འབྱུང་།
།རྟག་ཏུ་འབར་བ་ཡིན་ན་ནི། །རྩོམ་པ་དོན་མེད་ཉིད་དུ་འགྱུར།

| gźan la ltos pa med pa'i phyir | | 'bar bar byed rgyu las mi 'byuṅ |
| rtag tu 'bar ba yin na ni | | rtsom pa don med ñid du 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - Being unrelated to an other, it (i.e. fire) will be something without a cause for burning. Moreover, it will follow that a constantly burning fire would have no purpose of starting (i.e. burning) again.

JONES (Skt):
[3] Because fire is not dependent upon another thing, it would exist without being lit; and being eternally aflame, starting it would be rendered pointless.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A burning without a cause, because it is not contingent on another and, therefore, eternally aflame, would imply the meaninglessness of its commencement.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Igniting without a cause is independent from the sequel.
But thus the beginning is without purpose and a pennanent burning follows.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. In future, when we have left even having any kind of desire , It might be reasonable that there might be no light.
In that situations also again, losing the aim will begin,
And the native brightness will be occupied.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 Because it is unrelated to anything else it is not caused by bursting into flame; as it burns forever it follows that it is pointless to kindle it again.

STRENG (Skt):
3. Fire is without a cause, namely kindling, if it were independent of anything else; In which case another beginning would be pointless, and there is perpetual burning.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v3 If fire does not depend on fuel
Then it does not arise from causes and conditions.
If flames were permanently burning,
Human effort would be in vain.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Because [fire] does not depend on anything else, it would not arise from causes for burning. If it burned permanently, starting it would be meaningless.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Because it would not depend on anything else,
It would not arise from what causes it to burn.
Because it would bum eternally,
Lighting it would be pointless. [X.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. Since it would not depend on another
Ignition would be without a cause.
If it were eternally in flames,
Starting it would be meaningless.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. Since it would not depend on another,
Ignition would be without a cause.
If it were eternally in flames,
Effort regarding it would be pointless.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
A burning without a cause, because it is not contingent on another and, therefore, eternally aflame, would imply the meaninglessness of its commencement.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/3 If fire and fuel were different, then there would be fire independent of any fuel. If there were fire independent of fuel, then fire would not be a dharma dependent on a cause, and consequently it would not have arisen from causes and conditions. Moreover, if fire and fuel were different then there ought to be permanent fire, but if there were permanent fire we should see this fire, separate and apart from fuel, and without any need at all of human effort, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The thinking is that what actually flames is the fuel bursting into flame; bursting into flame is the 'cause' (*hetu*) of fire; that is what 'caused by bursting into flame' means. 'Not caused by bursting into flame' means that bursting into flame is not the cause of fire. If fire were something entirely different than bursting into flame then it would be independent of fuel. What is wholly other than something else is in fact seen to be independent of it, as cloth is other than a clay pot.

Therefore fire, being independent (*nirapeksatva*) of anything else, would not have bursting into flame as its cause. But if fire were dependent on bursting into flame it would go out if this failed. Yet if it were independent of ignition, not subject to the possibility of extinction, it would be alight forever. If fire burns forever then it would be pointless to try to prevent its extinction by fanning or blowing on the embers. In such case fire would be an agent without acting on anything (*akarmaka*). But no agent can be active if there is nothing for it to act on: the son of a barren woman does not exist. For this reason it is not tenable that fire is wholly other than fuel.

You may object that what was said earlier (*kārikā* 1) 'If fire is wholly other than fuel then it could exist even without fuel' does not make sense. The thought here is that if fire and fuel were wholly different fire could exist without fuel. But the object which is enveloped in flames is the fuel and its definition is 'what is being burned' and fire is directly perceived to be dependent on it. Now if this is correct then fuel must be defined in terms of a necessary connection with fire. Fire is, in our experience, seen to be dependent on fuel and not separate from it. It follows that your statement if fire is wholly other than fuel then it could exist even without fuel' draws an absurd conclusion which is not appropriate.

Exposing the untenability of this line of thought Nagarjuna says

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

A substantialist view of fire makes it independent of other elements or things. Hence, all the implications mentioned at X.2 will follow from such a view.

Kārikā X.4

तत्रैतस्मादिध्यमानमिन्धनं भवतीति चेत्।
केनेध्यतामिन्धनं तत्तावन्मात्रमिदं यदा॥४॥

tatraitat syād idhyamānam indhanaṃ bhavatīti cet |
kenedhyatām indhanaṃ tat tāvanmātram idaṃ yadā ||4||

若汝謂燃時 名為可燃者
爾時但有薪 何物燃可燃

ruò rǔ wèi rán shí míng wéi kě rán zhě
ěr shí dàn yǒu xīn hé wù rán kě rán

།དེ་ལ་གལ་ཏེ་འདི་སྙམ་དུ།།སྲེག་བཞིན་བུད་ཤིང་ཡིན་སེམས་ན།
།གང་ཚེ་དེ་ཙམ་དེ་ཡིན་ན།།གང་གིས་བུད་ཤིང་དེ་སྲེག་བྱེད།།

| de la gal te ’di sñam du | | sreg bźin bud śiṅ yin sems na |
| gaṅ tshe de tsam de yin na | | gaṅ gis (7a1)bud śiṅ de sreg byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - Thus, if it is granted that there is wood in the burning (process) and that only wood is burning, then by what means will it burn?

JONES (Skt):
[4] Because this is so, if you now say “What is currently burning is the fuel,” then by what is the fuel being burned?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Herein, if it is assumed that fuel is the present burning and, therefore, that [i.e., burning] is merely this [i.e., fuel], by what is fuel being burnt?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
In that case, therefore, if “the fuel is presently being ignited,”
by what means other than the fuel is that by which this is here so much as [ignited]?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. Then it might be just the state of being burnt,
And the situation of being burnt exists like that.
And when we think why fuel is always so much burned,
We can say only that the big volume of burning has appeared actually just at that time.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 If fuel is what bursts into flame, what will ignite the fuel as that is its essential nature. (fn *Lattavanmatram*. That is, fuel is what is already alight.)

STRENG (Skt):
4. If it is maintained: Kindling is that which is being kindled, By what is kindling kindled, since kindling is only that kindling? It is inherent existence that would make extinguishing /liberation impossible

BOCKING (Ch):
10v4 If you say that when something is burning
It constitutes fuel,
At the time when it is only firewood;
What thing is it that burns the fuel?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Concerning this, if one thinks that while burning it is firewood, if it is such only at that time, by what could that firewood be ignited?

DOCTOR (Tb):
It may be thought that the fuel
Is that which is burning,
But if that is all that it is,
What is it that burns the fuel? [X.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. So, if one thinks that
That which is burning is the fuel,
If it is just this,
How is this fuel being burned?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. So, if one thought that
That which is burning is the fuel,
If it is just this,
By what is this fuel being burned?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Herein, if it is assumed that fuel is the present burning and, therefore, that [i.e., burning] is merely this [i.e., fuel], by what is fuel being burnt?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/4 If you say that what was previously firewood is (only) called fuel; when it is burning, this is not correct. But if fuel exists separately apart from fire, how can you say that when it is afire159 it is (still) to be regarded as fuel?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If you think that fuel is what is enveloped in flames and is defined as 'what is burning' and that fire is based on that; if you speculate thus it is not logically possible to say that fire burns fuel because 'what will ignite the fuel as that is its essential nature' (fn 1 i.e. if fire burns only fuel that is already ignited, what ignites the fuel initially?).

If one imagines, as is usual, that 'fire burns fuel' then fuel is what is being burned, enveloped in flames. But we never experience a fire entirely separate and distinct by which the fuel is burned; as fuel is of such a nature as to be perceived directly as enveloped in flames and nothing but what is being burned. If then fire is not separate, what is it that will burn the fuel? The expression 'as that is its essential nature' means to be nothing but what is in flames. Fire does not therefore burn fuel because a fire which is separate (*vyatirikta*) from fuel does not exist. If this is so then how would the idea of something being enveloped in flames not trouble you for the same reason?

The problem of interaction

Further, if we assume the complete otherness (*anyatva*) of fire and fuel, what is usually called 'burning' does not exist. How can fuel be burning and how will fire burn fuel? Nagarjuna expounds this saying

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The substantialist point of view expressed at X.2 is further analysed here. If fuel already has the caloric element (usna) and, therefore, is already burning (idhyamana), one could not only raise the question as to when it started burning but also inquire as to what it is that brings about that burning.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. Nāgārjuna now sets up a destructive dilemma: Either the process of burning is identical to the fuel or different. In X: 4, he considers the possibility that they are identical. If so, he suggests, we have a problem in explaining how the fuel is consumed. The ordinary explanation of that is the presence of fire. But by identifying the burning process with the fuel, we have left the fire out of the picture. This analysis hence provides no explanation of combustion. After all, fuel by itself does not burn. It must be ignited, that is, fire must be introduced. If, as Nāgārjuna argues in X: 5, they are completely different, there won't be any fire at all. For then the burning would be dissociated from and independent of the fuel, and the unburned fuel would not be consumed by the burning. We could make no sense of the transition from unburned to burned fuel. The general moral is that we cannot make sense of interactive processes such as combustion without attending to the mutual dependence of the interacting phenomena that constitute those processes:

Kārikā X.5

अन्यो न प्राप्स्यतेऽप्राप्तो न धक्ष्यत्यदहन् पुनः।
न निर्वास्यत्यनिर्वाणः स्थास्यते वा स्वलिङ्गवान्॥५॥

anyo na prāpsyate ’prapto na dhakṣyaty adahan punaḥ |
na nirvāsyaty anirvāṇaḥ sthāsyate vā svaliṅgavān ||5||

若異則不至 不至則不燒
不燒則不滅 不滅則常住

ruò yì zé bù zhì bù zhì zé bù shāo
bù shāo zé bù miè bù miè zé cháng zhù

|གཞན་ཕྱིར་མི་ཕྲད་ཕྲད་མེད་ན||སྲེག་པར་མི་འགྱུར་མི་སྲེག་ན|
|འཆི་བར་མི་འགྱུར་མི་འཆི་ན||རང་རྟགས་དང་ཡང་ལྡན་པར་གནས||

| gźan phyir mi phrad phrad med na | | sreg par mi ’gyur mi sreg na |
| ’chi bar mi ’gyur mi ’chi na | | raṅ rtags daṅ yaṅ ldan par gnas |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - A different thing (i.e., fire distinguished from wood) is never effected and a non-effected thing will never burn. And, in turn, a non-burning thing will never extinguish itself while a non-extinguishing thing, having its own characteristics, will continue to endure itself.

JONES (Skt):
[5] If fuel and fire are different, fuel is not yet reached by the fire, and what is not reached will not burn. Not being burned, the fuel will not cease, and not ceasing, it continues to maintain its own characteristics forever.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
[Fuel] that is different is not reached; the unreached is not ignited. Furthermore, that which is not ignited does not cease. That which does not cease remains, like one that has its own mark.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If it is not fuel that is not reached by what is other than fuel, the unburnable will not bum.
Preserving the likeness of its own nature [permanent burning] will not be maintained by the nonextinction of the extinguished.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. As a different problem, something, which cannot be accomplished, can be possible a job, which can never be accomplished even in future.
Something, which can never be destroyed, might be also impossible to be destroyed even in future.
Something, which can never become balanced or serene, will be impossible to become balanced or serene even in future.
And a grammatical gender of each thing, which will maintain its gender, will also never change its grammatical gender without fail in future.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 Fire, being wholly other than fuel, cannot interact with it; not interacting it cannot burn; what does not burn cannot go out; and, not going out, it will persist in its own nature.

STRENG (Skt):
5. Fire, when different and not obtained through kindling, will not obtain; not burning, it will not burn later; Without extinction, it will not be extinguished; if there is no extinction, then it will remain with its own characteristics.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
X.5 [Fuel] which is different [from fire] is not reached; unreached it does not burn; moreover, not burning it will not be blown out. Not blown out it will continue to blaze, like something having a property essentially.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v5 If different, there would be no contact
And without contact there would be no burning.
Without burning there would be no extinguishing.
And with no extinguishing there would be permanence.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Because [fire] is other, it would not connect; if it did not connect, it would not ignite; if it did not ignite, it would not die; if it did not die, it would also remain in possession of its own characteristic.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If they are distinct, they do not touch;
If they do not touch, nothing is burned;
If nothing is burned, nothing dies out;
If nothing dies out, it will remain with its mark. [X.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. If they are different, and if one not yet connected isn't connected,
The not yet burned will not be burned.
They will not cease. If they do not cease
Then it will persist with its own characteristic.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. Because of difference, they do not touch. If they do not touch,
It will not be burned. If it is not burned,
It will not be extinguished. If it is not extinguished,
It will endure with its own identity as well.

HAGEN (paraphrase):

[Fuel] that is different is not reached; the unreached is not ignited. Furthermore, that which is not ignited does not cease. That which does not cease remains, like one that has its own mark.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/5 If fire were different from fuel then fire would never come into contact with fuel, and why? Because they would not be established interdependently. But fire, if not established by interdependence, would be self-subsistent, and then what use would it have for fuel? Therefore, there would be no contact, but without contact there would be no fire and fuel. Why is this? Because there is nothing which can burn without contact. If there is no burning, there will be no extinguishing, which would mean permanence and own-mark, and this is not correct. Question:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If fire were wholly other than fuel it could never, because of this otherness, interact (fn 2 *Prapsyate*, 'be affected by', or literally, 'reached by'. The problem of *prapti*, how one entity can have an essential relationship to another, is endemic to the Buddhist doctrine of separate reals (*dharmas*).) with fuel as it can never interact with darkness, nor will it burn fuel because it has not acted upon fuel. It is as if it were situated in a remote region. That is why it is simply not logically possible to say 'fuel bursts into flames'. It follows that fire cannot be extinguished and being unextinguished it would enjoy its own specific nature, that is, it will remain alight. The word 'and' in the *kārikā* offers alternative possibilities. It may mean either-or, that is, either that fire will persist in its own nature or that there is no difference in this respect between fire and fuel. It may mean conjunction, that is, that fire, wholly other, neither interacts, nor burns, nor goes out and persists in its own essential nature. It is therefore untenable that fire is wholly other than fuel.

Though other, fire and fuel are not independent of each other

You may object that it does not make sense to say that the otherness of fire and fuel is untenable because 'fire cannot interact with fuel; not interacting it cannot burn; what does not burn . . .'. It is, after all, common experience that a man and a woman, though different, do interact with one another. In the same way there can. be interaction of fire and fuel.

We reply

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If it is assumed that fire and fuel are different, a further series of questions arise. Difference in the present case implies absolute distinction or independence. As such, one entity cannot reach up to another. Fire cannot reach the fuel. When fire cannot reach the fuel, it cannot burn. That which does not burn remains for ever and does not cease. This explains the vicious circle the metaphysical speculations can lead to.

Kārikā X.6

अन्य एवेन्धनादग्निरिन्धनं प्राप्नुयाद्यदि।
स्त्री संप्राप्नोति पुरुषं पुरुषश्च स्त्रियं यथा॥६॥

anya evendhanād agnir indhanaṃ prāpnuyād yadi |
strī saṃprāpnoti puruṣaṃ puruṣaś ca striyaṃ yathā ||6||

燃與可燃異 而能至可燃
如此至彼人 彼人至此人

rán yǔ kě rán yì ér néng zhì kě rán
rú cǐ zhì bǐ rén bǐ rén zhì cǐ rén

།ཇི་ལྟར་བུད་མེད་སྐྱེས་པ་དང་། །སྐྱེས་པའང་བུད་མེད་ཕྲད་པ་བཞིན།
།གལ་ཏེ་ཤིང་ལས་མེ་གཞན་ཡང་། །ཤིང་དང་ཕྲད་དུ་རུང་བར་འགྱུར།།

| ji ltar bud med skyes pa daṅ | | skyes pa'aṅ bud med phrad pa bźin |
| gal te śiṅ las me (2)gźan na | | śiṅ daṅ phrad du ruṅ bar 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - (The opponent contends) If fire which is distinct from wood should unite with wood, it would be like a woman uniting with a man and, vice versa, a man uniting with a woman. - Note: Kumarajiva translates this union as between this person and that person but the Sanskrit definitely refers to a man and a woman. Both, however, carry the meaning across. At any rate, this opposition must never be confused with the union of husband and wife which are inseparable or correlative concepts.

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection:*6] If fire is other than fuel, then it could connect to the fuel, just as a woman connects to the man or a man to a woman.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If fire is different from fuel it would reach the fuel, just as a woman would reach for a man and a man for a woman.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If fire is different from fuel, it would reach for fuel,
just as a woman reaches for a man and a man for a woman.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. As another example, in a case that fire has left from burning,
Burning has strongly hoped to meet with fire again,
And the female (burning) has arrived at the male (fire) perfectly,
And so in such a situation, the male (fire) is very familiar to the female (burning) at that time.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 Fire, though wholly other than fuel, would interact with fuel if it were as it is with the woman interacting with the man and the man with the woman.

STRENG (Skt):
6. The opponent claims: If fire is different from kindling it could obtain the kindling As a woman obtains a husband, and a man obtains a wife.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v6 Fire may be different from fuel
Yet it can come together with fuel
Just as this person comes together with that person,
And that other comes together with this person.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Just as a woman connects with a man and a man too with a woman, although fire is other than wood, it is fit to connect with wood.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Just as a woman touches a man
And a man touches a woman,
Fire can be different from fuel,
And yet still touch it. [X.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. Just as a man and a woman
Connect to one another as man and woman,
So if fire were different from fuel,
Fire and fuel would have to be fit for connection.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. Just as a man touches a woman
And a woman touches a man,
So if fire were different from fuel,
Fire and fuel would have to be suited to touch.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If fire is different from fuel it would reach the fuel, just as a woman would reach for a man and a man for a woman.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/6 Fire might be different from fuel, yet it could come in contact with fuel, just as a man comes together with a woman, and a woman comes together with a man.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

This would be so if fire and fuel existed independently of each other as man and woman do. But Nagarjuna says they do not:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If fire and fuel were considered to be different yet complementary, then Nagarjuna is willing to allow some sort of mutual relationship. He perceives such a relationship bewteen a man and a woman. Unfortunately, here again we have a negative interpretation from Candrakīrti. Without taking much trouble to examine the import of the metaphor of "man and woman" used by Nagarjuna, Candrakīrti assumes that the relationship exemplified by it is meaningless (drstanta-vaiyarthyam). On the contrary, Nagarjuna is throwing the gauntlet at his opponent asking him to show that the sort of relationship that exists between a man and a woman can also be obtained between fire and fuel as the opponent has conceived of them.

Indeed, there could not be much difficulty in understanding the empirical relationship between a man and a woman. Because of their complementarity, they are attracted to each other. Such a relationship is clearly expressed by the Buddha in the fast two discourses in the Anguttara-nikaya (1.1-2). Yet the Buddha never attempted to go beyond that empirical relationship to inquire as to how it all happened. Such an inquiry was undoubtedly the foundation of the speculations recorded in the Upanisads. Describing the origin of the universe from a single unitary "self" (atman), the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad (I.4.3-4) says:

He, verily, had no delight. Therefore he who is alone has no delight. He desired a second. He became as large as a woman and a man in dose embrace. He caused that self to fall into two parts. From that arose husband and wife. . . . He became united with her. From that human beings were produced.

She thought, "How can he unite with me after having produced me from himself?." Well, let me hide myself. She became a cow, the other became a bull and was united with her and from that cows were born. . .. Thus, indeed, he produced everything whatever exists in pairs, down to the ants. This is the sort of answer that emerges from an inquiry that is not only directed at understanding the absolute origin of things, but also their substantiality. The metaphor of the fire and fuel were utilized by the Vatsiputriyas , not merely to understand the relationship between two empirical events, but also to justify the conception of a prior existent "person" (pudgala), no different from the pre-existent "self'" (atman) assumed in the Upanisads, which is clearly expresed in the metaphor of "man and woman."

Perceptive Nagarjuna was thus aware of the motivations of those who presented the metaphor. In the present verse he was therefore allowing the possibility of fire and fuel having a complementary relationship. However, if any other implication is drawn from such a relationship, Nagarjuna was ready to expose its untenability. This he does in the verses that follow.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. Here the opponent suggests that just as males and females are suited to connect in special ways in virtue of their particular anatomical structures, despite existing independently of one another, fire and fuel may be similarly suited to some special kind of connection. In that case, we would have the bizarre picture of ·fire being independent of fuel, yet peculiarly suited to coming together with it, and vice versa. (fn 62. See also Kalupahana (1986), p. 199.) Moreover, since on this model fire and fuel are distinct from one another in nature, yet interactive (they "preclude" each other in the sense that causes and effects preclude one another - that is, in virtue of being connected yet incapable of .simultaneous copresence), there must still be some account of how they connect, an account by no means easy to envisage:

Kārikā X.7

अन्य एवेन्धनादग्निरिन्धनं काममाप्नुयात्।
अग्नीन्धने यदि स्यातामन्योन्येन तिरस्कृते॥७॥

anya evendhanād agnir indhanaṃ kāmam āpnuyāt |
agnīndhane yadi syātām anyo'nyena tiraskṛte ||7||

若謂燃可燃 二俱相離者
如是燃則能 至於彼可燃

ruò wèi rán kě rán èr jù;jū xiàng;xiāng lí zhě
rú shì rán zé néng zhì yū;yú;wū bǐ kě rán

|གལ་ཏེ་མེ་དང་ཤིང་དག་ནི།།གཅིག་གིས་གཅིག་ནི་བསལ་གྱུར་ན།
|ཤིང་ལས་མེ་གཞན་ཉིད་ཡིན་ཡང་།།ཤིང་དང་ཕྲད་པར་འདོད་ལ་རག།

| gal te me daṅ śiṅ dag ni | | gcig gis gcig ni bsal gyur na |
| śiṅ las me gźan ñid yin yaṅ | | śiṅ daṅ phrad par 'dod la rag |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 (Nagarjuna asserts) Fire which is distinct from wood will unite with the latter freely as you contend, if and only if, the two have mutually distinct existences.

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply:*7] Fire that indeed is different from fuel could connect with the fuel, iffire and fupi pxisted separately.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The fire that is different from fuel may reach the fuel only if fire and fuel were to exist mutually separated.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Fire is different from fuel for fuel would be reached only
if a separation of one from the other would exist in fire and fuel.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. In another case, fire has left burning absolutely,
And burning has begun to get everything as far as burning likes to get it.
In the case when fire and burning have been fused into one completely,
Aha! It might be possible that fire and burning have enter into the common state, where it might be possible that both fire and burning do not notice with each other at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 Fire, though wholly other than fuel, would interact with fuel naturally if fire and fuel existed in isolation from each other.

STRENG (Skt):
7. Nargarjuna answers: Though fire is different from kindling, it could indeed obtain the kindling, On the condition that both fire and kindling can be reciprocally differentiated —but, this is impossible.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v7 If you say that fire and fuel
Are separate from each other
This being so, a fire could
Come in contact with some other fuel.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If fire and wood eliminated each other, even though fire is something other than wood, it would have to connect with wood.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If fire and fuel,
Would exclude each other,
Fire would be different from fuel,
And so fire could touch fuel. [X.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. And, if fire and fuel
Preclude each other,
Then fire being different from fuel,
It must still be asserted that they connect.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. And, if fire and fuel
Preclude each other,
Then although fire is different from fuel,
It still must be asserted that they touch.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The fire that is different from fuel may reach the fuel only if fire and fuel were to exist mutually separated.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/7 If there were fuel separate from fire, and fire separate from fuel, and each was established individually, there could be fire coming in contact with fuel; but in reality this is not so, and why? Because there is no fuel apart from fire, and no fire apart from fuel. But there are women apart from men, and men apart from women, and for this reason your illustration is not right. Since your example does not succeed, fire does not contact fuel.

Question: Fire and fuel are interdependent yet existent. Fire exists on account of fuel, and fuel exists on account of fire. The two dharmas are established interdependently.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

It is, however, not possible that fire exist independently (*nirapeksa*) of fuel and fuel independently of fire. The example given is therefore invalid. The example adduced must be valid for such beings as, even though wholly other, are inherently dependent on one another, and between whom alone interaction could take place (fn 3 I.e. fire and fuel). Such are not, however, possible; your statement 'though different they do interact with one another' is not tenable.

You may object that, even though fire and fuel do not exist in reciprocal independence as man and woman do, none the less there is at least reciprocal dependence. Therefore both fire and fuel, because of their reciprocal dependence, do have a nature of their own. After all, reciprocal dependence is never empirically observed between a non-existent son and daughter of a barren woman.

Fire and fuel as reciprocally dependent

We reply that this too is untenable.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here again, Nagarjuna is qualifying the sort of relationship that may obtain between fire and fuel if they are attracted to one another. One of the first conditions would be that they are separate. Without such separation it would be meaningless to speak of one reaching for the other. It is an attempt to destroy the belief in a mysterious underlying unity, any substantial connection. Nagarjuna is willing to allow for the empirical differences and the relationship of dependence among such events. However, he is not prepared to leave any room for any speculation about underlying substances (svabhava).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. Fire and fuel hence appear to be mutually dependent. Indeed the central point of Nāgārjuna's argument is that they are. But here the question arises: Don't they then have either to depend upon some third more fundamental thing or to be asymmetrically dependent, one of them established independently of the other?

Kārikā X.8

यदीन्धनमपेक्ष्याग्निरपेक्ष्याग्निं यदीन्धनम्।
कतरत्पूर्वनिष्पन्नं यदपेक्ष्याग्निरिन्धनम्॥८॥

yadīndhanam apekṣyāgnir apekṣyāgniṃ yadīndhanam |
katarat pūrvaniṣpannaṃ yad apekṣyāgnir indhanam ||8||

若因可燃燃 因燃有可燃
先定有何法 而有燃可燃

ruò yīn kě rán rán yīn rán yǒu kě rán
xiān dìng yǒu hé fǎ ér yǒu rán kě rán

།གལ་ཏེ་ཤིང་ལྟོས་མེ་ཡིན་ལ།།གལ་ཏེ་མེ་ལྟོས་ཤིང་ཡིན་ན།
།གང་ལྟོས་མེ་དང་ཤིང་འགྱུར་བ།།དང་པོར་གྲུབ་པ་གང་ཞིག་ཡིན།།

| gal te śiṅ ltos me yin la | | gal te me ltos śiṅ yin na |
| gaṅ ltos me (3)daṅ śiṅ ’gyur ba | | daṅ por grub pa gaṅ źig yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - If fire is dependent on wood and wood on fire, then each one must have had a prior completed state and to which the other depends.

JONES (Skt):
[8] If fire depends upon fuel, and if fuel depends upon lire, which is established first so that fire could be dependent upon fuel?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If fire is contingent upon fuel and fuel upon fire, which of them is preaccomplished so that fire could be contingent upon fuel?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If fire is dependent on fuel ,and fuel is dependent on fire which is descended from which so that fire and fuel are dependent?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Just at the time, when burning has been recognized as fire,
What has been accepted as fire must be just as burning.
Before the time, when fire or burning can manifest itself as fire or burning, What is recognized as fire must be inevitably exists as burning.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 If fire is dependent on fuel and fuel is dependent on fire, which of the two arises prior, that on which fire is dependent or that on which fuel is dependent?

STRENG (Skt):
8. If the fire is dependent on the kindling, and if the kindling is dependent on the fire Which is attained first, dependent on which they are fire and kindling?

BOCKING (Ch):
10v8 If fire exists because of fuel
And fuel exists because of fire,
Then what fixed dharma pre-existed
That there should be fire and fuel?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If fire were dependent on wood and wood were dependent on fire, of what becomes fire and wood dependently, which would be established first?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If fire depends on fuel
And fuel depends on fire,
Of fire and fuel, the two dependents,
Which is established first? [X.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. If fire depends on fuel,
And fuel depends on fire,
On what are fire and fuel established as dependent?
Which one is established first?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. If fire exists in dependence on fuel,
And fuel exists in dependence on fire,
Depending on what do fire and fuel exist?
Which one exists first?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If fire is contingent upon fuel and fuel upon fire, which of them is preaccomplished so that fire could be contingent upon fuel?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/8 If fire is established because of fuel, then fuel too should be established on account of fire. In this case, if a fixed (entity) of fuel existed first, then fire would be established on account of the fuel. If a fixed (entity) 'fire' existed first then fuel would be established on account of the fire. Now, if fire is established on account of fuel, this means that first there is fuel, and subsequently there is fire, but then the fuel must have existed independently of the fire a Why? Because the fuel came first, and the fire afterwards. If the fire was not burning the fuel, then the fuel would not be established (as fuel). The same goes for fuel, since it is not found anywhere apart from with fire. If fuel is not established then neither is fire. If (you say that) fire comes first and the fuel exists afterwards, then there is the same error as with fire. Therefore, neither fire nor fuel is established.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Fire is what burns fuel, it is the 'agent' (*karta*). If fire is defined as dependent on fuel, that is, if this very fuel is the 'object' (*karma*) of fire what fire acts upon and so if fuel is in this way dependent on fire, which of these two arises prior? Would it be fuel on which fire depends? Or would it be fire on which fuel depends? It would be absurd to think that fuel exists prior because there can be no fuel for a fire which is independent of it and which is burning nothing; and because it would follow that grass and absolutely everything would be fuel. On the other hand if one thinks that fire exists prior and fuel subsequently that too would be absurd because it is impossible for fire to exist prior to fuel because this would entail fire being without a material basis, and because dependence on what is subsequent is meaningless. There is therefore no prior existence of either in dependence on which the other could base its existence.

If you still think that fuel is prior and fire subsequent there is this further thought:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The motivation of the substantialists who were utilizing the metaphors of "fire and fuel" (agnindhana) as well as "woman and man" (stri-purusa), as exlained at X.6, are brought to the forefront here. Let fire and fuel be related by way of contingence (apeksa). Nagarjuna has no objection to it and this is clearly indicated by the manner in which Candrakīrti himself utilizes this particular conception of contingence on numerous occasionions. In the present case, Nagarjuna is not rejecting the mutual contingence (parasparapeksa) of phenomena, but only the inquiry relating to the preaccomplishment or prior existence (purva-nispanna) of any one of them. Chapter IX made it abundantly clear that speculations regarding the prior entity led to most metaphysical speculations. Having raised the question as to which one of these two things-fire and fuelis prior, a question that a substantialist cannot resist asking, Nagarjuna proceeds to analyse the possible answers and explain their unsatisfactory implications.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. If either is established as an entity first, without any reliance on the existence or nature of the other, that member of the pair would have a claim to being the basis in an asymmetrical dependency relation, and the opponent would have the counterexample necessary to refute the analysis in Chapters VIII and IX. The most obvious form that such an asymmetric dependence could take would involve the dependence of fire on. fuel. Nāgārjuna argues that this is impossible to maintain:

Kārikā X.9

यदीन्धनमपेक्ष्याग्निरग्नेः सिद्धस्य साधनम्।
एवं सतीन्धनं चापि भविष्यति निरग्निकम्॥९॥

yadīndhanam apekṣyāgnir agneḥ siddhasya sādhanam |
evaṃ satīndhanaṃ cāpi bhaviṣyati niragnikam ||9||

若因可燃燃 則燃成復成
是為可燃中 則為無有燃

ruò yīn kě rán rán zé rán chéng fù chéng
shì wéi kě rán zhōng zé wéi wú yǒu rán

|གལ་ཏེ་ཤིང་ལྟོས་མེ་ཡིན་ན། །མེ་གྲུབ་པ་ལ་སྒྲུབ་པར་འགྱུར།
|བུད་པར་བྱ་བའི་ཤིང་ལ་ཡང་། །མི་མེད་པར་ནི་འགྱུར་པ་ཡིན།།

| gal te śiṅ ltos me yin na | | me grub pa la sgrub par ’gyur |
| bud par bya ba’i śiṅ la yaṅ | | me med par ni ’gyur pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - If fire is dependent on wood then an already existing fire will again be effectuating itself. If that is so then wood also will exist without fire.

JONES (Skt):
[91 II’ fire depends upon fuel, then a fire that is already established would be established, and the fuel would exist without the fire.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If fire were to be contingent upon fuel, there would be proof of fire that is already proved [to exist]. When that is the case, even fuel would exist without fire.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If fire is dependent on fire’s fuel, the establishment of proof
Will thus be the existence of fuel where there is no fire.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. When burning has been considered as fire,
Everything, which has been accomplished with fire, can be accepted that the products have been accomplished by fire without fail.
But at the same time, even though there were actually existence of fire,
The usage of fire has been cut off and hasn’t been used actually, even though the keeping fire were so clear.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 If fire depends on fuel, the existence of fire is presupposed. This being so fuel will exist as fuel without relation to fire.

STRENG (Skt):
9. If fire is dependent on kindling, so is the proof of the proved fire. Thus, being kindling it will exist without fire.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v9 If fire exists on account of fuel,
Then fire already established is established again.
If it were in the fuel
It would be non-existent fire.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If fire were dependent on wood, [already] established fire would be established [again]. Firewood also would be [such] even without fire.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If fire depended on fuel,
An established fire would be reestablished,
And fuel would end up
Existing without fire. [X.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. If fire depends on fuel,
It would be the establishment of an established fire.
And the fuel could be fuel
Without any fire.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. If fire exists in dependence on fuel,
It would be the establishment of an established fire,
And the fuel would also exist
Without there being any fire.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If fire were to be contingent upon fuel, there would be proof of fire that is already proved [to exist]. When that is the case, even fuel would exist without fire.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/9 If you want to say that fire is established on account of fuel, then an already-established fire is being established again, and why? Fire abides as itself in fire. If you say that fire is not self-subsistent, but is established from fuel, no such thing exists. Therefore, if fire is established from fuel, then the fire, having been established, would be again established, and there errors like this. Moreover, there is the error of fuel which exists while fire does not exist. Why is this? Because fuel would be self-subsistent and separate from fire. Therefore, it is not-the case that fuel and fire are mutually interdependent.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

9ab *If fire depends on fuel, the existence of fire is presupposed.*

If it is supposed that fire is dependent on fuel this would be to establish the existence of an already existing fire. The dependence of an existing thing of established nature makes sense; but a non-existent Devadatta cannot be dependent on anything in his home. So if there were no existing fire, fuel could not be dependent on it. The existence of fire is thus presupposed. What then is achieved by a second dependence on fuel? As an existing fire is not re-lighted by fuel its dependence on fuel would be totally meaningless. In sum, it does not make sense to say that fire is dependent on fuel.

If one supposes that fire is dependent on fuel there is a further point:

9cd *This being so fuel will exist as fuel without relation to fire.*

If fuel did not exist fire could not be related to it because of the impossibility of relation to the non-existent. Then the existence of fuel unrelated to fire must be posited; but this cannot be the case and is untenable.

You may offer this possibility: Fire comes into existence simultaneously (*yaugapadya*) with the coming into existence of fuel and fuel comes into existence simultaneously with the coming into existence of fire. Because the priorness of neither is presupposed, what was asked does not make sense, namely 'which of the two arises first, that on which fire is dependent or that on which fuel is dependent?' We reply. Even if one attempts to think in this way neither can be established. Because:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Frustrating any attempt on the part of the substantialist, Nagarjuna insists that if fuel were to be the prior entity (purva-nispanna), and that fire is contingent upon it, then what is to be established is already established. In other words, the substantialist interpretations of contingence (parasparapeksa) would mean that fire is already existent in the fuel, which is itself the prior entity. If it is already existent in the fuel, then the implication is that it will need no fuel for its real existence. If so, fire and fuel could not be mutually contingent and one can conceive of fuel without fire (nir-agnikam).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. There are two arguments here. In the first two lines, Nāgārjuna argues that if fire were to depend upon fuel, fire would be doubly established. The point is that in order for the fuel to count as fuel, the existence of the fire must have already been established; indeed, the fuel depends upon the fire for its character as fuel. So to say then that the fire is dependent upon the fuel would be to argue that something whose existence is already presupposed if the fuel is to exist depends for its existence on that fuel. Note that this is only problematic for the opponent. That is, for one who accepts, as Nāgārjuna does, the mutual interdependence of phenomena, it is in fact true that fire depends upon fuel and that fuel depends upon fire. But the opponent at this stage in the argument argues that fire exists only dependently, but dependently on independent fuel. So Nāgārjuna only needs to show that position to be untenable. And the problem for the opponent is simply that the fuel he wants to exist independently can only do so in the presence of fire, which itself is merely dependent.

Second, Nāgārjuna argues, this would entail the absurd independent establishment of fuel as fuel. For fuel to be established independently as fuel in the absence of fire would be for there to be some characteristic of fuel that could be specified independently of fire that makes it fuel. But there is none. What makes fuel fuel is that it is combustible.

Kārikā X.10

योऽपेक्ष्य सिध्यते भावस्तमेवापेक्ष्य सिध्यति।
यदि योऽपेक्षितव्यः स सिध्यतां कमपेक्ष्य कः॥१०॥

yo ’pekṣya sidhyate bhāvas tam evāpekṣya sidhyati |
yadi yo ’pekṣitavyaḥ sa sidhyatāṃ kam apekṣya kaḥ ||10||

若法因待成 是法還成待
今則無因待 亦無所成法

ruò fǎ yīn dāi chéng shì fǎ huán chéng dāi
jīn zé wú yīn dāi yì wú suǒ chéng fǎ

།གལ་ཏེ་དངོས་པོ་གང་ལྟོས་འགྲུབ།དེ་ཉིད་ལ་ཡང་ལྟོས་ནས་ནི།
།ལྟོས་བྱ་གང་ཡིན་དེ་འགྲུབ་ན།།གང་ལ་ལྟོས་ནས་གང་ཞིག་འགྲུབ།།

| gal te dṅos po gaṅ ltos ’grub | | de ñid la yaṅ ltos nas ni |
| ltos bya gaṅ (4)yin de ’grub na | | gaṅ la ltos nas gaṅ źig ’grub |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - If an entity depends on another entity in order to manifest itself, the latter will also depend on the former for its manifestation. If what is to be dependent on for manifestation already exists, then (the question is) what depends on what?

JONES (Skt):
[10] When an entity is established by being dependent upon another entity, then its existence establishes that other entity. If that upon which the entity depends has yet to be established, what is dependent upon what?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
(not translated)

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What demonstrates the dependence demonstrated by the dependence of which being?
If what is to be depended upon is what has demonstrated that which is dependent on which? ‘

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. What has been produced as it was expected, is existence,
And how is it possible that what is actually not accomplished, can be seen as if it were accomplished?
And when what has been just expected, were realized,
What are the accomplished, and what is the expected?

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 One thing is established as dependent on the very thing which is dependent on it. If what is to be dependent is posited as already existing, which depends on which?

STRENG (Skt):
10. When a thing (bhava) is proved by being dependent on something else, then it proves the other by being dependent on it. If that which is required for dependence must be proved, then what is dependent on what?

BOCKING (Ch):
10v10 When a dharma is established by dependence,
This dharma in return establishes dependence
Now, where there is no dependence,
There will be no dharmas established either.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If a thing (A) is established dependently (on B), [but] if what it depends upon (B) is established also in dependence on that very thing (A), what would be established in dependence on what?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If an entity is established in dependence,
And is itself depended on
By that upon which it depends,
What is established in dependence on what? [X.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. If that on which an entity depends
Is established on the basis
Of the entity depending on it,
What is established in dependence on what?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. If an entity that depends on another
Exists in dependence on
That on which it depends,
What exists in dependence on what?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
(not translated)

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
If something exists in dependence upon something else,
But that thing upon which it depends
Must also depend upon it,
Then which one of these exists in dependence upon which? (10)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/10 When a dharma is established through dependence, this dharma in return establishes the original (dharma) on which it depends. Thus, these are not two fixed entities. It is like fire being established on account-of fuel, while in return the fuel is established on account of the fire. Thus these two entities are not fixed, and because they are not fixed they are untenable, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

That is, if an entity called fire exists in dependence on an entity called fuel and this entity called fuel is that with respect to which the independent existence of fire is to be established; and if this fuel is to exist in dependence on this very entity fire, in such case, pray tell, which exists in dependence on which? There is no fuel strictly speaking so long as fire is nonexistent, as there can be no fuel which is not the cause of fire. How will fire, whose material base is fuel, be established as existent?

In the same way let there be an entity called fuel which exists in dependence on an entity called fire and this entity called fire is that dependent on which the independent existence of fuel is to be established. Now if this fire is to exist in dependence on the entity called fuel, in such case, pray tell, which exists in dependence on which? As there is no fire so long as fuel does not exist — as there can be no fire which does not burn fuel — how will fuel, whose *raison d'etre* is fire, be established as existent?

Further, fire and fuel do not exist in dependence on one another because there is no dependence either of what is real or of what is not real. Nagarjuna, expounding, says

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If events are to be truly contingent, then they should be mutually contingent or dependent. If any one of two mutually contingent entities is to be found in a substantial or essential way in the other, then the notion of contingence is nullified. One becomes the essential and the other the superficial. The problem then would be: which depends upon what? The Vatsiputriyas, as mentioned earlier, were not looking for means of dissolving identity and difference. They are struggling to retain both identity and difference, and then move on to a higher synthesis. Nagarjuna's attempt here is not to allow the metaphysician the very concepts of identity and difference, which they were going to utilize as a springboard for leaping toward the notion of a metaphysical "person" (pudgala).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. So in order to establish the existence of fuel as fuel, we must establish the existence of fire. In order for something to be fire, it must be consuming fuel. Neither depends asymmetrically on the other.

Kārikā X.11

योऽपेक्ष्य सिध्यते भावः सोऽसिद्धोऽपेक्षते कथम्।
अथाप्यपेक्षते सिद्धस्त्वपेक्षास्य न युज्यते॥११॥

yo ’pekṣya sidhyate bhāvaḥ so ’siddho ’pekṣate katham |
athāpy apekṣate siddhas tv apekṣāsya na yujyate ||11||

若法有待成 未成云何待
若成已有待 成已何用待

ruò fǎ yǒu dāi chéng wèi chéng yún hé dāi
ruò chéng yǐ yǒu dāi chéng yǐ hé yòng dāi

།དངོས་པོ་ལྟོས་གྲུབ་གང་ཡིན་པ།།དེ་མ་གྲུབ་ན་ཇི་ལྟར་ལྟོས།
།ཅི་སྟེ་གྲུབ་པ་ལྟོས་ཤེ་ན།།དེ་ནི་ལྟོས་པར་མི་རིགས་སོ།།

| dṅos po ltos grub gaṅ yin pa | | de ma grub na ji ltar ltos |
| ci ste grub pa ltos śe na | | de ni ltos par mi rigs so |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - An entity depends on an other for realization (i.e., manifestation) but, in an unrealized (i.e., unmanifested) state, what is the manner of dependence? And again, even though (the entity) is already in a dependency manifested state, the nature of dependence is not possible.

JONES (Skt):
[11] But how can the entity that is brought about dependently upon an other thing depend upon what is not yet brought about? However, how can what is already brought about be dependent? Dependence then would make no sense.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever existent that is established through contingence, how can that, if it is not yet established be contingent? Even so [how can] that which is already established be contingent? For, its contingence is not proper.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How is that dependence demonstrated by the being who is not established in dependence?
But the demonstration of dependence does not occur in dependence.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. What has been hoped, has been accomplished, is existence,
And how is it possible that something, which has been expected, actually realized?
In such a situation, what has been accomplished, is expected,
And then, even looking at around, does not belong to attachment.

SPRUNG (Skt):
11 How can a supposedly dependent entity be dependent if it does not exist? On the other hand it does not make sense that an existing entity should be dependent on a dependent entity.

STRENG (Skt):
11. If that thing is proved by being dependent, how can that which has not been proved be dependent? So, that which is proved is dependent; but the dependence is not possible.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v11 If dharmas are dependently established,
When non-yet established, how can they depend?
If established, they are already dependent;
Being already established, what use have they for dependence?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How can a thing (A) which is established dependently (on B) be dependent (on B) when it (A) is not established? If one asks, “how can establishment be dependent?” It is not reasonable for it (A) to be dependent.

DOCTOR (Tb):
How could an entity that is established in dependence
Depend on something when it is not established?
If it is said that it depends while established,
Its dependence does not make any sense. [X.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. What entity is established through dependence?
If it is not established, then how could it depend?
However, if it is established merely through dependence,
That dependence makes no sense.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. If the entity that exists through dependence
Does not exist, how could it depend?
However, if you say that the existent depends,
That dependence makes no sense.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Whatever existent that is established through contingence, how can that, if it is not yet established be contingent? Even so [how can] that which is already established be contingent? For, its contingence is not proper.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/11 If dharmas are established by means of dependence, such dharmas are initially not yet established, and being not yet established do not exist. When they are non-existent, how can there be dependence? If such dharmas have already been established previously, then being already established, what need do they have for dependence? Neither is (in need) of mutual dependence. Therefore it is not the case that, as you said earlier, fuel and fire are established through mutual interdependence. Therefore

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Something called fire depends on something called fuel: it will be dependent on the fuel either in so far as it the fire - exists or does not exist. If it is non-existent then because of its non-existence it will not, like the horns of a rabbit, be dependent on the fuel. Again let it be the case that it exists. Then because it already exists how could it depend on fuel? So not even as existing does it exist in dependence because that would be meaningless. The case of fuel is to be demonstrated in the same way. In sum, fire and fuel cannot exist in dependence on one another simultaneously either.

From this it follows:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

X.10 refers to the fire that is already established (siddha), that is, something that is really existent (sad-bhuta). If one were to move to the other extreme and speak about events that are not established (asiddha), that is, those that are really non-existent (asad-bhuta), how can such events be contingent (apeksya sidhyate)? Thus, neither the already established (siddha) nor the unestablished (asiddha) can be related by way of mutual contingence. Contingence (apeksa) is not established in this substantialist way.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. Now Nāgārjuna draws the general ontological moral from this discussion of the putative counterexample. If an entity is inherently existent, it must be independently established as an entity and with its own nature. So no entity could be established as inherently existent through dependence on any other entity. Only inherently existent entities could be independent. To establish something as inherently existent through its dependence on something else is incoherent. So since entities can be established neither through independence nor through dependence, there is no way to establish anything as an entity in its own right.

Kārikā X.12

अपेक्ष्येन्धनमग्निर्न नानपेक्ष्याग्निरिन्धनम्।
अपेक्ष्येन्धनमग्निं न नानपेक्ष्याग्निमिन्धनम्॥१२॥

apekṣyendhanam agnir na nānapekṣyāgnir indhanam |
apekṣyendhanam agniṃ na nānapekṣyāgnim indhanam ||12||

因可燃無燃 不因亦無燃
因燃無可燃 不因無可燃

yīn kě rán wú rán bù yīn yì wú rán
yīn rán wú kě rán bù yīn wú kě rán

|ཤིང་ལ་ལྟོས་པའི་མེ་མེད་དེ།|ཤིང་ལ་མ་ལྟོས་མེ་ཡང་མེད།
|མེ་ལ་ལྟོས་པའི་ཤིང་མེད་དེ།|མེ་ལ་མ་ལྟོས་ཤིང་ཡང་མེད།|

| śiṅ la ltos pa'i me med de | | śiṅ la ma ltos me yaṅ med |
| me la ltos pa'i śiṅ med de | | (5)me la ma ltos śiṅ yaṅ med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - Fire does not exist by dependence on wood nor does it exist by non-dependence on wood. Likewise, wood does not exist by dependence or non-dependence on fire.

JONES (Skt):
[12] Fire is not dependent upon fuel; fire is not independent of fuel. Fuel is not dependent upon fire; fuel is not independent of fire.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Fire is not contingent upon fuel; fire is not non-contingent upon fuel. Fuel is not contingent upon fire; fuel is not non-contingent upon fire.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Fire is not dependent on fuel and fire is not independent of fuel.
Fuel is not dependent on fire and fuel is not independent of fire.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. To notice burning is not fire,
Or not to notice fire is not burning.
Being innocent to burning does not produce fire,
Or not to be ignorant of fire does not produce burning.

SPRUNG (Skt):
12 Fire does not depend on fuel. Fire is not independent of fuel. Fuel is not dependent on fire and fuel is not independent of fire.

STRENG (Skt):
12. Fire does not exist in relation to kindling; and fire does not exist unrelated to kindling. Kindling does not exist in relation to fire; and kindling does not exist unrelated to fire.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v12 Fire does not exist through dependence on fuel,
Nor does fire exist independently of fuel
Fuel does not exist through dependence on fire
Nor does fuel exist independently of fire.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
There is no fire that is dependent on wood; there is also no fire that is not dependent on wood. There is no wood that is dependent on fire; there is also no wood that is not dependent on fire.

DOCTOR (Tb):
There is no fire that depends on fuel,
There is no fire that does not depend on fuel.
There is no fuel that depends on fire,
There is no fuel that does not depend on fire. [X.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. Fire is not dependent upon fuel.
Fire is not independent of fuel.
Fuel is not dependent upon fire.
Fuel is not independent of fire.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. Fire is not dependent on fuel
Fire is not independent of fuel.
Fuel is not dependent on fire.
Fuel is not independent of fire.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Fire is not contingent upon fuel; fire is not non-contingent upon fuel. Fuel is not contingent upon fire; fuel is not non-contingent upon fire.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/12 Now, fire is not established by dependence on fuel, nor is it established by non-dependence on fuel. It is the same with fuel, whether (one says it is) dependent on fire or independent of fire, in neither way can it be established. This error has already been discussed.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

12a *Fire does not depend on fuel.*

You might think that therefore fire will exist independently. But Nagarjuna says this is not tenable either:

12b *Fire is not independent of fuel.*

Because its separate existence has been refuted and because it would follow that fire was uncaused. As fire is impossible either dependent on, or independent of, fuel, so fuel shares the same incapacity. Nagarjuna says

12cd *Fuel is not dependent on fire and fuel is not independent of fire.*

This argument is the same as that just given and to expound it again would be superfluous.

Fire is not latent in fuel. Rejection of Samkhya

You may ask: What is the purpose of this overly subtle analysis for us? We claim that fuel is directly perceived by the senses to be burned by fire; and that therefore both fire and fuel exist.

We reply: This would be so if fire did burn fuel. If fire were possible in fuel it would burn fuel. But Nagarjuna says it is not possible:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If the ideas expressed in the present verse were to be examined independent of what went before, it would be easy to leap to the conclusion that Nagarjuna is here expressing the "inexpressible"; that the negations such as "non-ceasing" (anirodham) and "non-arising" (anutpadam) were supposed to clear the way for the "nonconceptual," "non-dual" ultimate reality (paramartha?). On the contrary, if these thoughts are placed in their proper context, namely, the metaphysical explanations of "mutal contingence" (parasparapeksa), then these negative statements can be understood as outright rejections of such metaphysical explanations. As is evident from several quotations from Candrakīrti himself (see X.7), "contingence" (apeksa) can be explained in a non-metaphysical or empirical way, just as much as the notion of cause or condition (pratyaya) or the idea of motion (gati) can be elucidated without falling into the quagmire of metaphysics (see Chapters I,II).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

12. That is, neither fuel nor fire can be established as independent bases of predication separate from one another that then stand in accidental relations to one another. There are not two entities, fire and fuel, which then are related either by dependence or interdependence.

Kārikā X.13

आगच्छत्यन्यतो नाग्निरिन्धनेऽग्निर्न विद्यते।
अत्रेन्धने शेषमुक्तं गम्यमानगतागतैः॥१३॥

燃不餘處來 燃處亦無燃
可燃亦如是 餘如去來說

།མེ་ནི་གཞན་ལས་མི་འོང་སྟེ། །ཤིང་ལ་འང་མེ་ནི་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན། >།
།དེ་བཞིན་ཤིང་གི་ལྷག་མ་ནི། །སོང་དང་མ་སོང་བགོམ་པས་བསྟན། །

āgacchaty anyato nāgnir indhane ’gnir na vidyate |
atrendhane śeṣam uktaṃ gamyamānagatāgataiḥ ||13||

rán bù yú chǔ lái rán chǔ yì wú rán
kě rán yì rú shì yú rú qù lái shuì

| me ni gźan las mi ’oṅ ste | | śiṅ la’aṅ me ni yod ma yin |
| de bźin śiṅ gi lhag ma ni | | soṅ daṅ ma soṅ bgom pas bstan |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - Fire does not come from something else nor does it exist in the wood. With respect to wood the remaining issues have been taken up in the discussion of present passing away, that which has transpired, and that which has not transpired. - Note: Reference is to Chapter II.

JONES (Skt):
[13] Fire does not come out of something other than fuel; fire is not found in the fuel. Everything else about fuel was said in the analysis of motion in Chapter 2.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Fire does not come out of something different nor is fire seen to be in the fuel. Herein, with regard to fuel, the rest is stated as in the case of present moving, the moved and the not moved.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where fire does not come from something other than fuel, fire does not occur.
Certainly what has been said about gone, going, and not gone, and the rest applies in the case of fuel.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. What is going on a different way, is different from fire,
And in burning, it is impossible for fire to be found.
There, inside burning, what has been maintained, can be explained,
Relying upon the method of “is going,” ”has gone“ and “will go.”

SPRUNG (Skt):
13 Fire does not exist in the fuel; fire does not spring from any other source. The remaining arguments as given for motion and rest apply in this case to fuel.

STRENG (Skt):
13. Fire does not come from something else; and fire does not exist in kindling. The remaining analysis in regard to kindling is described by the analysis of "that which is being gone to," "that which is gone to" and "that which is not yet gone to."

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
X.13b In the place of ‘fire,’ all the other cases can be expressed by ‘what is presently moving,’ ‘what has moved,’ ‘what has not moved.’

BOCKING (Ch):
10v13 Fire does not come from some other place,
And there is no fire in the place occupied by fire.
The same applies to fuel,
And the rest is as explained in 'going and coming'.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Fire does not come from something else; fire also does not exist in wood. Likewise, the remainder of wood has been shown by gone, not-gone and going.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Fire does not come from anything else,
Nor is there any fire in the fuel.
The rest about fuel has been explained
By what was, will be, and is being traversed. [X.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. Fire does not come from something else,
Nor is fire in fuel itself.
Moreover, fire and the rest are just like
The moved, the not-moved, and the goer.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. Fire does not come from something else.
Nor is fire even in fuel.
Moreover, everything else concerning fuel is presented through
Where one has gone, where one has not gone, and where one goes.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Fire does not come out of something different nor is fire seen to be in the fuel. Herein, with regard to fuel, the rest is stated as in the case of present moving, the moved and the not moved.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/13 Fire does not come from some other quarter and enter the fuel, but there is no fire in the fuel either, for if you cut up the firewood and look for fire you will not be able to find it. It is the same with fuel. It does not come from some other place and enter into fire, but there is no fuel in fire either. The already-burnt does not burn, the not-yet burnt does not burn and in the moment of burning, there is no burning. Such ideas have been discussed in the chapter on going and coming.

Therefore:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

13ab *Fire does not exist in the fuel; fire does not spring from any other source.*

Fire does not derive from any source at all distinct from fuel because such source is never observed; and because no fire can arise which is without a cause, without relation to fuel; and because there would be no purpose in a fire starting up which was already connected with fuel. Nor again does fire exist in the fuel because the same objections would apply equally and would lead to an infinite regress. Fire does not arise from elsewhere than the fuel. Nor is it possible to be in the fuel because it is never observed there.

It may be argued (the Samkhya view) that an existing fire is not at first observed [in fuel] because the conditions which would make it manifest (*abhivyanjakapratyaya*) are lacking as in the case of underground water and such things. Subsequently, however, from the rubbing of sticks together, because the conditions which make fire manifest are realized, it is observed.

This theory should first be clarified. What is additionally effected by the conditions of manifestation in the case of underground water and such things? Their intrinsic nature (*svarupa*) is not at first brought into being by the conditions of their manifestation, because it exists already. If you say that it is the manifestation (*abhivyakti*) itself which is brought into being, what is this which is called manifestation? If it is 'becoming visible' then this becoming visible itself is what is created because it did not exist previously. To think this way is to abandon the theory according to which something exists in its intrinsic nature prior to its being caused, because the manifestation is created, at one time not existing and at a later time existing. If the intrinsic nature of a thing is independent of the conditions of its coming into being these would be, like a flower in the sky, without reality.

Further, this manifestation itself would have to be conceived as either of something already manifested or of something not yet manifested. In the first case something already manifest cannot be manifested because of the meaninglessness of its manifestation and because it would entail undesirable logical consequences. Again, what is not manifest can equally well not be manifested because of its not being manifested. It would be like a flower in the sky. Thus manifestation is not possible.

You may argue again that it is the coarse form (*staulya*) of a pre-existing thing which is brought into being by the conditions of manifestation. Here again, the coarse form itself does at a prior time not exist but is brought into being later. But how can there be manifestation as the actual production of the coarse form? Because the subtle form (*sauksmya*) (fn 1 The 'intrinsic nature of. The coarse form is the manifestation of this.) lying outside causal efficacy, cannot exist, of what would there be a manifestation consisting of the production of the coarse form? It is thus clear that in no way is there a potentiality of fire in fuel: fire does not exist in fuel. Nor can the burning of fuel arise from a fire that does not exist. So what you claim to perceive is quite unreal.

Further, there are the objections developed earlier (Chapter IV) in connection with motion and rest.

13cd *The remaining arguments as given for motion and rest apply in this case to fuel.*

'In this case' refers to the statement 'Fuel is perceived to be burned by fire.' With reference to fuel, that is, it should be understood that all the remaining objections are the same as those given for motion and rest. To adapt the passage referred to: What has burned is not burning, nor is what has not burned burning, and what is being burned something other than what has burned and what has not burned is not burning. In this way it is to be understood that fire does not burn fuel.

Review of the five possibilities

Nagarjuna, in order to sum up what has been expounded, now says:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

After dealing with the metaphysical interpretations of "contingence" (apeksa) assumed between fire and fuel, Nagarjuna returns to the more familiar substantialist theories of self-causation (svata utpatti) and external causation (parata utpatti). Fire is not inherent in the fuel nor does it issue out of something external. If any further explanations are to be provided which are themselves founded upon such substantialist ideas, all such explanations can be analysed in terms of the methods adopted in Chapter II dealing with motion (gati).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

13. Though, as verse 12 grants, fire exists only in relation to fuel, it would not be correct to assert that fuel as an independent entity somehow produces fire. The analysis and the conclusion are strictly analogous to that regarding motion and the mover. We neither can say that motion is the same as the mover nor that they are different entities. We cannot say that motion is present in the unmoved, the moving, or the yet-to-move. Similarly we cannot say that fire is the same as the fuel nor that it is different. Nor can we say that it is present in the unburned, the burning, or the yet-to-be-burned fuel. The next verse emphasizes this point:

Kārikā X.14

इन्धनं पुनरग्निर्न नाग्निरन्यत्र चेन्धनात्।
नाग्निरिन्धनवान्नाग्नाविन्धनानि न तेषु सः॥१४॥

indhanaṃ punar agnir na nāgnir anyatra cendhanāt |
nāgnir indhanavān nāgnāv indhanāni na teṣu saḥ ||14||

可燃即非然 離可燃無燃
燃無有可燃 燃中無可燃

kě rán jí fēi rán lí kě rán wú rán
rán wú yǒu kě rán rán zhōng wú kě rán

།ཤིང་ཉིད་མེ་ནི་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།།ཤིང་ལས་གཞན་པ་མེ་ཡང་མེད།
།མེ་ནི་ཤིང་དང་ལྡན་མ་ཡིན།།མེ་ལ་ཤིང་མེད་དེར་དེ་མེད།།

| śiṅ ñid me ni ma yin te | | śiṅ las gźan la me yaṅ med |
| me ni śiṅ daṅ ldan ma yin | | me (6)la śiṅ med der de med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 14 - Again, fire is not wood nor is it in something else than wood. Fire does not contain wood. There is neither wood in fire nor fire in wood.

JONES (Skt):
[14] In addition, the fuel is not the fire, nor is there fire apart from fuel. Fire does not possess fuel. Pieces of fuel are not in the fire, nor is the fire in them.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Furthermore, fuel is not fire. Apart from fuel there is no fire. Fire is not possessed of fuel. Fuel is not in the fire, nor is it [i.e., fire] in them.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, fire is not fuel and there is no fire other than from fuel.
Fire is not possessed by fuel and the fuels are not in the fire, nor is it in them.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
14. Burning is not fire itself again,
And fire even in another place, has never left from burning.
Fire has not separated from burning or from fire,
And miscellaneous kinds of burnings are never real because of them.

SPRUNG (Skt):
14 Fire is not identical with fuel; nor does fire arise elsewhere than from fuel; fire is not of the nature of fuel; fuels are not in fire nor fire in them.

STRENG (Skt):
14. Fire is not identical to kindling, but fire is not in anything other than kindling. Fire does not have kindling as its property; also, the kindling is not in fire and vice versa.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v14 Fuel is not the same as fire,
But apart from fuel there is no fire
Fire is not the same as fuel,
Within fire there is no fuel,
And within fuel there is no fire.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Wood itself is not fire; fire is also not something other than wood. Fire does not possess wood; wood does not exist in fire; that (fire) does not exist in it.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Fuel is not the same as fire,
Nor is there fire apart from fuel.
Fire does not possess fuel.
Fuel is not in fire, nor is fire in fuel. [X.14]

GARFIELD (Tb):
14. Fuel is not fire.
Fire does not arise from anything different from fuel.
Fire does not possess fuel.
Fuel is not in fire, nor vice versa.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
14. Fuel itself is not fire.
Fire is in nothing other than fuel.
Fire does not possess fuel.
Fuel is not in fire, nor vice versa.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Furthermore, fuel is not fire. Apart from fuel there is no fire. Fire is not possessed of fuel. Fuel is not in the fire, nor is it [i.e., fire] in them.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
The firewood itself is not the fire,
There is no fire that exists apart from the firewood,
The fire does not possess the firewood,
The fire does not support the firewood, and the firewood does not support the fire. (14)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/14 Fuel is not the same as fire, and why? Because of the error previously discussed (of saying) that doer and deed are one. There is no fire apart from fuel, because of the error of 'permanently existing fire' and so forth. Fire not fuel, there is no fuel in fire, and there is no fire in fuel. Since these would involve the error of (fuel and fire being different entities, none of the three can be established.

Question: Why are you discussing fuel and fire?

Reply: In the same way that fire depends for its existence on fuel, so the recipient depends for his existence on receiving. 'Receiving' stands for the five skandhas, 'the recipient' means the person. Since fuel and fire are not established, receiving and recipient also are not established (as existent) and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

(fn 2 This fivefold formula is introduced again in the Chapter 'The Perfectly Realized One'. Cf. p. 193.)

It was stated earlier (*kārikā* 1), 'If fuel is fire that would be identity of agent and act.' In this way the identity of fire and fuel was refuted; fuel is not fire. It was further stated 'If fire is wholly other than fuel it could exist even without fuel.' In this and other arguments the complete otherness of fire and fuel was refuted. Fire cannot arise elsewhere than from fuel. From the refutation of both theses, that of identity and that of complete otherness, the various other theses: that fire is of the nature of fuel, that fire contains fuel, that fuel contains fire are, by implication, refuted. Summarizing them Nagarjuna says, 'fire is not of the nature of fuel; fuels are not in fire nor is fire in them'.

Fire is said not to be of the nature of fuel (*indhanavan*); 'of the nature of' means either that fuel is of fire or that fire is in fuel. Here fire is either separate, or it is not separate except in an etymological sense. An example of the first would be 'Devadatta has a cow'. An example of the second would be 'Devadatta has a body, a mind and so on'. The refutation of the two theses - identity or complete otherness concerning fire and fuel entails the refutation of fire being of the nature of fuel.

It is commonly said that the dish, the completely other, is the container of the curd. But Fire is not completely other than fuel so it does not make sense that fuel is contained in fire. Nor can fire be in fuel because their complete otherness has been refuted. So, in this way, the theses of container and contained have been implicitly refuted.

Extension of the argument to the self and all objects

As fire, on being thoroughly investigated in the five ways, is not possible, so it is, Nagarjuna says, extending his argument, with the self as well.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The refutation of all metaphysical formulations of the notion of identity as applied to fire and fuel is presented here. This is done in terms of the analytical methods followed in Chapter I.

Kārikā X.15

अग्नीन्धनाभ्यां व्याख्यात आत्मोपादानयोः क्रमः।
सर्वो निरवशेषेण सार्धं घटपटादिभिः॥१५॥

agnīndhanābhyāṃ vyākhyāta ātma-upādānayoḥ kramaḥ |
sarvo niravaśeṣeṇa sārdhaṃ ghaṭapaṭādibhiḥ ||15||

以燃可燃法 說受受者法
及以說瓶衣 一切等諸法

yǐ rán kě rán fǎ shuì shòu shòu zhě fǎ
jí yǐ shuì píng yì;yī yī qiè děng zhū fǎ

།མེ་དང་ཤིང་གིས་བདག་དང་ནི།།ཉེ་བར་ལེན་པའི་རིམ་པ་ཀུན།
།བུམ་སྣམ་སོགས་དང་ལྷན་ཅིག་ཏུ།།མ་ལུས་པར་ནི་རྣམ་པར་བཤད།།

| ma daṅ śiṅ gis bdag daṅ ni | | ñe bar len pa'i rim pa kun |
| bum rnam sogs daṅ lhan cig tu | | ma lus par ni rnam par bśad |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 15 - By means of the analysis of fire and wood, the total relationship between atman and upadana, and along with the (notions of) earthen jar, cloth, etc., have all been explained without fail. -

JONES (Skt):
[15] Through this analysis of fire and fuel - together with similar examples of the clay and the pot, the thread and the cloth, and so forth - the entire method of analyzing the self and its acquiring a new rebirth is explained.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Through the examples of fire and fuel, together with the examples of pot [& clay], cloth [& thread], etc. every method of analysis of the self and grasping have been explained without exception.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The process of self and grasping is explained from fire, and fuel,
along with the jar and cloth, etc., and all the rest without exception.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
15. An idea that fire and burning are one, is a content of explanation,
And relying upon the oneness between mind and sense perception, the process is Å@going on.
Å@Everything in the world has never surplus or scarcity,
And to increase more half is concentrated intentionally like a kind of clothes.

SPRUNG (Skt):
15 Everything expounded in terms of fire and fuel is, without exception, applicable to self and the factors of personal existence. And to pot, cloth, and so on.

STRENG (Skt):
15. By the analysis of fire and kindling the syllogism of the individual self (atma) and "the acquiring" (upadana) Is fully and completely explained, as well as "the jar" and "the cloth" and other analogies.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
X.15 With [the investigation] of fire and fuel, the way [for the solution of the problem of] the self and of grasping is completely described.

ROBINSON (Skt):
By the [example of the] fire and fuel is explained the whole method, omitting nothing, for [the examination of] self and appropriation, as well as for the pot, the cloth, and so on.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v15 By means of the dharmas of fire and fuel,
We may explain the dharmas of receiving and recipient.
And we explain pots and cloth,
And all the various dharmas.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Through fire and wood is explained without exception all the stages of self and the grasped and at the same time jugs, cloth and so on.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Through the treatment of fire and fuel,
The self and its appropriation,
Along with vases, woolen garments, and so forth,
Have all been explained without exception. [X.15]

GARFIELD (Tb):
15. Through discussion of fire and fuel,
The self and the aggregates, the pot and cloth
All together,
Without remainder have been explained.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
15. Through the discussion of fire and fuel,
The order of self and appropriation,
Together with the pot and cloth, all
Without remainder have been explained.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Through the examples of fire and fuel, together with the examples of pot [& clay], cloth [& thread], etc. every method of analysis of the self and grasping have been explained without exception.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
This examination of fire and firewood
Refutes the self and the aggregates it appropriates in all five ways.
Similarly, examining vases, blankets, and so forth,
It is perfectly explained that none of them exist in any of these five ways. (15)

INADA FOOTNOTE

Note: Atman and upadana refer to man and his five basic functions (skandhas). This verse is a summation of the analysis of wood and fire, and the analysis, Nagarjuna contends, can be employed to all "entities" (dharmas) including the self (atman) and its functions in order to show the fallacies involved in maintaining preconceived notions.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/15 Just as fuel is not fire, so receiving is not the recipient, because of the error of deed and doer being one. But also, there is no recipient without receiving, because no difference can be found, (between them). Because of the error of 'difference', none of the three is established.

Just as with receiving and the recipient, so it is with all the external dharmas such as cloth, pots, and all the various dharmas, which are to be explained in the same way as above, as non-arising and utterly empty.

Therefore:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

15abc *Everything expounded in terms of fire and fuel is, without exception, applicable to self and the factors of personal existence.*

What the self (*atman*) possesses is what is appropriated (*upadana*), namely, the five appropriative factors of personal existence. What is commonly thought of as being based on these factors is the appropriator, the conceiver, the active agent and this is said to be the self. Because the i-me' sense (*ahamkara*) is made into an object, the illusion of the 'I' is conceived as in and of personal existence. The argumentation concerning the self and what it possesses is to be understood as exactly parallel to that expounded for fire and fuel.

What is the distinction between 'everything' and 'without exception'? The term 'everything' means the five theories taken consecutively. All these five theories are to be tied together in an orderly way for self and the factors of personal existence as they were for fire and fuel. The expository argumentation given earlier applied to the refutation of self and the factors of personal existence with nothing omitted is what is meant by 'without exception'. This is the meaning. It should be understood that Nagarjuna said 'everything without exception' with a view to emphasizing that the refutation of the self and the factors of personal existence is identical in every essential with that of fire and fuel. It is not tenable to say that the factors of personal existence are the same as the self because it would follow, absurdly, that agent and act were identical. Nor are the factors of personal existence one thing and the self another, because from that it would follow that the self could be perceived apart from the factors of personal existence and because it would follow, absurdly, that the self was without relation to anything other than itself. Because of the refutation of both identity and difference the self cannot be of the nature of the factors of personal existence. Because they are not wholly other the factors of personal existence are not 'in' the self nor is the self in them. It is clear, thus, that in none of the five ways is the self a reality. The reciprocally dependent existence of self and factors of personal existence, exactly like agent and act, is thus beyond doubt.

However, this extension of the argument is not limited to self and the factors of personal existence.

15d *And to pot, cloth, and so on.*

The exposition is to be understood as applying to all things without exception in every respect (fn 3 It is characteristically Buddhist to apply the same kind of argument to the self and to things. This seems restrictive, but it serves to expose the inadequacy of relational thinking sweepingly.). Pots and other things may be thought of in terms of cause and effect, or of part and whole, or of characteristic and the bearer of characteristics, or of quality and the possessor of quality. In the first case clay, stick, turntable, thread, water, the strength of the potter and so on would be the causes of the pot; the pot would be the effect. In the

second case the bare pot, its blue colour and so on would be the parts; the pot would be what the parts are in, the whole. Again, a broad base, turned-down edge, long neck and so on would be the characteristics of the pot; the pot would be the bearer of the characteristics. Last, colour and so on would be the qualities; the pot would be the possessor of qualities. In these ways the conclusions concerning fire and fuel are to be applied in extension. Concerning both self and the factors of personal existence, and such things as pots, the exposition may be found in the Madhyamakavatara. In this way the existence of self and the factors of personal existence as well as of pots and such things has been established as reciprocally dependent existence like agent and act.

Some, in their arrogance, believing they are aware of the true teaching of the realized one, in their confusion of mind conclude that the categories of things established by non-Buddhists accord with the true teaching.

Dependent origination

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The metaphysical interpretations of "self' (atman) and "grasping" (upadana) are exposed, here, especially in relation to the metaphor of fire and fuel (agnindhana). Does this mean that there could be non-metaphysical explanations of both "self' and "grasping?" The answer would be in the positive, especially in yew of what Nagarjuna has said in reference to "grasping" and the "one who grasps" (upadatr) or the action and the agent (karma-karaka). This analysis is not confined to the metaphor of "fire and fuel" alone. It applies to all other metaphors used during this period of speculation, such as "clay and the pot," and "thread and the cloth."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

15. The fire and fuel example is used as an analogy for a number of different cases of relations between bases and their attributes, including the relation between the putative self and its aggregates that is, the components of the personality. But there are other stock examples - the relation between the pot and its properties and between the cloth and its thread - that are used to try to defend these asymmetrical dependence relations between inherently existent bases and the properties they support. Nāgārjuna is simply asserting the complete generality of this argument: It applies, mutatis mutandis, to all of these cases.

Kārikā X.16

आत्मनश्च सतत्त्वं ये भावानां च पृथक्पृथक्।
निर्दिशन्ति न तान्मन्ये शासनस्यार्थकोविदान्॥१६॥

ātmanaś ca satattvaṃ ye bhāvānāṃ ca pṛthak pṛthak |
nirdiśanti na tān manye śāsanasyārthakovidān ||16||

若人說有我 諸法各異相
當知如是人 不得佛法味

ruò rén shuì yǒu wǒ zhū fǎ gè;gě yì xiàng;xiāng
dāng zhī rú shì rén bù dé fó fǎ wèi

|གང་དག་བདག་དང་དངོས་པོ་རྣམས||དེ་བཅས་ཉིད་དང་ཐ་དད་པར|
|སྟོན་པ་དེ་དག་བསྟན་དོན་ལ||མཁས་སོ་སྙམ་དུ་མི་སེམས་སོ||

| gaṅ dag bdag daṅ dṅos po rnams | | de bcas ñid daṅ tha dad par |
| ston pa de dag bstan don la | | mkhas (7)so sñam du mi sems so |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 16 - Insofar as I am concerned, those who speak of the reality of entities and who assign them distinct existences cannot be considered truly knowledgeable of the (Buddha's) teachings.

JONES (Skt):
[16] I do not consider those who teach that the self is the same or different from the entities to be skilled in the meaning of the Buddha's teachings.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Those who posit the substantiality of the self as well as of discrete existents—these I do not consider to be experts in the meaning of the [Buddha's] message.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Those who speak about the self and existence as different from beings
do not have, I think, knowledge about the meaning of the teaching [of the Buddha].

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
16. The spiritual existence and the material substances,
They are miscellaneous existences and at the same time existence of one by one.
However they do not indicate themselves as if they were something,
And so they have completely killed something, which has been much related with some kind of study.

SPRUNG (Skt):
16 Those who teach either that the self and entities coexist or that they exist separately I do not hold to understand the doctrine.

STRENG (Skt):
16. Those who specify the nature of the individual self and of existing things (bhava) as radically different—Those people I do not regard as ones who know the sense of the teaching.

BOCKING (Ch):
10v16 If a person says that he has a self
And that all the dharmas each have different characteristics,
You will know that such a man
Has not acquired the flavor of the Buddha-dharma.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
I do not think those who teach the identity or difference of self and things are wise in the meaning of the teaching.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Those who teach that self and entities
Are the same or different
I do not consider knowledgeable
About the meaning of the teachings. [X.16]

GARFIELD (Tb):
16. I do not think that
Those who teach that the self
Is the same as or different from the entities
Understand the meaning of the doctrine.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
16. I do not think that
Those who teach that the self
And the entities can be identical or different
Understand the meaning of the doctrine.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Those who posit the substantiality of the self as well as of discrete existents—these I do not consider to be experts in the meaning of the [Buddha's] message.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

10/16 All dharma s from the beginning have been non-arising, having the characteristic of utter nirvana. This is why he utters this verse at the end of the chapter. If a person asserts that there is a characteristic of 'self' as the Vatsiputriya school teaches, he cannot say that form is the self, and he cannot say that there is a self apart from form, but only that self resides in the 'fifth indescribable storehouse'. This is like the Sarvastivadins who teach that each of the dharmas has its own characteristics, distinguishing this one as skillful, this one as unskillful, this as neutral, this as outflowing or not outflowing, active or inactive, and so on. Such people as these do not attain the nirvana-quality of dharmas, but fabricate various kinds of sophistries, using the Buddha's words.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

To exist by virtue of something else is the meaning of 'coexist' (*satat*). A co-existing entity enjoys co-existence. The thought is that it is not separate, not wholly other, but makes a unity. Those who give this account of co-existence Nagarjuna does not consider to be well-versed in the Buddhist doctrine. For example the self is conceived of in terms of the factors of personal existence and only together with these is it possible. This means that self does not exist separately, apart from the factors of personal existence. In the same way a pot is conceived in terms of its causes — clay, potter and so on; it exists un- separated from them, not isolated by itself. Those who give this account of the co-existence of self and of entities do not discern the truth of the surpassingly deep idea of dependent origination - the way things really are — which is free of both ontology and nihilism and which is known as an idea based on the everyday but which conduces to enlightenment.

Those who espouse the separate existence of things see the self and the factors of personal existence each as separate and cause and effect as separate and so on: they see only complete otherness. Nagarjuna does not believe that such understand the meaning of the Buddhist doctrine. As it has been said, 'You should be aware of the woiid as neither eternal nor perishable and the things of the world as neither identical nor different but like echoes, and so be beyond reproach.' When the *yogi* has comprehended the supreme truth of the teaching by means of this analysis of fire and fuel then his body cannot be burned by the world holocaust nor by the flames of passion, hatred and delusion.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here then is a clear and unequivocal assertion on the part of Nagarjuna. Those who assert the substantial existence (satattvam), whether that be of a monistic "self" (atman) or of distinct entities (prthak prthak bhavanam) are not conversant with the teachings of the Buddha. When Nagarjuna makes that assertion with the statement: "[I] do not consider" ([aham] na manye), what sort of self was he recognizing? It certainly could not be anything like what he was refuting. The answer to this question will be provided later.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

16. This colophon verse reminds us that when existence is understood in terms of emptiness and when entities are regarded as purely relational in character, identity and difference can only be understood conventionally. This applies not only with respect to apparently distinct entities, but also to the relation between parts and wholes, things and their attributes, events and their causes, and as Nāgārjuna emphasizes here, self and the objects of awareness. Strict identity and difference as determined by reference to phenomena themselves are only conceivable from the incoherent standpoint of inherent existence.

Chapter XI

पूर्वापरकोटिपरीक्षा एकादशमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀本際品第十一(八偈)

།སྔོན་དང་ཕྱི་མའི་མཐའ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་གཅིག་པའོ།།

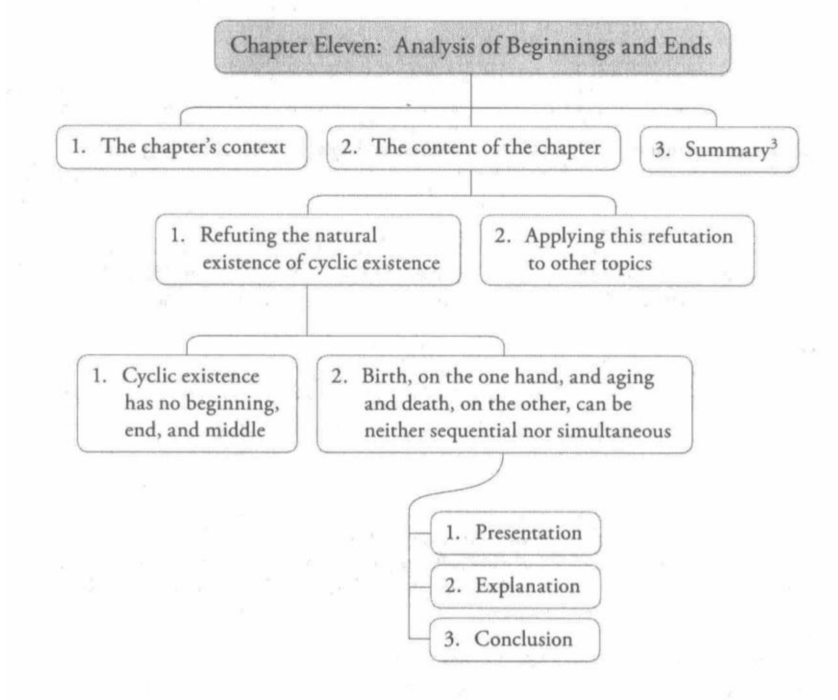
pūrvāparakoṭiparīkṣā nāmaikādaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XI: Examination of the Initial and Final Limits

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter XI

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the second part of the second major portion of the examination of the two selflessnesses—the explanation of the selflessness of the person. We have completed the first of its two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the person. We are now still in the second part: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of the person. We have completed the first part, the refutation of the example in the premises. **[231]** We now begin the second part, the refutation of the reasoning in the premises. This part has two sections: the refutation of the argument that the activity of birth and death exists and the refutation of the argument that, dependent on the self, suffering exists. This chapter is the first of these two parts.

EXPLANATION:

Here one might say the self exists essentially because cyclic existence exists. If there were no self, then in this cycle of five transmigrations, of migration proceeding to the next from this one, and coming from the previous one to this one, who would have the nature of transmigrating from one birth and death to another? The teacher has also said that the cycle of birth, aging, and death is without beginning or end. The origin of sentient beings who, clouded by ignorance, completely enmeshed with attachment, and bound by the chain of attachment, transmigrate, hurtling, is not apparent. Here the Buddha says that sentient beings, through continuous birth and death, transmigrate. Thus, the transmigrator exists, and that is the self.

The refutation of this has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of cyclic existence and the application of the argument to other phenomena.

SUMMARY:

If the transmigrating person and the activity of transmigration—birth, aging, and death—and all things such as cause and effect, existed inherently, there would be no way to call them "birth," etc. Therefore, it should be ascertained that the statement that the transmigrator is born and dies continuously is only tenable when taken as merely posited through convention.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XI - Examination of Antecedent and Consequent States in the Empirical Realm

In the Tibetan *Dhu na rtsa bahi hgrel pa ga las hjigs med (Mulamadhyamakavrttyakutobhaya),* the Chinese *Pan-jo-teng-lun-shih* and the *Ta-ch'eng-chung-kuan-shih-lun,* the title is the Examination of *Samsara (lun hui* 輪廻 life-death cycle). An investigation of the content of the present chapter reveals that this title is quite justifiable. However, Candrakirti's Sanskrit title is not without a basis since it suggests that the discussion of *samsara* should be carried to its extremes, hence the term, *koti,* and exhibit its impossibility. Here again, as in previous chapters, the argument develops by breaking up the doctrine of *samsara* into separate elements, i.e., into the three temporal moments of prior, posterior and simultaneity, and by showing the ultimate obscurity and uncertainty of these elements. All existences in truth are instances of the fact of *sunyata* which does not lend itself to analysis and description.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

11. *Prior and posterior ends* (*purvaparakoti*). The refutation of the prior existence of a substantial being or entity would still leave open the question regarding the beginning and end of things. Speculations regarding the beginning (*purva-koti*) and the final end (*apara-koti*) have occupied the attention of philosophers from the dawn of history. These speculations have given rise to a wide variety of beliefs, one of which is the substantial existence of a being (such as God) or an ultimate entity (such as primordial matter, *prakrti*, sometimes referred to as *svabhava*).81 Realizing the epistemological problems involved in these speculations, the Buddha refrained from making any statements regarding such issues.

Chapter XI is intended to explain the Buddha's attitude towards such questions. Nagarjuna was aware that the Buddha refused to make any statements about the prior end of the life-process. Hence his statement: "The Great Sage has declared that the prior end of the life-process is not known" (XI.1). However, the Sanskritization of the Prakrit term *anamatagga* (= "inconceivable is the beginning") as *anavaragra* (= "without beginning and end") had already appeared in the Buddhist texts that Nagarjuna was familiar with.82 Taking this latter version of the Buddha's statement, Nagarjuna maintains that there is neither a beginning nor an end, whereas the Buddha's own statement pertained to the epistemological difficulties.

Yet, Nagarjuna's ingenuity was such that he was able to indicate the logical difficulties involved in any denial of either the beginning or the end. For he finds that "no middle can be conceived of that which is without beginning or end" (XI.2). Because of such logical difficulties, he maintains that prior and posterior as well as simultaneous states (*of samsara*) are not appropriate. These logical difficulties arise primarily becaue entities are conceived of in a rather substantialist way. Thus, if birth were to be considered as being prior to old age and death, and birth as well as old age and death are substantial, that is, existing in their own nature (*svabhava*), then there will be birth without old age and death, which implies immortality (XI.3). Moreover, if they were to be selfexistent, there would be no causal connection between them (XI.4). Similar logical difficulties arise if they were considered as being simultaneous.

While the Buddha was unwilling to discuss the absolute origin and end of the life-process (*samsara*) and yet continued to speak of things arising and passing away on the basis of causal dependence, Nagarjuna had to deal with the notion of the life-process interpreted in a more substantialist way by the Buddhist metaphysicians. Therefore, after making the remark that the prior end of *samsara* is not evident, a position upheld by the Buddha himself, Nagarjuna proceeds to maintain that "the prior end of all *existents* is also not evident" (*sarvesam api bhavanam purva koti na vidyate,* XI.8), thereby rejecting all the views of the substantialists.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Before

Was there a before before?

If life has no beginning and no end,
No before and no after,
How can it be centered in a present?

Were birth before and death after,
I would be immortal with no history.
Were death first and birth later,
The dead would be unborn.

I cannot be born and die at once:
If birth were death,
They would both be unoriginated.

Why am I transfixed by them?

JONES (COMMENTARY)

11. *The Limits of the Past and Future*

This chapter involves *"samsara,"* which can refer to our cycle of births, deaths, and rebirths, or it can refer to the entire phenomenal world, which in Buddhist metaphysics is also constantly cycling. As Nagarjuna acknowledges (v. I; R106). when the Buddha was asked questions concerning the age and size of the universe, he left these matters unanswered *(avyakrita) (Digha Nikaya* 1.13, 111.137; *Majjhima Nikaya* 1.427; *Anguttara Nikaya* 11.80). There are three popular explanations within Buddhism for why these questions were left unanswered: any answer would be misconstrued by the unenlightened and would have adverse consequences for the student; asking these questions focuses the mind on matters that are irrelevant to the successful practice of the Buddhist path, and one should focus one's mind solely on more soteriologically important issues; and they are metaphysically misguided because they involve incoherent presuppositions of self-existence (Garfield 1995: 197 n. 65)· Notice that this is not a matter of "mystical ineffability of ultimate reality." Rather, it is only about certain factual matters that may or may not have an answer but either way are irrelevant to the Buddhist quest.

Nagarjuna, however, does not follow the Buddha's approach here. He bases his argument on the premise that *samsara* is *beginningless and endless* (v.1), i.e., without limits in the past or future. So too from verse 7: entities also have an infinite or at least indefinite past since no limit to them is found. He then proceeds with the conceptual interconnections of beginning, middle, and end. For example, if "birth" is a distinct reality from "aging and death," then birth never ages or dies, and one who is born would be immortal (v. 3)' So too, the young by definition cannot become old (v. 13·5; R 68) - life is divided up into discrete entities that cannot change or be related to one another. (The second half of verse 2 does not follow from the first half: there still may be the sequence to particular events of "before, after, and simultaneous" of events within a series even if there is no "beginning or end" to the total series. If Nagarjuna had said "before" and "after" in the first line, the second half would follow, but the Sanskrit does not justify such a translation.)

11

An Examination of Samsara

In the Prajnaparamita Sutras, the Buddha taught:

No beginning is perceptible,
No end is perceptible,
And nothing in between is perceptible either.

THE REASON THE WORD perceptible is used here is that if we examine with our eye of wisdom, we cannot perceive any earlier, middle, or later period of time in samsara, because these things do not inherently exist. Even the buddhas in all their wisdom never perceived any earlier, middle, or later period of time, because there have never been any of these three times to perceive.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter because those who believed in the true existence of things said to him, "Follower of the Middle Way, you may have attempted to refute the true existence of the self of the individual with your clever examples of fire and firewood, but you have not succeeded in doing so, because samsara exists. Since samsara exists, there must be someone to go around in samsara, and therefore the self does exist after all. Furthermore, since the self exists, the sources of consciousness, aggregates, and potentials that compose the self must also exist." Thus, Nagarjuna had to prove to these people that samsara does not truly exist, because if he had not done so, he would not have been able to help them overcome their confused belief in the true existence of the self.

If samsara actually existed, it would have to have a beginning, an end, and some span of time in the middle. Analysis, however, cannot find any beginning to samsara. Whatever our current situation in samsara, it had to have its own causes, and those causes had to have their own causes, and so on—nothing in the cycle of existence occurs without causes to bring it into being. We can therefore never find an "original cause" that would constitute the beginning of cyclic existence, because if there were one, it would have arisen without a cause itself, which is impossible. Thus, there was no point when samsara began, and how could something that never began ever end? Without a beginning or an end, how could there be any period of time in the middle? Since it has neither beginning, middle, nor end, samsara does not truly exist.

Another way to analyze samsara is to look at the relationship between samsara and the ones who supposedly wander around within it. Which of these comes first? If samsara existed before the ones who wander within it, there would be a samsara with nobody there. If the ones in samsara existed before samsara itself did, then where would they be? There would be nowhere for them to exist.

On the other hand, if samsara and the ones who wander in samsara existed simultaneously and they were inherently existent, they would have no connection with each other. They would each be able to go their own separate way independent of the other. It is not like that with respect to samsara and the beings within it, however. They cannot exist independently or separately because each needs and depends upon the other to exist.

Once we discover that samsara does not truly exist, we find out what samsara actually is: a mistake. Samsara is not really there; it is just a mistake that we make, and nirvana is simply the correction of that mistake. We could also say that samsara is similar to dreaming and not knowing it is a dream—it is simply a misperception or mistaken understanding of the events that appear to be happening. Nirvana, in contrast, is like recognizing the dream for what it is.

In this chapter Nagarjuna also analyzes birth and death, and, by logically demonstrating that neither one of them actually takes place, he proves that the cycle of repeated births and deaths that constitutes samsara actually does not occur. In the chapter there is both a brief and an extensive explanation of this point, the former being given in the sixth verse:

Since one cannot happen before the others,
And they cannot happen simultaneously,
Why would you ever think
That birth, aging, and death truly exist?

If we put this verse in the form of a logical reasoning, we would say: As for birth, aging, and death, they have no nature of their own, they do not truly exist, because one cannot happen before the others and they cannot occur simultaneously. They cannot occur sequentially because, first of all, birth cannot precede death. This is the case because the arising of one moment cannot occur before the cessation of the previous moment. Death cannot precede birth either, because if it did there would be death without anything having been born. They cannot occur simultaneously either, for they are opposites—how can one thing arise and cease at the same time?

Here we are not considering the coarse level of appearances, for example, a baby being born and then growing old and dying. Rather, we must look at the more subtle level of existence of any particular thing, at how it arises and ceases instant by instant. For example, snap your fingers and see if you can distinguish between the arising and the cessation of that finger snap.

When did it arise? When did it cease? Even that finger snap is an incredibly coarse entity, and its arising and ceasing are equally coarse events. If we think about how many hundreds, thousands, and millions of subtle instants

that arise and cease are included within the finger snap, then we start to realize that we cannot authentically distinguish between arising and ceasing. These events do not exist as independent, identifiable entities. Their existence is not perceptible to the eye of wisdom.

Birth, aging, and death are therefore like appearances in dreams. They are dependently arisen mere appearances that have no true existence. At the end of the verse, Nagarjuna asks, "Why would you ever think that birth, aging, and death truly exist?" There is not a single reason that can prove that birth, aging, and death are real, and there are so many reasons that prove that they are not real, so why would anyone who knew that continue to think of them as being truly existent?

What is the benefit of thinking that birth and death are real? How does that help? It only results in suffering. For example, when we dream, to believe that the birth, aging, and death that appear in the dream are real is not only unnecessary but harmful because it results in suffering. That is why it is so important to apply these reasonings and gain certainty that birth and death in samsara do not really exist, that they are just mere appearances that are like appearances in dreams and illusions.

Then you will see that samsara is just the erroneous belief that suffering is real, the erroneous belief that birth and death are real. Once we are free from the thought that suffering is real, we are no longer in samsara. Once we are free from the thought that birth and death are real, we will no longer be in samsara. In fact, since suffering, birth, and death do not really exist in the first place, samsara is just a mistake, just our making the mistake of thinking something is there that really is not there at all. Once we stop making that mistake, we are in nirvana.

That samsara is just a mistake and nirvana is when you simply stop making that mistake is the reason samsara and nirvana are actually undifferentiable, why they are of the nature of equality. The example of the dream makes this point clear. When you dream and do not know you are dreaming, the ignorance of the fact that it is a dream leads to attachment to some dream appearances and aversion to others, and this causes suffering. Once you realize that it is a dream, attachment and aversion dissolve and everything becomes open, spacious, and relaxed. From the perspective of the dream appearances themselves, however, nothing has changed at all. There was nothing wrong with those appearances in the first place, and therefore there were no flaws within them that needed to be abandoned or corrected, nor any positive qualities that needed to be added to them to make them better. They were originally pure and originally free, meaning that in their nature they transcended the characterizations of both confusion and realization, both suffering and bliss. Since from their own perspective there was never any confusion to begin with, there could be no liberation from confusion either. Since there was never any suffering inherent in them in the first place, they transcend the notion of the bliss that is the freedom from that suffering as well. In this way, the example of dream appearances illuminates the equality of ignorance and realization, of samsara and nirvana.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XI

पूर्वापरकोटिपरीक्षा एकादशमं प्रकरणम्।

pūrvāparakoṭiparīkṣā nāmaikādaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀本際品第十一(八偈)

zhōng lùn guān běn jì pǐn dì shí yī (bā jié;jì)

།སྔོན་དང་ཕྱི་མའི་མཐའ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་གཅིག་པའོ།།

| sṅon daṅ phyi ma'i mtha' brtag pa źes bya ste rab tu byed pa bcu gcig pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XI - Examination of Antecedent and Consequent States in the Empirical Realm

JONES (Skt):
11. The Limits of the Past and Future

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of the Prior and Posterior Extremities

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
11. Analysis of Past and Future Limits

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[11] Examination of the Termination of Beginning and End (8 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
[omitted]

STRENG (Skt):
Section 11 - An Analysis of the Past (purva) and Future Limits (aparakiti) of Existence (samsara) In 8 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
11. beginning point and end point.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 11 Contemplation of Original Limits 8 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Extremes of Before and After

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XI - Analysis of Beginnings and Ends

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XI: Examination of the Initial and Final Limits

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XI - Examination of the Beginning and End

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Eleven - Examination of the Initial and Final Limits

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 11: AN EXAMINATION OF SAMSARA

PINGALA COMMENTARY

11/0 Question: The 'Sutra on Limitless Origins' says that beings come and go in birth and death (samsara) and that its original limits are inconceivable. In that Sutra it states that there are beings and that there is birth-and-death. Why does it make this statement?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter omitted by Sprung]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Eleven Examination of the Prior and Posterior Extremities (purvaparakoti-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XI Examination of the Initial and Final Limits

But suppose that one could see that the self, considered as agent or as subject, lacks inherent existence, and still one argued that nonetheless it must do so in virtue of its impermanence and being subject to change. Then, one might argue, birth, aging, and death must be real as the conditions of the self's unreality. This is the position with which Nāgārjuna concerns himself in this chapter. But he is also concerned with the generalization of this question to the birth, aging, and death of all of cyclic existence. (fn 63. In Buddhist philosophy, the entire phenomenal world is referred to as cyclic existence *('khor-ba,* Skt: *saṃsāra).* This term indicates not only the endless cycle of birth and death posited by the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth, but also the universally cyclic character of phenomena: Perception and action form a cycle; motivation and action form a cycle; the seasons are cyclic; chains of interdependence of phenomena are cyclic; interpersonal relations are cyclic; craving and acquisition are cyclic. It is this metaphor, suggesting that all of unenlightened existence amounts to going around in circles despite the illusion of progress, that most poignantly captures the sense in which all of human existence is suffering. See Sogyal Rinpoche 1992, pp. 18-22, for an excellent discussion.) And it is this more general problem with which he actually opens the chapter, developing the account of individual impermanence as a special case: (fn 64. This is, as the Yen. Sherab Gyatso pointed out in conversation, not the only possible reading of the import of this chapter. It could perfectly well be read simply as a discussion of the problem of the beginning of personal existence and as an argument to the effect that cyclic existence and the predicament of suffering is beginningless, or at least that it is pointless or impossible to discuss and ponder its beginning. On the other hand, given the parallels between the analysis here and that in Chapter XXVII, where the questions concerning the finitude or infinitude of personal existence and of the world's existence are explicitly juxtaposed and receive identical treatment, there is good reason to see this chapter as implicitly addressing both as well.)

Kārikā XI.1

पूर्वा प्रज्ञायते कोटिर्नेत्युवाच महामुनिः।
संसारोऽनवराग्रो हि नास्यादिर्नापि पश्चिमम्॥१॥

LVP 219,2-3 - LVP 226,12
pūrvā prajñāyate koṭir nety uvāca mahāmuniḥ |
saṃsāro ’navarāgro hi nāsyādir nāpi paścimam ||1||

大聖之所說 本際不可得
生死無有始 亦復無有終

T1564: vol 30, pg 16a4
dà shèng zhī suǒ shuì běn jì bù kě dé;děi;de
shēng sǐ wú yǒu shǐ yì fù wú yǒu zhōng

|སྔོན་མཐའ་མངོན་ནམ་ཞེས་ཞུས་ཚེ། །ཐུབ་པ་ཆེན་པོས་མིན་ཞེས་གསུངས།
།འཁོར་བ་ཐོག་མ་མཐའ་མེད་དེ། །དེ་ལ་སྔོན་མེད་ཕྱི་མ་མེད།

Tg tsa 7a7 - Tg tsa 7b4
|| sṅon mtha’ mṅon nam źes źus tshe | | thub pa chen pos min źes gsuṅs |
| ’khor ba thog ma mtha’ med de | | de la sṅon med phyi ma med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - The great wise one (i.e., Sakyamuni) has said that the state anterior to samsara (i.e., life-death cycle or the empirical realm) cannot be grasped. For, samsara has no beginning and end; that is to say, no definite points of commencement and conclusion.

JONES (Skt):
[I] The great sage, the Buddha, has stated that a limit to the past is not known. The cycling of rebirths is without beginning or end. Indeed, there is no beginning nor end to it.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The Great Sage has stated that the prior end is not known. The life-process is without beginning and end. There is neither a beginning nor an end.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The great sage said, “The prior limit is unknown.
Saṃsāra is without beginning or end. Indeed, there is no beginning or end.”

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. Before noticing the end of his life,
The great saint Gautama Buddha has never say anything at all.
Because our usual daily life is never inferior, but excellent,
Even rains, and so forth, can never be placed behind.

STRENG (Skt):
1. The great ascetic Buddha said: "The extreme limit (koti) of the past cannot be discerned." "Existence-in-flux" (samsara) is without bounds; indeed, there is no beginning nor ending of that existence.

BOCKING (Ch):
11v1 The Great Sage has said
That no original limit is conceivable.
Birth and death had no beginning
And likewise will have no end.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When asked, “is a before-extreme evident?” the great Muni said, “it is not.” Samsara has no beginning, no end; it has no before, no after.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When asked whether any beginning can be seen,
The Able One answered in the negative.
Cyclic existence has no beginning or end;
There is no before and there is no after. [XI.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. When asked about the beginning,
The Great Sage said that nothing is known of it.
Cyclic existence is without end and beginning.
So there is no beginning or end.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. When asked if the beginning is known,
The great sage said “no.”
Cyclic existence is without origin or terminus.
Because there is no beginning or end.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
11.1 [axiomatic] The Great Sage has said, "the extreme limit of the past cannot be discerned." Samsara is without bounds. That is to say, no definite beginning or ending point can be found.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

11/1 Sages are of three kinds. Firstly there are the non-Buddhist sages with their five supernatural powers, secondly the Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas, and thirdly the great bodhisattvas who have attained supernatural powers. Because the Buddha is supreme amongst these three kinds we call him 'The Great Sage'. In whatever the Buddha has said there is nothing which is not the truth. Birth and death has no beginning, and why? A beginning or end of birth and death is inconceivable. This is why we say that it has no beginning. If you say that, even though it has no beginning and end, it must have a middle, this too is wrong, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The criticism of the "self' (atman) as a substantial entity continued in the last few chapters brings up more related issues for discussion. If there is no such entity, how can the life process consisting of reputed births and deaths be explained?

Rebirth or rebecoming (punabbhava) was an important element in the Buddhist doctrine, even though the Buddha was concerned more with the problems of the print life than of the past. As mentioned earlier (see commentary on IX. 1-2), for the Buddha, the knowledge of the past (atitamse nana) was an important means of understanding the present. Yet he did not encourage speculation regarding the past as he feted that this would eventually lead to all sorts of metaphysical views. For this reason, he remained aloof from speculating on the absolute origin of things. That aloofness is clearly implied in his statement: "Inconceivable is the beginning of this life-process. The prior end is not evident," (Anamataggo 'yam . . . samsaro pubbakoti na pannayati S 2.178, 193; 3.144.151). There is here no denial of the prior end or the fret beginning of things, but only of its conceivability or perceptibility. However, with the problems that emerged during the scholastic period in the matter of explaining any form of origin (utpada), not merely of the tint beginning (purva koti), some Buddhists were compelled to deny outright any form of beginning. While the Sarvastivada conception of substance left no room for origin and cessation, the Sautrantikas had difficulties explaining the origin and cessation of momentary events. The difficulties involved in providing an explanation seems to have led the metaphysicians to assume the absence of a prior end, rather than of its inconceivability. Hence the term anamatagga ("inconceivable is the beginning") came to be replaced by anavaragra ("without end and beginning"). As such, Nagarjuna proceeds with the examination of the view current during his day, only to revert back to the Buddha's own approach to this problem in the end. Candrakīrti, confining, himself to the literary tradition of his day and influenced by a transcendentalist approach in his interpretation of Nagarjuna, does not seem to recognize the above mentioned change taking place in the Buddhist conception of the life-process (samsara).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. ("When asked about the beginning, The Great Sage said that nothing is known of it" fn 65. *thub-pa chen-pas min zhes gsungs.* In an alternative Tibetan translation, this· reads *thub-pa chen-pas* mi *gsungs* zhu,i.e.,- "The Great Sage did not answer." See the *Potthapāda Sutra 25:* "Tell me. Is the world eternal? Is only this true and the opposite false? Potthapada, I have not declared that the world is eternal and that the opposite view is false. Well. Lord, is the world not eternal? I have not declared that the world is not eternal. ... Well, Lord, is the world infinite, ... not infinite ... ? I have not declared that the world is not infinite and that the opposite view is false." (Walsh, trans., 1987, p. 164) There are three popular readings of the Buddha's refusal to answer the "unanswerable questions." On one reading this was an example of his great skill in teaching; any answer he would have given would have been misconstrued and would have had adverse consequences for the student. On another reading, by refusing to answer, the Buddha was indicating that asking these questions does not conduce to successful practice of the Buddhist path and that one should focus one's mind on more soteriologically efficacious issues. On a third reading - the one adopted here - these questions are in fact metaphysically misguided. They all involve incoherent essentialist presuppositions that, when rejected, render the questions meaningless.)

The question about the existence and nature of the origin of the world is one of the questions that Sakyamuni Buddha declared to be unanswerable. Nāgārjuna here interprets that to mean that there is nothing coherent that can be said about the origin of the world. Given the striking similarity between the questions that the Buddha declared unanswerable and those that Kant argues to be unanswerable by reason in the Antinomies of Pure Reason, there is much to be said for this diagnosis. (fn 66. The Buddha pronounced unanswerable questions regarding whether the world has an origin or an end in time or space, whether the individual continues to exist after entering nirvāṇa, whether there is some entity that transmigrates, arid whether there is temporal beginning or end to the continuum of consciousness. Kant pronounces unanswerable questions regarding the substantiality, simplicity, personal identity, and primacy of the self, as well as questions regarding the finiteness or infinitude of the world in space and time, the ultimate divisibility of the world, the freedom of the will, and the existence of God. Murti (1985) makes a bit too much of this parallel, however, arguing that Nāgārjuna follows Kant in asserting that "the aim in cosmological speculation (Rational Cosmology) is to reach the unconditioned ground of

empirical objects by means of a regressive claim of reasoning (i.e. arguing from effect to cause) stretched illegitimately, as Kant points out, beyond the possibility of experience.... The question regarding the *Tathāgata* is in fact about the ultimate ground of both the soul and objects - about the unconditioned in general. The *Tathāgata* as the Perfect Man is the ultimate essence of the universe. His position is analogous to that of God of Rational Theology.... The formulation of the problems in the thesis-antithesis form is itself evidence of the conflict in Reason, that the conflict is not on the empirical level and so not capable of being settled by appeal to facts is realized by the Buddha when he declares them unsoluble ..." (pp. xiii-xv). While Nāgārjuna shares with Kant a critical approach to philosophy - each seeks to limn the bounds of thought - and while Kant posits an unconditioned realm that is the unknowable but necessary ground of the empirical world, Nāgārjuna eschews just such a ground. His treatment of the unanswerable questions, then, differs from Kant's, despite the many genuine parallels, in that while for Kant the antinomies represent the application of concepts beyond their range, for Nāgārjuna they represent sheer nonsense: These antinomies are not for him insoluble problems, but rather pairs of apparently coherent but in fact nonsensical verbal formulations.) So Nāgārjuna here claims that we cannot make sense of the beginning or end of all of cyclic existence - beginnings and ends are beginnings and ends of actual, conventionally designated and delimited processes within cyclic existence.

Kārikā XI.2

नैवाग्रं नावरं यस्य तस्य मध्यं कुतो भवेत्।
तस्मान्नात्रोपपद्यन्ते पूर्वापरसहक्रमाः॥२॥

naivāgraṃ nāvaraṃ yasya tasya madhyaṃ kuto bhavet |
tasmān nātropapadyante pūrvāparasahakramāḥ ||2||

若無有始終 中當云何有
是故於此中 先後共亦無

ruò wú yǒu shǐ zhōng zhōng dāng yún hé yǒu
shì gù yū;yú;wū cǐ zhōng xiān hòu gòng yì wú

།གང་ལ་ཐོག་མེད་མཐ་མེད་པར། །དེ་ལ་དབུས་ནི་ག་ལ་ཡོད།
།དེ་ཕྱིར་དེ་ལ་སྔ་ཕྱི་དང་། །ལྷན་ཅིག་རིམ་པ་མི་འཐད་དོ།

| gaṅ la thog med mtha’ med par | | (7b1)de la dbus ni ga la yod |
| de phyir de la sṅa phyi daṅ | | lhan cig rim pa mi ’thad do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - As there are no beginning and end, how could there be a middle? Therefore, the simultaneity, anterior, and posterior states (of samsara) are not possible.

JONES (Skt):
[2] And how could there be a middle to what has no beginning or end? Therefore, thinking in terms of “before, after, and simultaneous” is inappropriate.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How could there be the middle of that which has neither a beginning nor an end? Therefore, the methods of (distinguishing) the prior, the posterior or both together (i.e., the middle) are not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where would the middle of what has no beginning or of what has no end be?
Therefore, the processes of the past, the present, and the future do not take place here.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. Belonging to not the highest, or belonging to not to the lowest,
They belong to the middle class without reason.
Therefore without reason miscellaneous things and phenomena manifest themselves.
And so before and after, there are only strong progresses.

STRENG (Skt):
2. How could there be a middle portion of that which has no "before" and "after"; It follows that "past," "future," and "simultaneous events" do not obtain. Birth and death are not separate/different, not simultaneous/the same.

BOCKING (Ch):
11v2 If there is no beginning or end
How can there be a middle?
Therefore within this (process)
There is no before, no after, and no simultaneity.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
For that without beginning [and] end, where can a middle be in that? Therefore, it is not possible for it to have before, after, and simultaneous phases.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When something has neither beginning nor end,
How could it possibly have a middle?
Therefore, cyclic existence cannot
Be either sequential or simultaneous. [XI.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. Where there is no beginning or end,
How could there be a middle?
It follows that thinking about this in terms of
Prior, posterior, and simultaneous is not appropriate.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. For that which has neither origin nor terminus,
How could there be a middle?
Therefore it is not tenable that it is ordered as
prior, posterior, or simultaneous.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
11.2 Where there is no beginning or end, how could there be a middle? For this reason, regarding Reality as a whole, distinctions of "before," "after," and "during," make no sense.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

11/2 Beginning exists because of middle and end, and end exists because of beginning and middle. Where there is no beginning and no end, how can there be a middle? Within samsara there is no beginning and no end, hence we say that before, after and simultaneity cannot be. Why is this?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Starting with the current assumption that there is neither a prior nor a posterior end, Nagarjuna raises the question as to how, in the absence of these two extremities, one can speak of a "middle" (madhya). He then proceeds to apply this criticism to the conception of the life-process (samsara) as understood and interpreted by the metaphysicians.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. The concept of a middle, Nāgārjuna argues, is bound up with those of beginnings and ends. We can say that we and all phenomena are within cyclic existence, but to posit determinate absolute spatiotemporal locations is senseless.

Kārikā XI.3

पूर्वं जातिर्यदि भवेज्जरामरणमुत्तरम्।
निर्जरामरणा जातिर्भवेज्जायेत चामृतः॥३॥

pūrvaṃ jātir yadi bhavej jarāmaraṇam uttaram |
nirjarā maraṇā jātir bhavej jāyeta cāmṛtaḥ ||3||

若使先有生 後有老死者
不老死有生 不生有老死

ruò shǐ xiān yǒu shēng hòu yǒu lǎo sǐ zhě
bù lǎo sǐ yǒu shēng bù shēng yǒu lǎo sǐ

།གལ་ཏེ་སྐྱེ་བ་སྔ་གྱུར་ལ།།རྒ་ཤི་ཕྱི་མ་ཡིན་ན་ནི།
།སྐྱེ་བ་རྒ་ཤི་མེད་པ་དང༌།།མ་ཤི་བར་ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te skye ba sṅa gyur la | | rga śi phyi ma yin na ni |
| skye ba rga śi med pa daṅ | | ma śi bar yaṅ skye bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - If birth is anterior and old age-death posterior, then there will be birth without old age-death and this will entail the rise of a deathless being.

JONES (Skt):
[3] If birth came first, and aging and death came later, then birth would be without aging and death, and one would be born immortal.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If birth were to come first and decay and death were to follow, then birth would be without decay and death, and an immortal would thus emerge.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If birth is first, old age and death would be later
then birth would be without old age and death and an immortal would have been born.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Before the time when birth has existed,
Aging and death had belonged to future.
There are young ages, death, or birth. , There are expectations of birth, and even expectation of eternity.

STRENG (Skt):
3. If birth is regarded as the former, and growing old and dying are regarded as coming into being later, Then birth exists without growing old and dying, and something is born without death.

BOCKING (Ch):
11v3 If we suppose that first there is birth,
And afterwards there is old age and death;
Then there will be birth with no old age and death,
And old age and death with no birth.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If birth were before and aging/death after, there would be birth without aging/death and also without dying one would be born.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If birth came first
And aging and death followed later,
There would be birth without aging and death,
As well as birth without anyone having died. [XI.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. If birth came first,
And then old age and death,
Then birth would be ageless and deathless,
And a deathless one would be born.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. If birth came first,
And then aging and death,
Then birth would be ageless and deathless
And a deathless one would be born.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
11.3 If birth came first, followed by old age and death, then birth would be without aging and death, and a deathless being would arise.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The difficulties created by the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas in the mat- ter of explaining causal continuity have been discussed at length. The linear view of the causal process broken up into discrete events, one following the other, left these events without any possible relations. If the same model were to be used in explaining events such as birth (jati) decay-death (jara-marana), then the implication would be that birth has nothing to do with decay-death. There is no necessary connection between them. If this argument were to be carried to its conclusion, then it could be maintained that there is immortality (amrta), for there could be something that continues without decay-death. Here, Nagarjuna is not insisting that decay-death should be inherent in birth. Rather, he is exposing the difficulties confronted by the metaphysicians who upheld a linear view of the causal process.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. Birth, old age, and death here are to be understood in an absolute sense. Of course, conventionally, the birth of a particular human being comes before her/his aging, which precedes her/his death. But that should not lead us to think of that birth as the origin of an entity, that aging as the midpoint in the life of that entity, or that death as the end of that entity. If one adopts. a doctrine of rebirth, as does Nāgārjuna and as do all of his interlocutors, the point can be made quite straightforwardly: For any sentient continuum, every birth is preceded by an aging and a death, and so forth.

But even setting aside the particular doctrine of rebirth, we can elucidate, this insight with equal force: To see particular entities as having determinate, nonconventional beginnings of existence and determinate, nonconventional termini and, hence, that there are distinct times at which there is a clear fact of the matter about whether or not they exist, independent of conventions for their individuation, is to see those entities as having necessary and sufficient characteristics for their identity, that is, as having essences. But the central thesis Nāgārjuna is defending is that this very conception of what it is to exist is incoherent - that things are empty of such essences and that the boundaries of objects are conventional and indeterminate.' There is no fixed boundary between the existence of a seed, the tree to which it gives rise, a piece of wood from that tree, and a table fashioned therefrom or between the existence of an intact table, a broken table, wooden table parts, ashes, earth, . the nutrients for a seed, that seed, the sapling to which it gives rise, and another tree.

Once we see the world from the standpoint of emptiness of inherent existence, the history of any conventionally designated entity is but an arbitrary stage carved out of a vast continuum of interdependent phenomena. (fn 67. One must not, however, take this to mean that for Nāgārjuna there is an inherently existent continuum out of which we carve the merely conventional. Rather just as any totality is dependent upon its parts, the totality of empirical reality depends upon its empty components and, so, is itself empty. Ontology presupposes conventional categories. Nor is this to say that the conventions we adopt are from our perspective arbitrary. They reflect our needs, our biological, psychological, perceptual, and social characteristics, as well as our languages and customs. Given these constraints and conventions, there are indeed facts of the matter regarding empirical claims and regarding the meanings of words. But there is no transcendent standpoint, Nāgārjuna would insist, from which these conventions and constraints can be seen as justified.) The arising of any phenomenon, human, nonhuman sentient being, or inanimate object is the consequence of the disintegration of others. That disintegration succeeds their arising and aging. Once we give up the intrinsic identity of entities, the constant cycle of death, birth, aging, and rebirth of entities is unavoidable.

———

Kārikā XI.4

पश्चाज्जातिर्यदि भवेज्जरामरणमादितः।
अहेतुकमजातस्य स्याज्जरामरणं कथम्॥४॥

paścāj jātir yadi bhavej jarāmaraṇam āditaḥ |
ahetukam ajātasya syāj jarāmaraṇaṃ katham ||4||

若先有老死 而後有生者
是則為無因 不生有老死

ruò xiān yǒu lǎo sǐ ér hòu yǒu shēng zhě
shì zé wéi wú yīn bù shēng yǒu lǎo sǐ

།གལ་ཏེ་སྐྱེ་བ་ཕྱི་འགྱུར་ལ།།རྒ་ཤི་སྔ་བ་ཡིན་ན་ནི།
།སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་པའི་རྒ་ཤི་ནི།།རྒྱུ་མེད་པར་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te skye ba 'phyi 'gyur la | | rga śi sṅa ba yin na ni |
| skye ba med pa'i rga (2)śi ni | | rgyu med par ni ji ltar 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - If birth is posterior and old age-death anterior, that would constitute a state of non-causal connection. For, of something yet to be born, how could there be old age-death?

JONES (Skt):
[4] However, if birth came after, and aging and death came before, then aging and death would be causeless, and how could they exist for something not yet born?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If birth were to be posterior and decay-death anterior, then the latter would be without a cause. How could there be decay-death of one who is not born?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If birth is later, there would be old age and death from the beginning.
How could the old age and death of the unborn be without a cause?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. After a birth has existed,
Aging and death, and so forth, exist.
Because it might be impossible for anything illogical to exist really,
What is the real meaning of becoming older, or death?

STRENG (Skt):
4. If birth were later, and growing old and dying were earlier, How would there be an uncaused growing old and dying of something unborn?

BOCKING (Ch):
11v4 If old age and death come first,
And afterwards there is birth.
Then this constitutes causelessness:
For without birth, there is old age and death.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If birth were after and aging/death before, how could there be an uncaused aging/death which has no birth?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If birth occurred later,
And aging and death before,
How could this causeless aging and death
Happen to someone who was never born? [XI.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. If birth were to come after,
And old age and death first,
How could there be a causeless aging and death
Of one not born?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. If birth were to come after,
And aging and death first,
How could there be a causeless aging and death
Without birth?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
11.4 If birth followed death, the latter would be without cause. How could something unborn grow old and die?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

11/4 If all the beings in samsara were first born, then gradually became old and afterwards died, then in their being born there would be no old age or death. As a dharma, birth should involve old age and death and old age and death should involve birth. Moreover, if there were birth without old age and death this too would be wrong, and so too if there were old age and death not caused by birth. If old age and death came first, and birth afterwards, then old age and death would be uncaused, because birth would only come afterwards. Also, without birth how can there be old age and death? If you say that birth, old age and death coming either before or after each other is untenable, and assert that they are established simultaneously, this is also erroneous, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Placing birth after decay-death in this linear view of the life-process, the logical conclusion is inevitable that birth cannot relate itself to anything prior and, therefore, is uncaused. If birth cannot be explained, just as much as decay-death could not be accounted for (as stated at XI.3), then we are left with the unborn (ajata). Nagarjuna considers it inappropriate to speak of decay-death of something/someone who is not born.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. But birth has to precede death as well, on pain of the absurdity of something that is unborn dying. And, as Nāgārjuna points out in the next verse, we must think conventionally of these things in sequence because any conventionally designated object undergoes them in order:

Kārikā XI.5

न जरामरणेनैव जातिश्च सह युज्यते।
म्रियेत जायमानश्च स्याच्चाहेतुकतोभयोः॥५॥

na jarāmaraṇaṃ caiva jātiś ca saha yujyate |
mriyeta jāyamānaś ca syāc cāhetukatobhayoḥ ||5||

生及於老死 不得一時共
生時則有死 是二俱無因

shēng jí yū;yú;wū lǎo sǐ bù dé yī shí gòng
shēng shí zé yǒu sǐ shì èr jù;jū wú yīn

|སྐྱེ་བ་དང་ནི་རྒ་ཤི་དག||ལྷན་ཅིག་རུང་བ་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ|
|སྐྱེ་བཞིན་པ་ནི་འཆི་འགྱུར་ཞིང་||གཉིས་ཀ་རྒྱུ་མེད་ཅན་དུ་འགྱུར||

| skye ba daṅ ni rga śi dag | lhan cig ruṅ ba ma yin te |
| skye bźin pa na 'chi 'gyur źiṅ | | gñis ka rgyu med can du 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - Indeed, birth is never conceived to be simultaneous with old age-death. For, what is in the process of being born must die and both life and death are non-causally related.

JONES (Skt):
[5] But birth together with aging and death is not admissible - if they were so, one would be dying while being born, and both would occur without a cause.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Indeed, decay-death as concomitant of birth is not proper. [In that case,] what is in the process of being born will also be dying and both would be rendered causeless.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Birth does not occur simultaneously with old age and death. He would die by being born and both would be without a cause.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Never completely the same as the cases of aging, or death,
The cases of birth, and so forth, might be exactly governed ,
Therefore perhaps in the case of death, or the birth of babies,
They might be both unreasonable probably together. .

STRENG (Skt):
5. And a birth which is simultaneous with growing old and dying is likewise impossible; For, that which is being born would die, and both would be without cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
11v5 Birth and old age and death
Cannot occur simultaneously
For in the moment of birth there would be death,
And both of these would be uncaused.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is not suitable for birth and aging/death to be simultaneous; that which is being born would be dying and both would be without cause.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Birth, aging, and death
Cannot occur simultaneously,
For the one being born would then be dying,
And both would be lacking their cause. [XI.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. Birth and age and death
Cannot occur at one time.
Then what is being born would be dying
And both would occur without cause.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. For birth, aging, and death
To be simultaneous makes no sense.
That which is being born would be dying,
And both would be without a cause.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
11.5 Birth is not conceived as being simultaneous with aging and death. Were it so, what is being born would be dying, and both would occur without cause.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

11/5 To say that birth, old age and death are simultaneous is incorrect, and why? Because there would be death in the moment of birth, and dharmas ought to exist at the moment of birth and not exist at the moment of death. For there to be death in the moment of birth, is not correct. If they arose simultaneously they would be independent of each other, just as an ox's horns growing simultaneously are independent of each other.

Therefore:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As mentioned in commentary on XI.4, one way of explaining the problems raised at XI.4-5 would be to assume that decay-death (jara-marana) is inherent in birth (jati). This relationship of inherence would mean that decay-death begins at the same time as birth, and as such it would be appropriate to say that one who is being born is at the same time dying. If so, neither one of them could be the cause of the other. Being uncaused, their occurrence would be rather spontaneous.

Kārikā XI.6

यत्र न प्रभवन्त्येते पूर्वापरसहक्रमाः।
प्रपञ्चयन्ति तां जातिं तज्जरामरणं च किम्॥६॥

yatra na prabhavanty ete pūrvāparasahakramāḥ |
prapañcayanti tāṃ jātiṃ taj jarāmaraṇaṃ ca kim ||6||

若使初後共 是皆不然者
何故而戲論 謂有生老死

ruò shǐ chū hòu gòng shì jiē bù rán zhě
hé gù ér xì lùn wèi yǒu shēng lǎo sǐ

།གང་ལ་སྔ་ཕྱི་ལྷན་ཅིག་གི།རིམ་པ་དེ་དག་མི་སྲིད་པའི།
།སྐྱེ་བ་དེ་དང་རྒ་ཤི་དེ།ཅི་ཡི་ཕྱིར་ན་སྤྲོ་བར་བྱེད།།

| gaṅ la sṅa phyi lhan cig gi | | rim pa de dag mi srid pa'i |
| skye ba re daṅ rga śi de | | ci yi phyir na spro (3)bar byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - Where states of anterior, posterior, and simultaneity (of samsara) do not exist, how could the concepts of birth and old age-death be projected?

JONES (Skt):
[6] Where the series of "before and after" do not prevail, why would we think in terms of such "birth" and "aging and death"?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Wherever such methods of (discriminating) the prior, the posterior and the simultaneous do not arise, why be obsessed by such birth and such decay-death.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where the processes of the past, the future, and the present do not come forth,
what do they explain in detail about birth, old age, and death?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. In such situations, anything does not appear in this world,
Before being not so far, but common progress.
However at the same time, miscellaneous things and phenomena, have been born,
And so what is the reason, why those aging and death are produced?

STRENG (Skt):
6. Since the past, future, and simultaneous activity do not originate, To what purpose do you explain in detail the existence of birth, growing old and dying?

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XI.6 Where the earlier, the later, and the simultaneous do not appear, how [is there] a proliferation [of the concepts] "birth," "ageing," and "death"?

BOCKING (Ch):
11v6 If you admit that beginning, end and simultaneity
Are all incorrect
Why do you (pursue) sophistries
And say that there is birth, old age and death?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Why fixate on that birth, that aging/dying, for which the phases of before, after, simultaneity are impossible?

DOCTOR (Tb):
As it is impossible for them to occur
In sequence or simultaneously,
Why would anyone think
In terms of birth, aging, and death? [XI.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. When the series of the prior, simultaneous, and posterior
Is not possible,
Why are you led to posit
This birth, aging, and death?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. Since the framework of sequence and simultaneity
Does not make sense for
Birth, aging, and death,
Why do you fabricate them?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
11.6 When "before," "after," and "during" do not arise, why assume the notions of birth, aging, and death?

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Since one cannot happen before the others,
And they cannot happen simultaneously,
Why would you ever think
That birth, aging, and death truly exist? (6)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

11/6 On investigation of birth, old age and death, all three (interpretations) are found to be erroneous; they are simply non-arising and utterly empty.. Why do you tenaciously cling to vain arguments about birth, old age and death, claiming that they have fixed, definite characteristics?

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The speculation that is questioned here is specifically related to the sort of succession discussed previously. It is not every form of reflection that is rejected. Even if the verb prapañcayanti were to mean "conceptualizing", as understood by a majority of modern translators of Buddhist texts, in this context, it does not mean the emptying of the mind of all concepts of birth and decay-death. It is the particular form of conceptualization mentioned in the previous statements as well as the earlier verses that is to be avoided.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. The birth, aging, and death that the opponent has in mind can be represented at two levels: At the most general level, it is the birth, aging, and death of cyclic existence, the examination of which frames this discussion. At that level, Nāgārjuna is pointing out that these conceptions, having legitimate employment only within the empirical realm, are nonsense. But the opponent could also be interpreted as positing birth, aging, and death as determinate, intrinsically identifiable moments in the evolution of empirical phenomena or, specifically, of sentient beings. Nāgārjuna rejects that as well, arguing that moments intrinsically prior to, simultaneous with, or posterior to the existence of entities cannot be identified, given the lack of intrinsic identity of the entities themselves. So long as one in conceiving of phenomena thinks of them as temporally determinate and bounded, and thinks of the identity of things as intrinsic to them, one will have to identify their beginnings, middles, and ends. But this leads to paradox, given the indeterminateness, interdependence, and interpenetration of things. Nāgārjuna hence advises the rejection of this ontology:

Kārikā XI.7

कार्यं च कारणं चैव लक्ष्यं लक्षणमेव च।
वेदना वेदकश्चैव सन्त्यर्था ये च केचन॥७॥

kāryaṃ ca kāraṇaṃ caiva lakṣyaṃ lakṣaṇam eva ca |
vedanā vedakaś caiva santy arthā ye ca ke cana ||7||

諸所有因果 相及可相法
受及受者等 所有一切法

zhū suǒ yǒu yīn guǒ xiàng;xiāng jí kě xiàng;xiāng fǎ
shòu jí shòu zhě děng suǒ yǒu yī qiè fǎ

|འཁོར་བ་འབའ་ཞིག་སྔོན་གྱི་མཐའ།།ཡོད་མ་ཡིན་པར་མ་ཟད་ཀྱི།
|རྒྱུ་དང་འབྲས་བུ་ཉིད་དང་ནི།།མཚན་ཉིད་དང་ནི་མཚན་གཞི་ཉིད།།

| ’khor ba ’ba’ źig sṅon gyi mtha’ | | yod ma yin par ma zad kyi |
| rgyu daṅ ’bras bu ñid daṅ ni | | mtshan ñid daṅ ni mtshan gźi ñid |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - Cause and effect, characteristics and characterization, feeler and feeling, and also whatever other things exist....(This verse continues on to the next.)

JONES (Skt):
[7-8] Like the cycling of rebirth, no prior limit to all entities is found. So too, no prior limit is found for cause and effect, being characterized or characteristic, feeling and the feeler, or any other thing.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Effect and cause as well as characterized and characteristic, together with feeling and feeler or whatever fruits there are,

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Cause and effect, characteristic and characterized
feeler and feeling, and whatever else, do not meaningfully exist.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Something, which has been produced, and the reason, why it was produced, are commonly the same,
And what has been produced, and the characteristics, which has been accomplished, are absolutely similar to.
Sense perception and the efforts to transmit it to others, are also constructed perfectly as the same,
Even though there is some kind of aim, but at the same time it is just something. which can not be described with words.

STRENG (Skt):
7. That which is produced and its cause, as well as the characteristic and that which is characterized, The sensation and the one who senses, and whatever other things there are –

BOCKING (Ch):
11v7 Every cause and effect which exists,
Marks and marked dharmas
Receiving and recipient etc..
All existing dharmas ...

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is not just samsara alone that has no before-extreme, cause and fruit themselves, and characteristics and the basis for characteristics themselves,

DOCTOR (Tb):
Not only does cyclic existence
Have no beginning,
But also cause and effect,
Characteristics and their bearers, [XI.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. Not only is cyclic existence itself without beginning,
No existent has a beginning:
Neither cause and effect;
Nor character and characterized….

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. Not only is cyclic existence
Without a prior limit—
Neither cause and effect;
Nor characteristic and characterized.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
11.7 & 11.8 Not only is no beginning of samsara ever found, all entities, together with cause and effect, characteristic and characterized, feeling and feeler, are found without a prior end.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. The alternative, both with respect to cyclic existence as a whole and with respect to individual entities, is to reject the ontology of entities and characteristics altogether, along with the boundaries and determinate relations that ontology requires:

Kārikā XI.8

पूर्वा न विद्यते कोटिः संसारस्य न केवलम्।
सर्वेषामपि भावानां पूर्वा कोटिर्न विद्यते॥८॥

pūrvā na vidyate koṭiḥ saṃsārasya na kevalam |
sarveṣām api bhāvānāṃ pūrvā koṭī na vidyate ||8||

非但於生死 本際不可得
如是一切法 本際皆亦無

fēi dàn yū;yú;wū shēng sǐ běn jì bù kě dé;děi;de
rú shì yī qiè fǎ běn jì jiē yì wú

|ཚོར་དང་ཚོར་པོ་ཉིད་དང་ནི||དོན་ཡོད་གང་དག་ཅི་ཡང་རུང་|
|དངོས་རྣམས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཉིད་ལ་ཡང་||སྔོན་གྱི་མཐའ་ནི་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན||

| tshor daṅ tshor po ñid daṅ ni | | don yod gaṅ dag ci yaṅ ruṅ |
| dṅos rnams thams cad ñid la yaṅ | | sṅon gyi mtha' (4)ni yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - .... not only is there not an anterior state in samsara but this state is not possible for all existences.

JONES (Skt):
[8] [see above]

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
the prior end of these is not evident. Of the entire life-process as well as of all existents, the prior end is not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The prior limit of *saṃsāra* does not only not occur,
but also every place prior to the limits of beings does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Before the time hasn't been grasped in its true meaning yet,
Wandering in our daily life is never lonely at all yet.
All things and phenomena seem to be exist really,
Before we do not recognize the existence of time.

STRENG (Skt):
8. Not only is the former limit of existence-in-flux (samsara) not to be found, But the former limit of all those things is not to be found.

BOCKING (Ch):
11v8 Not only does birth and death.
Have no conceivable original limits -
All dharmas are like this.
No original limits exist at all.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
feeling and the feeler, whatever is suitable to bear meaning, also all things have no before-extreme.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Feelings and those that feel—
Whatever there may be.
The same applies to all things;
None have a beginning. [XI.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. Nor feeling and the feeler;
Whatever there is:
All entities
Are without beginning.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Nor feeling and the feeler;
Whatever there is—
All entities
Are without a prior limit.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
11.8 [see XI.7]

PINGALA COMMENTARY

11/8 'All dharmas' refers to cause and effect, marks and what is marked, receiving, recipient and so on. All are without original limits. It is not only birth and death that has no ultimate limits, but in order to summarize all the details he talks only about birth and death having no original limits.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

It is not suprizing to see Nagarjuna concluding his analysis of extremities (koti) of events, whether they be of came and effect, or the characterized and the characteristic, of experiences, of the life-process, and even of all existents (bhava), with the assertion that they are not evident (na vidyate). He does not maintain that these events are without extremities.

Chapter XII

दुःखपरीक्षा द्वादशमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀苦品第十二(十偈)

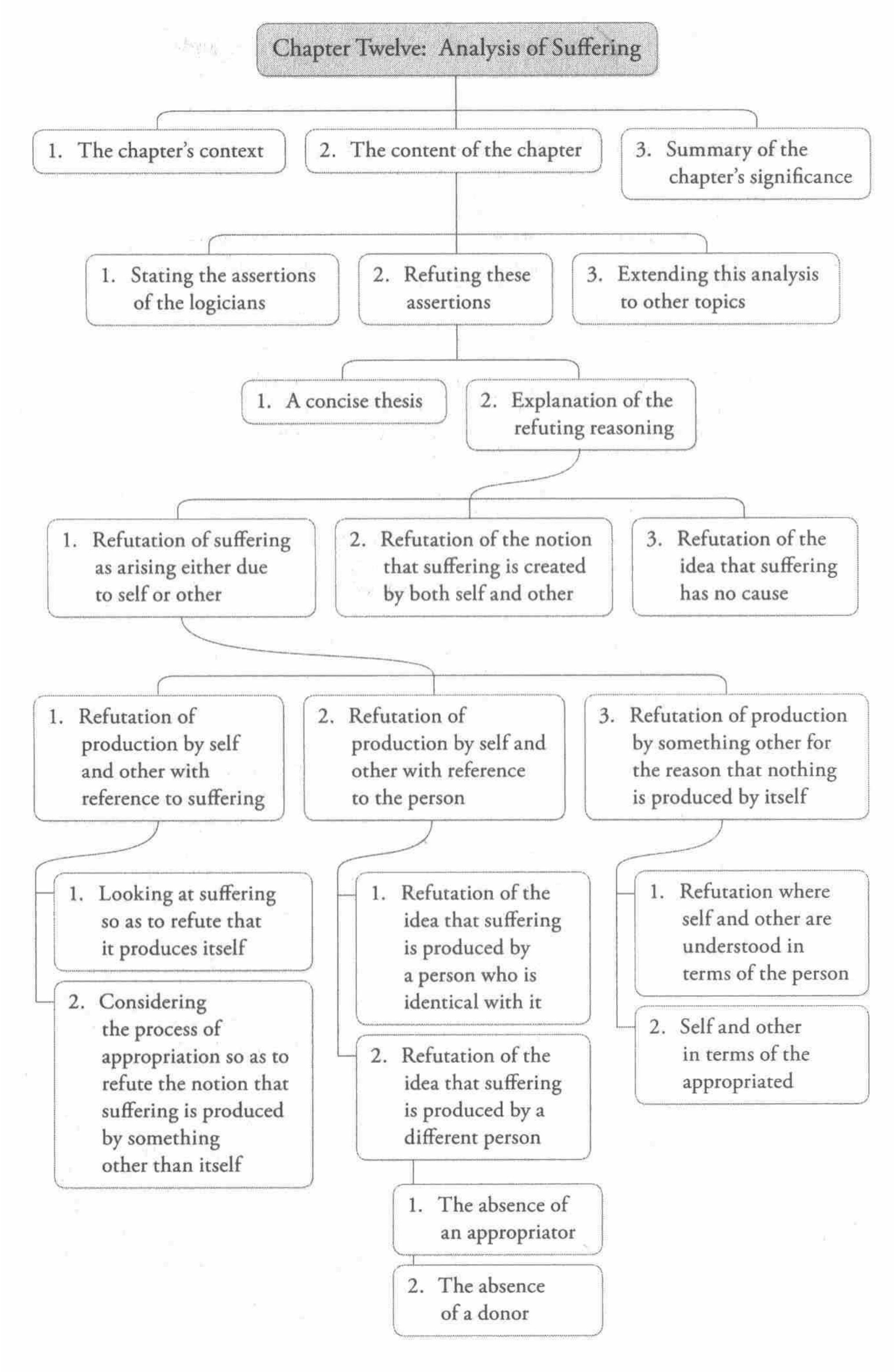
།བདག་གིས་བྱས་པ་དང་གཞན་གྱིས་བྱས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་གཉིས་པའོ།།

duḥkhaparīkṣā nāma dvādaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XII: Examination of Suffering

Chapter XII

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the second part of the examination of the two selflessnesses— the explanation of the selflessness of the person. We have completed the first of its two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the person. We are now still in the second part: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of the person. We have completed the first part, the refutation of the example, in the premises. We are still in the second part, the refutation of the reasoning in the premises. We have completed the first part—the refutation of the argument that the activity of birth and death exists. **[243:1]** This chapter is the second of these two parts: the refutation of the argument that that dependent on the self—suffering—exists.

EXPLANATION:

Here one might say, "The self exists essentially because the suffering with which it is associated exists. According to sutra, the appropriator's five aggregates are suffering. Therefore, they exist. Suffering cannot exist without a basis; therefore it must have a basis, and that is the self."

The refutation of this has two parts: the refutation of the inherent existence of suffering and the application of this argument to other phenomena.

SUMMARY:

As it has been explained, suffering is neither created by itself nor by another, and how could it arise causelessly? It cannot, just like the beautiful fragrance of the sky flower. Thus suffering does not exist inherently; nor does its basis, the self, exist inherently.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XII - Examination of Suffering

As the chapter indicates, the discussion is on the investigation of pain or suffering (duhkha). The problem is stated in the opening verse which asserts the four possible ways of viewing the causes of suffering, i.e., self-cause, other-cause, both self and other cause, and non-causal. In each instance the usual logic of reductio ad absurdum (prasanga) is applied to exhibit the untenability of each causal view. Nagarjuna concludes by making reference to the fact that the four-fold possible views can equally be applied to demonstrate the impossibility of asserting elements of the external world.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

12. *Suffering* (*duhkha*). After analysing the nature of existence and adoping a middle position between the two extreme views presented by his fellow Buddhist philosophers, Nagarjuna focussed his attention on the problem of human suffering (*duhkha*). Here again, it is difficult to believe that Nagarjuna was unaware of the statements of the Buddha as recorded in the Nikayas and Agamas. His analysis of suffering follows exactly the line that was followed by the Buddha in the *Acela-kassapa-sutta* of the *Samyutta-nikaya*.83 Herein, when a disciple by name Kassapa questioned the Buddha as to whether suffering is self-caused (*sayam katam dukkham*), the Buddha, without saying: "It is not so" (no h'etam), which is a formal negation, merely remarks that "he should not speak so," or "should not put it that way" (*ma h'evam*). Kassapa elicits the same response from the Buddha when he questions him as to whether "suffering is caused by another" (*param katam dukkham*) or whether it is "caused by both self and other" (*sayam katan ca param katan ca*) or whether it is "caused neither by oneself nor by another" (*asayamkaram aparamkaram*) and, therefore, of "spontaneous origin" *(adhiccasamuppannam).*

The reason why the Buddha discouraged Kassapa from reflecting on the cause of suffering in this manner was that he felt that the first two views led to beliefs in permanence (*sassata*) and annihilation (*uccheda*) respectively. In the background in which the Buddha preached, to say that "one acts and the same person experiences the consequences" (*so karoti so patisamvediyati*) implied the existence of an eternal soul or self, and to maintain that "one acts and another experiences the consequences" (*aññо karoti aññо patisamvediyati*) was taken to mean annihilation, that is, absence of any connection between act and consequence. This was tantamount to a denial of moral responsibility. Avoiding these two extremes, the Buddha explained the relation between action and consequences as one of dependence. It would be necessary to keep in mind that in the above context the Buddha was not denying the four theories of the causation of suffering. He was merely stating that the theories as presented were not satisfactory, because of the implications drawn by the metaphysicians. However, after warning that one should avoid such implications and explaining the dependence of such phenomena, the Buddha used similar linguistic expressions in order to explain his view of the causation of suffering. Recognizing one's responsibility for one's own actions, he was even willing to say: "An action is performed by oneself" (*attana va katam kammam*),84 so long as one

does not assume the existence of a metaphysical agent or ignore any other factor that contributes to the situation.

Following the same method, Nagarjuna (XII.1), instead of denying these possibilities, merely says that they are not proper (*na yujyate*). The reason for this is that "if [suffering] were to be considered self-caused, then it will not be dependently arisen" (XII.2). Here then is a distinction between self-causation and dependence, a distinction based upon the assumption or the non-assumption of a metaphysical agent respectively. Therefore, Nagarjuna maintains: "These aggregates appear dependent upon these other aggregates." However, this latter view should not be taken as meaning "external causation" (*parakrta).*

Subsequently Nagarjuna proceeds to show the logical difficulties involved in accepting either self-causation or external causation. And this criticism is then applied to the self-causation or external causation of any other existent (*bhava*).

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Anguish

If anguish created itself,
It would not be contingent,
For the pain depends
On what I'm doing now.

Were it other than me
And I other than it,
The pain would be caused
By someone else.

Who am I if I create
My own suffering?
How can I be apart
From pain I cause myself?

Who am I if I can feel
The suffering you create?
Can I be apart
From pain you cause me?

Who are you who hurt me?
How can you be apart
From pain you cause me?

Anguish is not caused by me.
How can it be caused by you?
Anguish caused by you
Is caused by your me too.

Suffering is not caused by me,
For I do not cause myself.
If uncaused by another me,
How could it be caused by you?

If both of us cause pain,
Would not it be caused
By we who have no part in it?
Can anguish be uncaused?

Suffering is nothing special.
Even jugs and rolls of cloth
Do not come from themselves,
Others, both or nothing.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

12. Suffering

In Buddhism, suffering *(duhkha)* does not necessarily mean direct *pain.* Not all things are painful. Many experiences in fact are pleasurable. But even the pleasurable ones come to an end, and so they are ultimately not satisfying but frustrating, leaving us in a state of "dis-ease."

The chapter begins with four options: suffering is self-caused, caused by another, caused by both itself and another, or uncaused (v. I). Nagarjuna is trying to exhaust all the possibilities to show that suffering is not something that can be connected to the concept of causation in any way (since neither suffering nor causation is self-existent).

If a person is the cause of suffering, then he or she must be distinct from suffering in order to cause it. But as the analyses in chapters 2,6, and 8 show, we cannot conceive a sufferer to be distinct from the suffering that gives him or her that characterization. It also leaves suffering to be self-created in that person (v. 4) and so still self-existent; or suffering is given by another person who is distinct from the suffering too (v. 5).

Because the self-existent cannot change, it cannot suffer or be related to suffering since that would be a change. So too, suffering cannot be self-caused or it would be unrelated to anything that suffers. If suffering cannot be self-caused, then it cannot be caused by another, for it would have to be self-caused in that other person (v. 7). (See "other-existence" in verse 15.3). So it cannot be caused by itself, by another, by

both (since causation by itself or another has been eliminated), or by neither (which is dependent upon both itself and another being possible causes) (vv. 8-10). Only if emptiness prevails does the Buddhist first noble truth - "All is suffering" - prevail.

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

12

An Examination of Suffering

In the Prajnaparamita Sutras, the Buddha taught:

Suffering is empty of suffering.

THIS PARTICULAR TEACHING of the Buddha is a good example of teachings from the perspective of the Rang-tong, or "empty of self," school (fn The Rang-tong school is the branch of the Middle Way that bases its view on the second turning of the wheel of Dharma. It is composed of the Middle Way Autonomy and Middle Way Consequence schools.): Whatever phenomenon it is, it is empty of its own essence; it is empty of what it appears to be; it is empty of itself. In this chapter, Nagarjuna proves the validity of this teaching with logical reasoning.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to those who believed that the self exists because suffering exists. Since there is suffering, there has to be someone to experience the suffering, these people claimed. If Nagarjuna did not then prove to them that suffering was not real, it would have been impossible for him to help them see that there really is no self. That is why he analyzes suffering in this chapter and proves that it does not truly exist.

We can formulate many logical reasonings that prove that suffering is not real. For example: Suffering does not truly exist because there is not really anyone there to suffer—the self who supposedly suffers does not truly exist. Therefore, the suffering itself has no existent essence, and, just like in a dream, suffering is just our imagination. Isn't that good?

Furthermore, suffering does not truly exist because it does not come from anywhere and it does not go anywhere, and because it does not arise and it does not cease.

And further, suffering does not truly exist because the one who suffers, namely, the self, and the suffering that the self experiences cannot be the same thing and they cannot be different things. If they were the same thing, then the one who suffers would always be suffering. If they were different things, they would exist in different places with no connection between them. Therefore, they cannot be the same and they cannot be different, and since there is no other possibility for how they could be, they cannot truly exist.

What's more, suffering does not truly exist because the causal conditions that bring it about do not truly exist, as is the case with future suffering, for example. The causes of future suffering do not exist because they are in the future, and since they do not exist, future suffering that is their result does not exist, either.

When we know that suffering does not truly exist, it becomes clear that suffering in apparent reality is the mere lack of knowledge that suffering is not real. It is the mistaken belief that suffering is real when in fact it is not. It is like when we dream and do not know that we are dreaming.

If suffering were real, if it objectively existed, it would have to display some signs of that. There are no signs of its true existence, however, because suffering does not exist inherently or independently. Rather, it only appears to exist when certain causes and conditions come together. What is more, suffering cannot exist apart from any thought of it—it must depend upon the thought of the suffering in order to exist. Without the concept of suffering, there is no suffering in the slightest. Since it cannot exist on its own, it cannot have any objective or true existence.

The fact that suffering is just a thought and nothing else is something we definitely know from our own experience. For example, people can be very upset before they go to sleep, but when they are in deep sleep they do not suffer at all, because they do not have the thought of suffering. Then when they wake up again in the morning, they do not suffer at all until they start thinking of their suffering. Once they start thinking of it, then it begins, but not before.

If we examine in this way, we will understand what characteristics suffering would have to have if it were real, and we will understand that since it does not have those characteristics, it is not real.

Verse ten of this chapter explains how the analysis of suffering can be applied to everything else as well:

That which is only suffering does not arise
From any of the four extremes, and not only that,
All outer phenomena do not arise
From any of the four extremes either.

"That which is only suffering" refers to the five aggregates that constitute the individual. In the Shravaka tradition, these are taught to be "only suffering" because they are both the result of defiled karmic action and the basis for the arising of the mental afflictions, which are suffering in and of themselves as well as being the cause of further karmic actions that produce even more suffering in the future. This is why the goal of the Shravakayana is to abandon the five aggregates and attain the state of nirvana, where not even the slightest trace of them remains. The nirvana of the Shravaka tradition is described as being like when a candle flame goes out—it is the peace that is the

complete cessation of the defiled aggregates and samsara as well.

The Mahayana does not present things in this way, however. The Buddha taught many times in the Mahayana sutras that the five aggregates, and the suffering that goes along with them, are of the nature of original and perfect purity. There is not the tiniest bit of impurity anywhere within them that needs to be abandoned. Therefore, Mahayana practitioners do not want to be rid of their samsaric existence, but rather they aspire to take birth in samsara in as many bodies, in as many lifetimes as possible to be of benefit to sentient beings. In Vajrayana practice, one cultivates the understanding that the five aggregates are of the nature of the five buddha families and that suffering is of the nature of bliss. Since that is the case, why would one ever want to abandon them? They are of the very essence of enlightenment.

The key to understanding the Mahayana and Vajrayana views lies in Nagarjuna's reasonings. This is because the reason the aggregates and suffering can be described as being pure by nature is that they are empty by nature—they are unborn. They never actually come into existence. Something that never really comes into existence cannot possibly be impure, for what is there to be impure in the first place? It is like getting covered with filth in a dream—no matter how dirty you might seem to be, since not a single particle of the filth is real, in fact there is no impurity at all. Since there is no impurity, there cannot actually be any purity either, just as when you take a bath in the dream after having gotten so filthy, your cleanliness after the bath is just as lacking in reality as the dirtiness that preceded it. Therefore, the true nature of the dream transcends both purity and impurity, and this is given the name "original purity." We have to understand that what original purity refers to is the freedom from all fabrications, the emptiness in which we can gain certainty by using Nagarjuna's reasonings.

If we now examine suffering in the way that is described in this verse, we can determine that it is of the nature of emptiness because it does not arise from any of the four extremes. The first of these extremes would be to think that suffering came from itself, that suffering produced itself. If it did that, however, then it would have to exist first and then bring itself into existence once more. It would have to exist and then it would arise. That is obviously not what happens, however, because we can be incredibly happy and then all of a sudden, great suffering can occur—the suffering can arise very quickly where it did not exist before in any way. So the suffering does not produce itself because it occurs anew.

Suffering does not arise from a cause that is different from itself either, because "difference" implies that there are two things simultaneously existent to compare with each other. At the time that the suffering itself exists, however, the causal conditions that bring it into existence do not exist, and thus there is no cause existent for the suffering to be different from. As we learned in chapter 1, cause and result do not exist simultaneously: When the cause exists the result does not, and when the result exists the cause does not, as is the case with a seed and its sprout. Therefore, results cannot arise from things that are different from themselves, because at the time they exist, there are no causes for the results to be different from; and therefore, suffering does not arise from something different from itself, because there is nothing for it to be different from.

The third possibility is that suffering would come from both itself and something other than itself. That is impossible, however, because all of the flaws in saying that suffering comes from itself and all the flaws of saying that it comes from something other than itself accrue to this third alternative.

The fourth extreme is to believe that suffering occurs without any cause at all. That is also impossible, because nothing can arise without causes and conditions. Whatever we perceive in the world, whatever suffering we experience, we know that it does not appear without causes and conditions.

Therefore, suffering does not really happen after all because it does not arise from any of the four extremes, and there are no other possibilities. All outer things are the same—they actually do not arise because they do not arise from any of the four extremes.

When you snap your fingers, that finger snap does not come from itself, does not come from something different from itself, does not come from both itself and something different from itself, and does not arise without any cause at all.

The same is true for all the thoughts that appear in the mind. Whether they are good or bad, profound or base, these thoughts do not come from themselves, do not come from something other than themselves, do not come from both themselves and something other than themselves, and do not arise without any cause at all. Rather, they are dependently arisen mere appearances, just like thoughts in a dream.

If thoughts were real, they would have to arise. If they arose, they would have to arise from one of these four possibilities. Since they do not arise from any one of these four possibilities, and these four are all the possibilities there are, thoughts do not truly arise, and therefore thoughts are not real.

Suffering does not ever really happen because it does not arise from any one of the four extremes. Nevertheless, there is the thought that thinks that suffering is real. Since this thought that thinks suffering is real does not arise from any one of the four extremes either, it is said to be self-liberated—its true nature is freedom.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XII

दुःखपरीक्षा द्वादशमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀苦品第十二(十偈)

།བདག་གིས་བྱས་པ་དང་གཞན་གྱིས་བྱས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་གཉིས་པའོ།།

duḥkhaparīkṣā nāma dvādaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

zhōng lùn guān kǔ pǐn dì shí èr(shí jié;jì)

| bdag gis byas pa daṅ gźan gyis byas pa brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab (3)tu byed pa bcu gñis pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XII - Examination of Suffering

JONES (Skt):
12. Suffering

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Suffering

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
12. Analysis of Suffering

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[12] Examination of Pain (10 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
[omitted]

STRENG (Skt):
Section 12 - An Analysis of Sorrow (Suffering) In 10 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
12. suffering.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 12 Contemplation of Suffering 10 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Anguish

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XII - Analysis of Suffering

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XII: Examination of Suffering

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XII - Examination of Suffering

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 12: AN EXAMINATION OF SUFFERING

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Twelve - Examination of Dukkha

PINGALA COMMENTARY

12/0 Some people say:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter omitted by Sprung]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Twelve Examination of Suffering (Duhkha-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XII Examination of Suffering

The first of the Four Noble Truths is that "all this is suffering." So one can imagine an interlocutor granting all that has gone before, but in defense of Buddhist orthodoxy, insisting that suffering is inherently existent. After all, the Four Noble Truths are, from a Buddhist perspective, *truths.* Nāgārjuna, of course, is a Buddhist and accepts the Four Noble Truths. (In fact, the principal chapter of this work, Chapter XXIV, is devoted to an exposition of the Four Noble Truths from the standpoint of emptiness and to the argument that only on Nāgārjuna's analysis can these truths be maintained at all.) So he must, without denying the reality of suffering, explain its emptiness.

Kārikā XII.1

स्वयं कृतं परकृतं द्वाभ्यां कृतमहेतुकम्।
दुःखमित्येक इच्छन्ति तच्च कार्यं न युज्यते॥१॥

LVP 227,8-9 - LVP 236,5-6
svayaṃ kṛtaṃ parakṛtaṃ dvābhyāṃ kṛtam ahetukam |
duḥkham ity eka icchanti tac ca kāryaṃ na yujyate ||1||

自作及他作 共作無因作
如是說諸苦 於果則不然

T1564: vol 30, pg 16b20
zì zuò jí tā zuò gòng zuò wú yīn zuò
rú shì shuì zhū kǔ yū;yú;wū guǒ zé bù rán

།ཁ་ཅིག་སྡུག་བསྔལ་བདག་གིས་བྱས།།གཞན་གྱིས་བྱས་དང་གཉི་གས་བྱས།
།རྒྱུ་མེད་པ་ལས་འབྱུང་བར་འདོད།།དེ་ནི་བྱ་བར་མི་རུང་ངོ༎

Tg tsa 7b4 - Tg tsa 8a2-3
|| kha cig sdug bsṅal bdag gis byas | | gźan gyis byas daṅ gñi gas byas |
| rgyu med pa las 'byuṅ bar 'dod | | de ni bya bar mi ruṅ ṅo |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - Some assert that suffering arises by virtue of being self-caused, other-caused, both self and other-caused or non-causal. Such an assertion which treats suffering as an effect is not justifiable.

JONES (Skt):
[1] Some maintain that suffering is self-caused. caused by another, caused by both itself and another, or is uncaused. But suffering as something that can be caused is not admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Some assume that suffering is self-caused, mused by another, caused by both or without a cause. [Suffering as] such an effect is indeed not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Some say, "Suffering is self-caused, caused by another, caused by both or uncaused."
But it [suffering] does not occur as an effect.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. My own Action, and others' Action,
And Action, which is done by myself and the others together, are not reasonable.
Only one aim called Pain has been desired,
And the Pain and what has been done actually, are not combined into one.

STRENG (Skt):
1. Some say: Sorrow (dukkha) is produced by oneself (i), or by another (ii), or by both itself and another (iii), or from no cause at all (iv); But to consider that sorrow (dukkha) as what is produced is not possible.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XII.1 Some say that suffering is caused by itself, or by something else, or from both, or that it arises in an uncaused way. To consider [suffering] as produced is not appropriate.

BOCKING (Ch):
12v1 'Self-created, created by another
Jointly created, or created by no cause'.
In these ways they describe suffering
But in fact these are wrong.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Some assert that anguish arises from being made by self, made by other, by both, without cause. To do that is not suitable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Some say that suffering is produced by itself,
By something other, by both,
Or that it arises without a cause.
Such production is not possible. [XII.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Some say suffering is self-produced,
Or produced from another or from both.
Or that it arises without a cause.
it is not the kind of thing to be produced.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Some maintain that suffering is self-created.
Some maintain that it is created by another; others that it is created by both,
Or that it arises without a cause.
Such creation is impossible.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
12.1 Some claim that dukkha is self-caused, other-caused, both self and other-caused, or that it is without a cause. But treating dukkha as an effect cannot be sustained.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

12/1 Some people say that suffering is self-created, or that it is created by something else, or that it is. created by both self and other, or that it is created by no cause, but in fact none of these is the case. None of these being the case (means that sentient beings bring about suffering through causality, and disliking pain, desire to extinguish it. Being ignorant of the true causes and conditions of suffering, they have these four kinds of mistaken ideas. Thus he says that in fact they are all wrong, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The discussion of the life-process (samsara) leads Nagarjuna to an examination of the problem of suffering (duhkha). It seems that when compiling this chapter Nagarjuna had a copy of the Buddha's discourse to Acela-Kassapa (S 2.18-22; Tsa 12.20 [Taisho 2.86a]) in front of him. The Buddha's discourse to Acela-Kassapa begins with the four theories of the causation of suffering referred to by Nagarjuna in almost identical terms. The only difference is with regard to the explanation of the fourth. Where Nagarjuna has ahetukam, the Buddha's discourse refers to adhiccasamuppannam (see XII.9 below). Another difference is that while the Buddha's advises Kassapa not to get involved in such speculations, insisting, "Do not [say] so," (ma h'evam), Nagarjuna maintains that these theories are not appropriate.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. These are the four possibilities with regard to inherently existent suffering. The echo of I: 1 is obvious, and the argument here will depend heavily upon the analysis of dependent arising developed in that chapter and in Chapter VII.

Kārikā XII.2

स्वयं कृतं यदि भवेत्प्रतीत्य न ततो भवेत्।
स्कन्धानिमानमी स्कन्धाः संभवन्ति प्रतीत्य हि॥२॥

svayaṃ kṛtaṃ yadi bhavet pratītya na tato bhavet |
skandhān imān amī skandhāḥ saṃbhavanti pratītya hi ||2||

苦若自作者 則不從緣生
因有此陰故 而有彼陰生

kǔ ruò zì zuò zhě zé bù cóng yuán shēng
yīn yǒu cǐ yīn gù ér yǒu bǐ yīn shēng

།གལ་ཏེ་བདག་གིས་བྱས་གྱུར་ན།།དེ་ཕྱིར་བརྟེན་ནས་འབྱུང་མི་འགྱུར།
།གང་ཕྱིར་ཕུང་པོ་འདི་དག་ལ།།བརྟེན་ནས་ཕུང་པོ་དེ་དག་འབྱུང༎

| gal te bdag gis byas gyur na | | (5)de phyir brten nas 'byuṅ mi 'gyur |
| gaṅ phyir phuṅ po 'di dag la | | brten nas phuṅ po de dag 'byuṅ |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - If suffering is self-caused, it will not have a relational condition in arising. For, surely, these (present) skandhas are relationally conditioned in the arising of those (future) skandhas.

JONES (Skt):
[2] If suffering were self-caused. it then would not arise dependently, since aggregates arise dependent upon other aggregates.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If [suffering were to be] self-caused, then it could not occur dependently. Indeed, depending upon these aggregates, these other aggregates occur.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If it would be self-caused, it would not be dependent.
Skandhas [separate heaps of conditionings that make up a sense of personality] arise dependent on these boundless *skandhas.*

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. In the case, when my Action exists,
It is clear that what has expanded does not exist clearly.
And what have been accumulated are accumulations.
Because something clearly aggregated, is conspicuously clear in front of us.

STRENG (Skt):
2. If it were produced by itself (i.e. self-causation), it would not exist dependent on something else. Certainly those "groups of universal elements" (skandhas) exist presupposing these "groups."

BOCKING (Ch):
12v2 If suffering were self-created
Then it would not arise from conditions.
(But) it is on account of 'these skandhas'
That 'those skandhas' arise.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If it were made by self, therefore it would not be contingently arising, because those aggregates arise contingently on these aggregates.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If suffering were produced by itself
It could not arise in dependence,
Because, based on these aggregates,
Those aggregates arise. [XII.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. If suffering came from itself,
Then it would not arise dependently.
For those aggregates
Arise in dependence on these aggregates.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. If suffering was created by itself,
Then it would not arise dependently.
For those aggregates
Arise in dependence on these aggregates.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
12.2 If dukkha is self-caused, it would not arise dependently. Surely those aggregates arise dependent upon these aggregates.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

12/2 If suffering is self-created, then it does not arise from conditions. 'Self (-created)' means to arise from its own nature, but this is not correct. Why is this? It is because of the previous five skandhas that the subsequent five skandhas arise, and therefore suffering cannot be self-created.

Question: If you say 'these skandhas create those skandhas', this is creation by another.

Reply: This is not the case, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The notion of self-causation of suffering is further elaborated by the Buddha as the view expressed in the statement, "He acts and he [himself] reaps the consequences," (so karoti so patisamvediyati). The Buddha's reason for not accepting such a view is that it leads to the belief in eternalism (sassatam etam pareti). Nagarjuna certainly knew that the Buddha was utilizing the conception of dependence (paticcasamuppada) to avoid any metaphysical theory of eternalism. This was the basic theme, not only in the discourse to Kaccayana, but also in the discourse to Acela-Kassapa, where it is once again presented as the middle position between the extremes of eternalism and annihilationism (S 2.20). It is, therefore, not surprising to see Nagarjuna rejecting the conception of self-causation of suffering on the grounds that in such a case suffering would not be dependently arisen ?(na pratitya bhavet).

Furthermore, the eternalism that comes to be embodied in a theory of self-causation of suffering pertains more to the individual self or soul (atman), and not the substance (svabhava). Therefore, Nagarjuna insists that what is being asserted as a self or soul is nothing other than the arising of a set of aggregates depending upon (pratiya) another set of aggregates.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. Self-arising suffering would indeed be a candidate for inherent existence. But for the proponent of a Buddhist analysis of suffering, that is little help since suffering on a Buddhist analysis is the consequence of delusion, attachment, craving, action, and so forth. So such an analysis is not open to anyone wanting to defend the inherent existence of the suffering explored in the Four Noble Truths.

Kārikā XII.3

यद्यमीभ्य इमेऽन्ये स्युरेभ्यो वामी परे यदि।
भवेत्परकृतं दुःखं परैरेभिरमी कृताः॥३॥

yady amībhya ime ’nye syur ebhyo vāmī pare yadi |
bhavet parakṛtaṃ duḥkhaṃ parair ebhir amī kṛtāḥ ||3||

若謂此五陰 異彼五陰者
如是則應言 從他而作苦

ruò wèi cǐ wǔ yīn yì bǐ wǔ yīn zhě
rú shì zé yīng yán cóng tā ér zuò kǔ

|གལ་ཏེ་འདི་ལས་དེ་གཞན་ཞིང༌།།གལ་ཏེ་དེ་ལས་འདི་གཞན་ན།
|སྡུག་བསྔལ་གཞན་གྱིས་བྱས་འགྱུར་ཞིང༌།།གཞན་དེ་དག་གིས་དེ་བྱས་འགྱུར།།

| gal te ’di las de gźan źiṅ | | gal te de las ’di gźan na |
| sdug bsṅal gźan gyis byas ’gyur źiṅ | | gźan de dag gis de byas ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - If these (present) skandhas are different from those (future) skandhas or if the latter is other than the former, then there will be suffering caused by something else and those (future) skandhas will also be caused by it.

JONES (Skt):
[3] If things arise from things they were different from, or if the latter arose from the former, then suffering could be caused by another, since things then could be caused by other things.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If from these those that are different were to come to be, or if from those these different [things] were to come to be, then suffering would be caused by another, for these are mused by those that are different.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If these are different from those or those would be some place other than these,
suffering would be caused by others and those caused by means of these others.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. When this world is different from what is seen now,
The similarity and difference of the world might be bound then by the miscellaneous things and phenomena.
It might be true that something, which has been produced by others, can be painful,
But even being produced by either by others, or by oneself, they are the same to be produced by production.

STRENG (Skt):
3. If these were different from those, or if those were different from these, Sorrow (dukkha) would be produced by something other than itself (i.e. other-causation), because those would be made by these others.

BOCKING (Ch):
12v3 If you say that these five skandhas
Differ from those five skandhas
Then surely you are saying that
Suffering is created by another?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If that were other than this and if this were other than that, anguish would be made by other and that would be made by those others.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If those were something other than these,
And these were something other than those,
Suffering would be produced by something other,
And they would produce something other. [XII.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. If those were different from these,
Or if these were different from those,
Suffering could arise from another.
These would arise from those others.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. If those were different from these,
Or if these were different from those,
Suffering could be created by another.
These would be created by those others.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
12.3 If these present aggregates were different from those future aggregates, or if those were different from these, then dukkha could arise from another since those arise from these.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

12/3 If these five skandhas are different from those five skandhas, and those five skandhas are different from these five skandhas, then (you say that) this must be 'creation by another'. But by way of example, if thread were different from cloth, then there ought to be cloth apart from thread, but as there is no cloth apart from thread, then cloth is not different from thread. In the same way if those five skandhas differ from these five skandhas, then those five skandhas ought to exist apart from these five skandhas, and if those five skandhas do not exist apart from these five skandhas, then these five skandhas are not different from those five skandhas. Consequently, you should not say that suffering is 'creation by another'.

Question: 'Self creation' means that everybody creates of himself his own suffering and of himself receives his suffering.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here we find a definition of "external causation" (para-krta). Nagarjuna has already explained the relationship between self-nature or substance (svabhava) and other-nature (parabhava)(see I.3). There he maintained that without self-nature there cannot be other-nature (avidyamane svabhave parabhavo na vidyate). In the present verse, Nagarjuna applies the same principle to explain "causation by another." Thus, we find him utilizing the ablative case (amibhyah, ebhyah), expressive of "source" or "origin," in order to explain the arising of something different from within something that preceded. In other words, even though the effect is different from the cause, it arises from the cause; that is, external causation is invariably related to selfcausation.

It is important to distinguish this statement from that found at XII.2 which, instead of using the ablative case, employs the accusative (iman skandhan pratiya) in order to highlight the principle of dependence. Indeed, the very term idappaccayata (idam-pratyayata) utilized by the Buddha to express the principle of dependence is couched in the accusative case (idam), instead of the ablative of source.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. The next alternative - that suffering arises from another requires that there be essential difference. For since suffering does arise from previous conditions, if there is genuine otherness, that would characterize the relation between suffering and its grounds.

Kārikā XII.4

स्वपुद्नलकृतं दुःखं यदि दुःखं पुनर्विना।
स्वपुद्गलः स कतमो येन दुःखं स्वयं कृतम्॥४॥

svapudgalakṛtaṃ duḥkhaṃ yadi duḥkhaṃ punar vinā |
svapudgalaḥ sa katamo yena duḥkhaṃ svayaṃ kṛtam ||4||

若人自作苦 離苦何有人
而謂於彼人 而能自作苦

ruò rén zì zuò kǔ lí kǔ hé yǒu rén
ér wèi yū;yú;wū bǐ rén ér néng zì zuò kǔ

།གལ་ཏེ་གང་ཟག་བདག་གིས་ནི།།སྡུག་བསྔལ་བྱས་ན་གང་བདག་གིས།
།སྡུག་བསྔལ་བྱས་པའི་གང་ཟག་ནི།།སྡུག་བསྔལ་མ་གཏོགས་གང་ཞིག་ཡིན།།

| gal te gaṅ zag bdag gis ni | | (6)sdug bsṅal byas na gaṅ bdag gis |
| sdug bsṅal byas pa'i gaṅ zag ni | | sdug bsṅal ma gtogs gaṅ źig yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - If suffering is caused by the individual himself, then the individual is separated from suffering. Who is this individual self which self-causes suffering?

JONES (Skt):
[4] If suffering is caused by a person himself, then that person exists without suffering. But then what is that person by whom suffering is self-created?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If suffering is caused by one's own person, then that own person can exist without suffering. Who is he by whom suffering is self-caused?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If suffering is caused by the person himself, then [he would exist] without suffering.
Who is this person himself by means ('If whom suffering is self-caused?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. When the personality of myself has produced Pain,
Then it might be similar to as if there were no Pain, too.
The personality of myself is also only one among many people,
And so what has produced Pain, is also my Action itself.

STRENG (Skt):
4. If sorrow (dukkha) is made through one's own personality (i) (svapudgala), then one's own personality would be without sorrow (dukkha); Who is that "own personality" by which sorrow (dukkha) is self-produced (i)?

BOCKING (Ch):
12v4 If the person himself creates suffering –
What person is there apart from suffering?
That you could say of that person,
'He is able to create his own suffering'?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If anguish were made by one's own person, who would that person be who has made anguish by himself, but is not included in the anguish?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the person itself
Produces suffering,
Then what, apart from suffering,
Is this person who produces suffering? [XII.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. If suffering were caused by a person himself,
Then who is that person -
By whom suffering is caused -
Who exists distinct from suffering?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. If suffering were caused by a person himself,
Then who is that self who created the suffering—
That person—
Apart from suffering?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
12.4 If dukkha were caused by one's own self, then such a one is separate from dukkha. Who is this person by whom dukkha is self-caused?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

12/4 You may say that the person himself creates his own suffering, but in what other situation, apart from in the suffering of the five skandhas, do you find a person who could create his own suffering? You should give an account of such a person, but you cannot give an account of him. Therefore, suffering is not self-created by the person. If you say that, although a person does not self-create his own suffering, another person creates the suffering and transfers it to this person, this also is incorrect, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As shown before, the Buddhist metaphysicians who adopted a theory of moments had difficulty explaining personal continuity or identity in a more empirical way. They were confronted with the problem of explaining good and bad, suffering and happiness as part of the personal continuity. Thus, the Sarvastivadins would maintain that suffering, etc. are mere qualities (laksana) that characterize the substance (dravya), or they would, along with the Sautrantikas, maintain that qualifies are appropriated or become part of the stream (svasamtana-patita, AK 2.36; Akb ; Poussin, L'Abhidharmakosa, vol. 1.). Such a perspective inevitably leads to a distinction between the person or the stream of personal identity, on the one hand, and qualifies like suffering on the other. What Nagarjuna is attempting to do in the present verse is to bring out the metaphysical implications of this theory. According to this theory, suffering is something external to the individual. It is an entity having its own reality. It is something caused by a person, as a carpenter would produce a piece of furniture. As such, Nagarjuna questions the very nature of that person who, being independent of suffering, causes suffering on its own.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. But who is that other? It must be the sufferer himself at another stage, or another individual altogether. If it is the person himself, then as the cause of suffering, he must be distinct from suffering. This poses two problems: First, as per the analysis of motion, desire, and agency in Chapters II, VI, and VIII above, we cannot conceive of the sufferer as inherently different from the suffering he experiences. For part of his identity is constituted by that very suffering, and that suffering is his suffering. But second, given the framework of the first of the Four Noble Truths, a Buddhist philosopher such as Nāgārjuna would share with any Buddhist interlocutor the assumption that in saṃsāra sentient beings not only suffer, but are literally constituted of suffering - that every aggregate of a sentient being's existence is a cause, an effect, and a basis of misery. So on either score, to distinguish sufferer from suffering for the purpose of such an analysis would be impossible.

Kārikā XII.5

परपुद्गलजं दुःखं यदि यस्मै प्रदीयते।
परेण कृत्वा तद्दुःखं स दुःखेन विना कुतः॥५॥

parapudgalajaṃ duḥkhaṃ yadi yasmai pradīyate |
pareṇa kṛtvā tad duḥkhaṃ sa duḥkhena vinā kutaḥ ||5||

若苦他人作 而與此人者
若當離於苦 何有此人受

ruò kǔ tā rén zuò ér yǔ cǐ rén zhě
ruò dāng lí yū;yú;wū kǔ hé yǒu cǐ rén shòu

།གལ་ཏེ་གང་ཟག་གཞན་ལས་ནི།།སྡུག་བསྔལ་འབྱུང་ན་གཞན་ཞིག་གིས།
།སྡུག་བསྔལ་དེ་བྱས་གང་སྦྱིན་དེ།།སྡུག་བསྔལ་མ་གཏོགས་ཇི་ལྟར་རུང་།།

| gal te gaṅ zag gźan las ni | | sdug bsṅal 'byuṅ na gźan źig gis |
| sdug bsṅal de byas gaṅ sbyin de | | sdug bsṅal ma gtogs ji ltar ruṅ |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - If suffering is caused by another individual, where is this self which is separated from suffering but which is (seemingly) the recipient of the suffering caused by another?

JONES (Skt):
[5] If suffering is caused by one person and then given to another, then the suffering is caused by the former - how can he then be without suffering?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If suffering were to be produced by one person and given over to another, that suffering is caused by the former. How can the latter be identified without suffering?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If suffering is produced by another person,
to whom does this suffering caused by another apply since he is without suffering?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. When the personality of others have produced Pain,
Then the Pain has been illuminated by other's light.
What are created by others, might be the Pain,
And where is it possible for Reality to exist without Pain?

STRENG (Skt):
5. If sorrow (dukkha) were produced by a different personality (ii) (parapudgala), How would he, to whom is given that sorrow (dukkha) by another after he had produced it, be without sorrow (dukkha)?

BOCKING (Ch):
12v5 If suffering is created by another person
And yet is transferred to this person,
Then, if he is separate from the suffering
How can this person receive it?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If anguish arose from another person, how could it be suitable for there to be [someone] not included in the anguish, who has been given it by another who made the anguish?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If suffering comes from a different person,
Then how, when produced by another person,
Could it be given to somebody
Who is something other than suffering? [XII.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. If suffering comes from another person,
Then who is that person -
When suffering is given by another -
Who exists distinct from suffering?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. If suffering arose from another person,
Then that other one would create the suffering.
What could that which comes to fruition be
Apart from the suffering?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
12.5 If dukkha were caused by another, then who is the recipient that could exist distinct from dukkha?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

12/5 If another person creates the suffering and transfers it to this person, there can be no reception by this person apart from the five skandhas.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If one were to accept the separation of suffering from the person who produces it (i.e., the theory criticized at XII.4), then it will lead to difficulties not only for one who adopts self-causation of suffering (svayam . krtam duhkham), but also for one who upholds the opposite view, namely, suffering is caused by another (parakrtam duhkham). The latter will have to maintain that suffering is caused by one person and passed on to another. But that other would himself be independent of suffering, in the same way as the person who caused it. The question still remains as to how that person can be identified.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. Another alternative is that the suffering is caused not by earlier stages of one's own life, but by another individual. That other individual of course could be someone else entirely, in the ordinary sense, or it could be an earlier moment of what is ordinarily regarded as oneself, but which is for the purposes of this analysis regarded as substantially other. That is, taken in this way, Nāgārjuna can be seen to be arguing on each side of a dilemma with regard to the identity of persons across time. But if this were so, it would have to be the case that the person in whom suffering was caused by that other could be identified and that that person could be distinguished from her suffering. But then the same problems developed above apply. Nāgārjuna emphasizes this in XII: 6: (fn 68. In this case, there is a second difficulty as well: For one person to cause suffering for another, that first must already be suffering. For to cause suffering is a very serious wrong, which could only be done by someone who him/herself is suffering. So there is a possible regress.)

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Kārikā XII.6

परपुद्गलजं दुःखं यदि कः परपुद्गलः।
विना दुःखेन यः कृत्वा परस्मै प्रहिणोति तत्॥६॥

苦若彼人作 持與此人者
離苦何有人 而能授於此

།གལ་ཏེ་གང་ཟག་གཞན་སྡུག་བསྔལ།།འབྱུང་ན་གང་གིས་དེ་བྱས་ནས།
།གཞན་ལ་སྟེར་བའི་གང་ཟག་གཞན།།སྡུག་བསྔལ་མ་གཏོགས་གང་ཞིག་ཡིན།།

parapudgalajaṃ duḥkhaṃ yadi kaḥ parapudgalaḥ |
vinā duḥkhena yaḥ kṛtvā parasmai prahiṇoti tat ||6||

kǔ ruò bǐ rén zuò chí yǔ cǐ rén zhě
lí kǔ hé yǒu rén ér néng shòu yū;yú;wū cǐ

| gal (7)te gaṅ zag gźan sdug bsṅal | | ’byuṅ na gaṅ gis de byas nas |
| gźan la ster ba’i gaṅ zag gźan | | sdug bsṅal ma gtogs gaṅ źig yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - If suffering is caused by another individual, what is (the nature of) this individual which is separated from and yet causes and bestows suffering on the recipient?

JONES (Skt):
[6] If suffering is caused by another person, who is that other person who is without suffering and who causes the suffering?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If suffering is caused by another person, who is that other person who, himself without suffering, causes it and bestows it on another?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If.suffering is produced by another person, who is the other person
Without suffering who caused and bestows it on another?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. When the personality of others have produced Pain,
Then what is just the personality, which is called other's personality?
The situation, which does not have any Pain, might be the states, which have been produced.
Therefore it is the state, which has been grasped by the facts.

STRENG (Skt):
6. If sorrow (dukkha) is produced by a different personality, who is that different personality Who, while being without sorrow (dukkha), yet makes and transmits that sorrow (dukkha) to the other?

BOCKING (Ch):
12v6 If that person creates suffering,
And bestows it on this person,
What person could exist, apart from suffering
Who could give it to this person?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If anguish arose [from] another person, who would that other person be who, having made it, gives it to someone else, but is not included in the anguish?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If suffering occurs because of another person,
Then who is this producer,
Tins other who gives suffering to another,
Yet who is not that very suffering? [XII.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If another person causes suffering,
Who is that other one
Who bestowed that suffering,
Distinct from suffering?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If another person gave rise to suffering,
Who would that other person be
Who created it and gave that suffering,
Other than suffering?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
12.6 If dukkha were caused by another, who is that one that, distinct from dukkha, can bestow dukkha on another?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

12/6 Suppose you say that that person creates suffering and gives it to this person; what person is there apart from the suffering of the five skandhas, to create suffering and give it to this person? If such a one exists you should describe his characteristics.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is similar to the arguments presented before. The sharp dichotomy between the agent of suffering and suffering itself prompts Nagarjuna to question the nature of that other person (para-pudgala) who is supposed to be the author of suffering and who passes it on to another.

Kārikā XII.7

स्वयंकृतस्याप्रसिद्धेर्दुःखं परकृतं कुतः।
परो हि दुःखं यत्कुर्यात्ततत्तस्य स्यात्स्वयं कृतम्॥७॥

svayaṃ kṛtasyāprasiddher duḥkhaṃ parakṛtaṃ kutaḥ |
paro hi duḥkhaṃ yat kuryāt tat tasya syāt svayaṃ kṛtam ||7||

自作若不成 云何彼作苦
若彼人作苦 即亦名自作

zì zuò ruò bù chéng yún hé bǐ zuò kǔ
ruò bǐ rén zuò kǔ jí yì míng zì zuò

|བདག་གིས་བྱས་པར་མ་གྲུབ་པས||སྡུག་བསྔལ་གཞན་གྱིས་ག་ལ་བྱས|
|གཞན་གྱིས་སྡུག་བསྔལ་གང་བྱེད་པ||དེ་ནི་དེ་ཡི་བདག་བྱས་འགྱུར||

| bdag gis byas par ma grub pas | | sdug bsṅal gźan gyis ga la byas |
| gźan gyis sdug bsṅal gaṅ byed pa | | de ni de yi (8a1)bdag byas ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - As self-cause cannot be established, where can an other-caused suffering be? For, surely, an other-caused suffering is caused by that other itself.

JONES (Skt):
[7] Because self-causation is not established, how can there be suffering caused by another? For the suffering that the other would create would be self-caused in him.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
With the non-establishment of self-causation, how can there be suffering caused by another? For, indeed, if another were to cause that suffering, in relation to him it would be self-caused.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Since the self-nature of cause is unexplained for suffering, where is there cause by another?
Indeed the other, from whose cause there is suffering, his suffering would be self-caused.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Because our products haven't been accomplished yet,
It is impossible for us to say that the Pain has come from others' efforts.
Because even though other people have also created their Pain actually,
Their work might be done as their own products separately.

STRENG (Skt):
7. It is not established that sorrow (dukkha) is self-produced (i), but how is sorrow (dukkha) produced by another (ii)? Certainly the sorrow (dukkha), which would be produced by another (ii), in his case would be self-produced (i’).

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XII.7 If we cannot show that it has been caused by itself, how could suffering have been created by another? If another one made the suffering, this one would have to have caused his own suffering.

BOCKING (Ch):
12v7 If self-creation is not established
How can there be creation of suffering by another?
If another person creates suffering
Then this is also termed 'self-creation'.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Since it is not established as made by self, how can anguish have been made by other? [For] whatever anguish is made by other, that has been made by his self.

DOCTOR (Tb):
As it cannot be established to be produced by a self,
How could suffering be the product of another?
The suffering produced by the other
Is the product of that other itself. [XII.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. When self-caused is not established,
How could suffering be caused by another?
Whoever caused the suffering of another
Must have caused his own suffering.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. When it does not exist as self-created,
How could suffering be created by another?
Any suffering created by another
Must have been self-created.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
12.7 When self-causation is not established, how can there be dukkha caused by another? Dukkha, caused by another, would, to that other, be self-caused.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

12/7 Neither other nor self-creation of suffering can be established for various reasons, yet you say that suffering is created by another. This too is incorrect, and why? Because 'this' and 'that' are mutually dependent. If that (person) creates suffering then for that (person) it will constitute self-creation of suffering. Self-creation of suffering has already been refuted, and since you have accepted that self-creation of suffering cannot be established, other-creation cannot be established either. Moreover:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. But the suffering of that other person must either be caused by someone else or be self-caused. The former alternative leads to a regress: The whole point from the standpoint of the opponent who is the target of this argument is to find the independent explanatory ground for suffering. The second alternative leads back to the problem scouted in the opening verses: Self-caused suffering is both inconceivable within a general Buddhist soteriological framework and runs afoul of the arguments against self-causation generally. Finally, it is rather embarrassingly ad hoc. Nāgārjuna sums this up in the next verse:

Kārikā XII.8

न तावत्स्वकृतं दुःखं न हि तेनैव तत्कृतम्।
परो नात्मकृतश्चेत्स्याद्दुःखं परकृतं कथम्॥८॥

na tāvat svakṛtaṃ duḥkhaṃ na hi tenaiva tat kṛtam |
paro nātmakṛtaś cet syād duḥkhaṃ parakṛtaṃ katham ||8||

苦不名自作 法不自作法
彼無有自體 何有彼作苦

kǔ bù míng zì zuò fǎ bù zì zuò fǎ
bǐ wú yǒu zì tǐ hé yǒu bǐ zuò kǔ

|རེ་ཞིག་སྡུག་བསྔལ་བདག་བྱས་མིན། །དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ནི་དེ་མ་བྱས། །
|གལ་ཏེ་གཞན་བདག་མ་བྱས་ན། །སྡུག་བསྔལ་གཞན་བྱས་ག་ལ་འགྱུར། །

| re źig sdug bsṅal bdag byas min | | de ñid kyis ni de ma byas |
| gal te gźan bdag ma byas na | | sdug bsṅal gźan byas ga la ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - In truth then, there is no self-caused suffering for it cannot come about by itself. If an other does not bring about its own suffering, why is there an other-caused suffering?

JONES (Skt):
[8] Suffering is not self-caused, for it is not created by itself. So too, if any other one is not self-created, how can suffering be created by that one?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
So long as suffering is not self-caused, it is, indeed, not caused by oneself. If the other were not to do it by himself, how could suffering be caused by another?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Therefore, suffering is not self-caused, indeed it is not caused by means of itself.
How can [suffering] be caused by another if [his] suffering would not be caused by an other not the self?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. What I have sacrificed for producing something, is not so painful.
Because without relying upon such efforts the article might not be produced at all.
Because in this case another person must be different from the person himself,
Therefore how is it possible for Pain to come from another's behavior?

STRENG (Skt):
8. Sorrow (dukkha) is not self-produced (i), for that which is produced is certainly not produced by that personality. If the "other" (para) is not produced by the individual self (atma), how would sorrow (dukkha) be that produced by another?

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XII.8 Suffering is not self-caused insofar as nothing is self-caused. If the other is not self-caused, how can suffering be caused by another?

BOCKING (Ch):
12v8 Suffering is not termed self-created
Dharmas do not themselves create dharmas
The 'other' has no self-substance.
How can there be an 'other' who creates suffering?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Anguish is not made [by] self; that is not made by that itself. If it is not made by an other self, how can anguish be made by other?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Suffering is not self produced;
It is not its own product.
If the other is not the product of itself,
How could suffering be produced by another? [XII.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. No suffering is self-caused.
Nothing causes itself.
If another is not self-made,
How could suffering be caused by another?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. No suffering is self-created.
Nothing creates itself.
If another is not self-created,
How could suffering be created by another?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
12.8 Dukkha is not self-produced, for that which is produced is not self-caused. If another is not self-caused, how could dukkha be caused by another?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

12/8 There is no self-creation of suffering, and why? Just as a cannot cut itself, so a dharma cannot create, of itself, a dharma. Therefore, there cannot be self-creation. There is no other-creation of suffering either, and why? There is no own-nature of an 'other' apart from suffering. If there were another own-nature, we would have to say that this other created suffering, but this other is itself also suffering, and how can suffering itself create suffering?

Question: Even if there is neither self-creation nor other-creation, surely there is 'joint creation'?

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The implications of XII.3 discussed earlier are stated once more clearly and explicitly in these two verses. If some other person were to cause suffering, then that suffering, in relation to that particular person, would be self-mused. Thus, if one perspectvie is not valid then the other too would be invalidated. This, as pointed out earlier, is the method adopted at I.3 to reject both self-nature (svabhava) and other-nature (parabhava).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. But, as Nāgārjuna points out in XII: 9, it can’t be caused by both since we have seen that neither can be causally relevant at all to inherently existent suffering of a kind relevant to Buddhist doctrine. And it is absurd to suppose that it is uncaused:

Kārikā XII.9

स्यादुभाभ्यां कृतं दुःखं स्यादेकैककृतं यदि।
पराकारास्वयंकारं दुःखमहेतुकं कुतः॥९॥

syād ubhābhyāṃ kṛtaṃ duḥkhaṃ syād ekaikakṛtaṃ yadi |
parākārāsvayaṃkāraṃ duḥkham ahetukaṃ kutaḥ ||9||

若此彼苦成 應有共作苦
此彼尚無作 何況無因作

ruò cǐ bǐ kǔ chéng yīng yǒu gòng zuò kǔ
cǐ bǐ shàng wú zuò hé kuàng wú yīn zuò

|གལ་ཏེ་རེ་རེས་བྱས་གྱུར་ན||སྡུག་བསྔལ་གཉིས་ཀས་བྱས་པར་འགྱུར|
|བདག་གིས་མ་བྱས་གཞན་མ་བྱས||སྡུག་བསྔལ་རྒྱུ་མེད་ག་ལ་འགྱུར||

| gal te re res byas gyur na | | sdug bsṅal gñis kas byas par ’gyur |
| bdag (2)gis ma byas gźan ma byas | | sdug bsṅal rgyu med ga la ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - If suffering could be caused individually by one's self and by an other, then there should also be suffering caused jointly. Where is this non-causal suffering which is neither caused by itself nor by an other?

JONES (Skt):
[9ab] If suffering were created by oneself and another, it would be made by both. [9cd] How could there be suffering that is not self-created or created by another or causeless?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If suffering were to be caused by both, it would be caused by each individually. Whence can there be suffering that is caused neither by another nor by oneself and is without a cause?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If suffering would be caused by both, it would be caused one by one.
Where IS the uncaused suffering that is not self-caused or caused by another?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. In the case that a work has been done by the two members,
Then the Pain might be separated into two, one by one.
If Pain has not been produced by either others, or by himself,
Why Pain is so unreasonable actually like that?

STRENG (Skt):
9. Sorrow (dukkha) could be made by both self and the "other" (iii) if it could be produced by either one. But not produced by another, and not self-produced (iv)—how can sorrow (dukkha) exist without a caused

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XII.9a If suffering was caused by both [itself and others] it could be caused by each individually.

BOCKING (Ch):
12v9 'if the suffering of this (person) and that (person) is established,
Then surely there is joint creation of suffering'?
But this and that person do not create,
How much less is there creation without a cause.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If it is made by each, anguish would be made by both. Not made by self, not made by other, how can anguish have no cause?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If suffering were produced by each of these,
Then suffering would be the product of both.
Neither produced by self nor other,
How could suffering be uncaused? [XII.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. If suffering were caused by each,
Suffering could be caused by both.
Not caused by self or by other,
How could suffering be uncaused?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. If suffering were created by each,
Suffering could be created by both.
Not created by self or by other,
How could uncaused suffering occur?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
12.9 If dukkha were caused by either self or another, it could also be caused by both together. How can dukkha that is neither self- nor other-caused be without cause?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

12/9 Even self-creation and creation by another are erroneous. How much more so creation with no cause? Causelessness involves numerous errors, as has already been explained in the chapter refuting the deed and the doer (chapter 8). Furthermore :

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The third theory of the causation of suffering referred to in the discourse to Acela-Kassapa is a combination of causation by oneself and causation by another (sayam katan ca param katan ca). This is understood by Nagarjuna as causation by each individual (ekaika-krtam). However, he has already rejected both types of causation.

If suffering were not caused by oneself or another, then according to the Buddha it would "arise one top of another" (adhiccasamuppanna). Such arising is contrary to "arising by moving towards or depending upon another" (paticcasamuppanna). This implies arising without any causal connection. Hence, adhiccasamuppanna becomes a synonym for ahetuka (cause-less). For Nagarjuna, there is no such uncaused suffering.

Kārikā XII.10

न केवलं हि दुःखस्य चातुर्विध्यं न विद्यते।
बाह्यानामपि भावानां चातुर्विध्यं न विद्यते॥१०॥

na kevalaṃ hi duḥkhasya cāturvidhyaṃ na vidyate |
bāhyānām api bhāvānāṃ cāturvidhyaṃ na vidyate ||10||

非但說於苦 四種義不成
一切外萬物 四義亦不成

fēi dàn shuì yū;yú;wū kǔ sì zhǒng yì bù chéng
yī qiè wài wàn wù sì yì yì bù chéng

|སྡུག་བསྔལ་འབའ་ཞིག་རྣམ་པ་བཞི||ཡོད་མ་ཡིན་པར་མ་ཟད་ཀྱི|
|ཕྱི་རོལ་དངོས་པོ་དག་ལ་ཡང་||རྣམ་པ་བཞི་པོ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན||

| sdug bsṅal 'ba' źig rnam pa bźi | | yod ma yin par ma zad kyi |
| phyi rol dṅos po dag la yaṅ | | rnam pa bźi po yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - Not only is the four-fold causal view of suffering impossible but the same is not possible with respect to the external elements of being.

JONES (Skt):
[10] Not only are the four modes listed in verse 1not found for suffering. they are not found for entities in general either.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
It is not that the fourfold theory applied exclusively to suffering is not evident. The fourfold theory pertaining to other existents too is not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, not only does the fourfold account of suffering not occur,
but the fourfold account of the downfall of beings also does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. Some special condition, which is peculiarly individual, does not belong to Pain,
The four kinds of recognition, that is, life, aging, disease, and death, are difficult to realize.
And even though what are existents out of doors, are also existence,
The four kinds of recognition, that is, life, aging, disease, and death, are difficult to realize.

STRENG (Skt):
10. Not only are the four causal interpretations not possible in respect to sorrow (dukkha), but also none of the four causal interpretations is possible even in respect to external things (bhava).

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XII.10 Not only does suffering not exist in any of the four possible ways described, but no other external entity exists in these ways either.

BOCKING (Ch):
12v10 It is not only in the explanation of suffering
That these four ways of thinking cannot be established,
But also in regard to all external things
These four ideas cannot be established.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Not only does anguish alone not have the four aspects, external things too do not have the four aspects.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Not only does suffering
Not exist in any of these four ways,
External entities as well
Do not exist in any of the four ways. [XII.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. Not only does suffering not exist
In any of the fourfold ways:
No external entity exists
In any of the fourfold ways.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. Not only does suffering not exist
In any of the fourfold ways:
No external entity exists
In any of the fourfold ways.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
That which is only suffering does not arise
From any of the four extremes, and not only that,
All outer phenomena do not arise
From any of the four extremes either. (10)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
12.10 Not only are these four ways of explaining the cause of dukkha unsound, causal explanations for the existence of any mind object are equally unsound.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

12/10 Although it is stated in the Buddha's teaching that the five receptive skandhas constitute suffering, there are non- Buddhists who say that suffering is the reception of suffering. For this reason he says that it is not only in the explanation of suffering that the four kinds of ideas cannot be established, but they cannot be established for any external objects including earth, water, mountains, trees and so on or any of the dharmas.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Inada's explanation that these are the "four-fold possible views" (caturvidhyam) () seems to leave no room for a fifth view which both the Buddha (in his discourse to Kassapa) and Nagarjuna (at XII.2) were very clearly and unequivocally upholding, namely, "dependent arising of suffering." Hence his conclusion that these four possible views can equally be applied to demonstrate the impossibility of asserting elements of the external world. On the contrary, Nagarjuna (as well as the Buddha) were merely criticizing the futility of adopting these four particular views in explaining suffering as well as other elements in the world of experience. Indeed, Nagarjuna was clearly aware of the fact that these four are not the only views explicating the causation of suffering. Hence his statement in the very first verse in this chapter, "Some assert" (eke icchanti), which means that it is not everyone that asserts such theories.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. The fourfold analysis is, of course, that in terms of the tetralemma of causation. And Nāgārjuna is simply emphasizing that this refutation of the existence of inherently existing suffering is perfectly general. No entity can arise from itself, from another, from both, or from a noncause. This was the burden of the first chapter. We must, of course, recall that this is not a refutation of the existence of the suffering we all experience and wish to avoid. Rather it is a demonstration of its emptiness of inherent existence. For just as the analysis in Chapter I has provided the key to dismissing the inherent existence of suffering, the positive side of that same analysis can be used to recover its conventional existence. If by suffering we mean something dependently arisen, impermanent, and conventional, existing only as imputed and only in relation to its empty subjects, there is plenty of suffering to go around. But moreover, not only is the existence of suffering rendered comprehensible on this analysis, but so is the possibility of the alleviation of suffering. For if the proponent of the inherent existence of suffering were correct, while it might seem that suffering would then have a more solid status than that vouchsafed it by Nāgārjuna's analysis in terms of emptiness, that very substantial existence and hence independence of other conditions would make its alleviation impossible. For if it exists independently, then there are no conditions in the absence of which it fails to exist. So Nāgārjuna's analysis not only makes good sense of the first truth that of suffering - and by implication of the second - that of the cause of suffering - but also opens the door for an analysis of the third and fourth truths - those of cessation and of the means to cessation.

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Chapter XIII

संस्कारपरीक्षा त्रयोदशमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀行品第十三(九偈)

།འདུ་བྱེད་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་གསུམ་པ་འོ།།

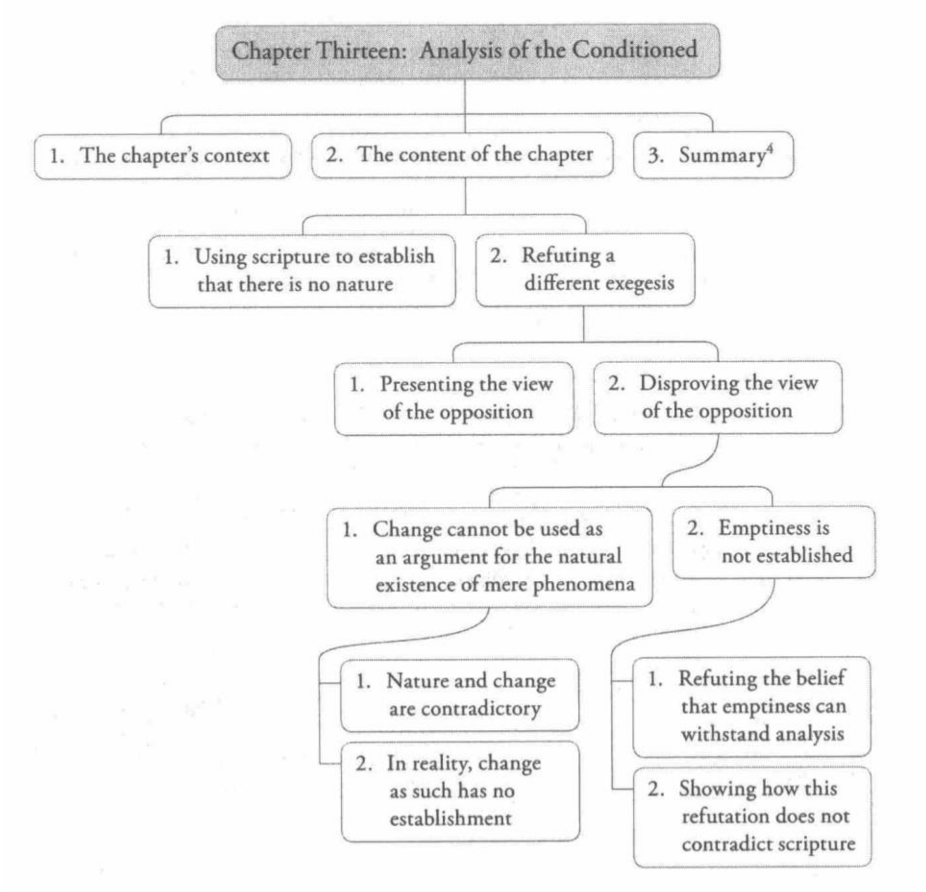
saṃskāraparīkṣā nāma trayodaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XIII: Examination of Compounded Phenomena

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter XIII

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We have now completed the first part of the section on the distinct presentation of the selflessness of the person and the selflessness of phenomena—that discussing the selflessness of the person. **[250: 4]** We now begin the second part of that section, the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of things and the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of things. This chapter is the first of those two parts.

EXPLANATION:

This section has three parts: the explanation of essencelessness through treatises renowned to others, rebutting the refutations claiming that these explanations are not tenable, and refutation of the claim that these treatises have different meanings.

SUMMARY:

The sense in which that which is false is false is that although they appear to do so, things do not exist through their own characteristics. Since all agents and actions are tenable in this sense, **[262]** "false" should not to be taken to mean *empty of the phenomena of agent and action*. Impermanence and transformation should be understood in the same way. Emptiness, that is, the negation of the true existence of that which is false, does not truly exist. However, it is not the case that it is nonexistent. Those who aspire to liberation must ascertain perfectly the objects of the path on which one should concentrate in meditation in order to eliminate the obscurations.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XIII - Examination of Mental Conformation

At the outset, Nagarjuna strikes at the heart of the matter by saying that the Buddha condemned all conceptions arising from false discrimination of realities. This is, in fact, attributed to the nature of samskara or mental conformation. The discussion then goes into the conceptions of self-nature (svabhava) and varying nature, and their possible relationship. In neither case, however, does the argument prove any of their respective existences. Youth does not age in the strict sense and milk does not turn into butter In other words, in the true Zen manner, youth is youth, age is age, milk is milk, and butter is butter. There is no strict conversion from one to the other. Thus the discussion inevitably arrives at the nature of thusness, sunyata, as the only true view of existence, but Nagarjuna is quick to caution that sunyata. is not subject to conceptualization.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

13. *Dispositions* (*samskara*). The Buddha never claimed that all phenomena (*dharmah*) lead to suffering (*duhkha*). For him, all dispositions (*samskarah*) or everything conditioned by dispositions (*samskrta*) are subject to suffering or are unsatisfactory.85 Thus, after explaining the conception of suffering, Nagarjuna deems it necessary to discuss the conception of dispositions (*samskara*). Chapter XIII is devoted to this question.

The non-absolutist standpoint of early Buddhism is clearly manifest in the Buddha's rejection of the sharp dichotomy between truth (*satya*) and falsehood (*asatya*) recognized in the Indian philsophical tradition. Instead of the true/false dichotomy, the Buddha spoke of truth (*sacca* = *satya*) and confusion (*musa* = *mrsa*),86 indicating thereby that he was not advocating a notion of absolute or ultimate truth, comparable to the Atman/Brahman of the pre-Buddhist traditions. Nagarjuna was faithfully following the Buddha and the early Buddhists when he began his analysis of "dispositions" (*samskara*) with a reference to this idea of "confusion" (*mrsa*). The relationship between "dispositions" and "confusion" needs to be carefully examined before any attempt to understand the Buddha's as well as Nagarjuna's disquisition on the nature of dispositions.

A careful reading of the early discourses will reveal that dispositions are an inalienable part of the human personality. In the case of an ordinary unenlightened person, they are not eliminated even at death. Hence the possibility of his being reborn. However, they are completely eliminated in the *tathagata* when he attains *parinirvana,* that is, when he dies. Yet, there is no mention of the dispositions being *completely* eliminated in the enlightened one (*buddha, tathagata*) while he is still alive. What is achieved with the attainment of freedom (*nirvana*) is the "appeasement of dispositions" (*samskaropasama*). This very subtle distinction will become extremely important when we try to understand Nagarjuna's treatment of "dispositions" (*samskara*) in the present chapter.

William James explains human knowledge and understanding in the following manner: "The intellectual life of man consists almost wholly in his substitution of a conceptual order for the perceptual order in which his experience originally comes."87 Elaborating upon this statement, he says:

The substitution of concepts and their connections, of a whole conceptual order, in short, for the immediate perceptual flow, thus widens enormously our mental panorama. Had we no concepts we should live simply "getting" each successive moment of experience, as the sessile sea-anemone on its rock receives whatever nourishment the wash of the waves may bring. With concepts we go in quest of the absent, meet the remote, actively turn this way or that, bend our experience, and make it tell us wither it is bound. We change its order, run it back-wards, bring far bits together and separate near bits, jump about over its surface instead of ploughing through its continuity, string its stems on as many diagrams as our mind can frame.

Unless we attribute "omniscience" (*sarvajnata*) to the Buddha, and that is knowledge of everything that has occurred, is ocurring and will occur in this world, a knowledge he refused to claim for himself,88 we may end up turning him into a "sessile sea-anemone," if we are to deny him the need to *conceptualize.* In this process of conceptualizing, in "putting things together" (which is the literal meaning of *samskara*), our interests play a dominant role. Interests are easily converted to likes and dislikes, and these latter are causes of most human suffering. We are, therefore, in a double-bind. We need the *samskaras* in order to live. On the contrary, they can contribute to most of our suffering (*duhkha*). Realizing this fact, the Buddha emphasized the need to pacify our dispositions rather than eliminate them completely. Thus, on the basis of experience we come to know that things are "dependently arisen" (*pratityasamutpanna*) and then adopt the view that in the dim past this may have been the case and that in the future it may be the case.

In the eyes of the Buddha this represents a more comprehensive and, therefore, a more appropriate view

(*samyag-drsti*) rather than the more limited views: (1) which says: "Suffering is self-caused" (*svayamkrtam*), which is the result of our believing in a self *(atman*) to the exclusion of every other factor, and (2) which says: "Suffering is caused by another" (*duhkham parakrtam*), which is, in some sense, the result of our reluctance to admit our own responsibility. In both cases, our likes and dislikes have dominated our dispositions, and hence our perspectives push us in two different directions. Such dispositions, dominated by our likes and dislikes, eventually mislead us regarding many of our experiences and thereby contribute to our suffering and frustrations. In the Buddha's view, therefore, the cessation of suffering is synonymous with "nongrasping" after views89 which comes about as a result of the appeasement of dispositions.90 Cessation of suffering is *not* synonymous with not having views or not having dispositions. Rather, it is synonymous with the appeasement of dispositions.

It is very appropriate, therefore, that Nagarjuna decided to write a chapter on the dispositions (*samskara*) after his analysis of suffering (*duhkha*). However, what is more important is that this chapter is entirely devoted to an examination of "views" (*drsti*) as well as of the condition that give rise to "wrong-" or "confused views" (*mithya drsti*), namely, confusion (*mrsa*). In fact, the term *samskara* occurs in the first verse *only*.

The entire chapter is devoted to an examination of the notions of the "existent" (*bhava*), the "non-existent" (*abhava*), "self-nature" (*svabhava*), etc. and the manner in which these could be avoided by adopting the conception of "emptiness" (*sunyata*), without allowing that notion of emptiness to be an obsession. Hence his conclusion: "The Victorious Ones have announced that emptiness is the relinquishing of all views. Those who are possessed of the view of emptiness are said to be incorrigible."

We have rendered the term *nihsarana* occurring in the above verse as "relinquishing" in order to bring out the specific meaning that Nagarjuna probably had in mind. Many interpreters of Nagarjuna have explained "emptiness" (*sunyata*) as a "provisional view," thereby implying that the ultimate truth is beyond conceptualization.91 The foregoing analysis of the Buddha's as well as Nagarjuna's thoughts would mean that they indeed did not recognize a "non-conceptual truth or reality." For them, there is no way in which a "truth" could be understood non-conceptually, because, as mentioned earlier, truth in its most comprehensieve sense pertains to statements and thus involves conceptualization. However, conceptualizations can be comprehensive and therefore right (*samyak*), or limited and confused and therefore wrong (*mithya*), and these depend upon the amount of prejudice that has gone into the formulation of the concepts. Thus, "emptiness" is a "view," a view not without identification, but which is identified with "the empty" (*idam sunyam*). It is a view that helps the individual to attain freedom from views and upholding it as the absolute or ultimate truth without any reference to "the empty" would be the last thing either the Buddha or Nagarjuna would advocate.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Change

[The first three stanzas are included in a footnote and left out of the main body of the text]

[Conditions are unreal
Because they deceive you
Therefore they are empty.

Things have no essence
Because they change into other things
Emptiness is their essence.

Without an essence--
Whose nature would it be
To change into anything else?]

If something has an essence –
How can it ever change
Into anything else?

A thing doesn't change into something else –
Youth does not age,
Age does not age.

If something changed into something else –
Milk would be butter
Or butter would not be milk.

Were there a trace of something,
There would be a trace of emptiness.
Were there no trace of anything,
There would be no trace of emptiness.

Buddhas say emptiness
Is relinquishing opinions.
Believers in emptiness
Are incurable.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

13. What is Compounded

What is compounded *(samskrita)* is anything made of parts. It can be any sort of composite, not just something mechanically assembled. In early Buddhism, all compounded things are considered impermanent. The question arose for the Abhidharmists of whether the component parts - the *dharmas* - were also impermanent or were in fact permanent.

Notice in the first verse that Nagarjuna states that "All phenomena that are put together are characterized by deception and thus they all are false." Everything in the "conventional world" is compounded - so, is everything in the conventional world false? Are there no "conventional truths"? Since Nagarjuna is connecting falsity with *deception* here, he probably means that the conventional perception that what is compounded as *distinct, self-existent entities* is the deception and thus only that conventional claims about self-existent realities are false from the ultimate point of view.

Verse 3 is a succinct statement of Madhyamaka empirical and metaphysical claims: "Since we see change, all entities lack self-existence. Without self-existence, no entity can exist - thus the emptiness of all entities." Nothing is *real* since anything "real" is self-existent and so all entities are empty. The self-existent has an "essence" or "own-nature" that cannot change, for if it changed it would not have that nature any more.

There also is the distinction here between "real entities" (self-existent, permanent, eternal, changeless) and "entities" in the conventional world (dependent, impermanent, and constantly changing). If there is no self-existence, there is no real thing that could change; and if there is self-existence, nothing could change (v. 4). To the opponent, there must be something *real* for any change to occur. But to Nagarjuna, anything real cannot change (vv. 5-6) - it cannot retain its nature and yet be different at the same time. Thus, either point of view, a "young man" does not grow old (v. 5): from the point of view of self-existence metaphysics, no *real* (se~ *existent) entity* ever changes and so the young man cannot grow old; from the point of view of emptiness metaphysics, there is no *real change* – change itself is not a self is not a self-existent reality, nor are any real entities to change. In verse 7, emptiness as *an entity* is denied. There is nothing real in the world that we could point to and call "emptiness." It is not a self-existent entity, nor do any entities without self-existence have "emptiness" as a *property*. Nor would real entities have emptiness as a property – to be real, they would have to have self-existence. This leads to the denial of all views *(drishtis)* in verse 8. (This is important for understanding v. 27.30: Nagarjuna always connects the nature of a "view" to the idea of the metaphysics of self-existence.) To hold "emptiness" as a view is to treat it as a self-existent entity, and anyone who does this is "incurable *(asadhyan).*"

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

13

An Examination of the Precise Nature of Reality

In the sutras, the Buddha said:

Bhikshus, there is only one authentic undeceiving reality, and that is the reality of nirvana.
All composite things are deceptive and false.

READING THIS TEACHING, we come to understand the importance of knowing the difference between apparent reality and genuine reality, between the way things appear and the way they really are. It is the case that even though things have no inherent nature because they do not arise from any of the four extremes, they still appear to arise to ordinary beings who, with their eyes of wisdom clouded by the cataracts of ignorance, believe this arising to be real. In this way, ordinary beings are like people who are tricked by a magician's illusions into thinking that the illusory animals that the magician has conjured up are real. To use a modern example, they are like children watching a movie, who get frightened by the fierce lions and tigers they see on the screen because they do not know that the movie is not real.

On the other hand, noble buddhas and bodhisattvas who have directly realized the true nature of reality know that the appearances of phenomena arising, abiding, and ceasing are just mere appearances that have no inherent nature. They are like the adults watching the movie, who reassure the children that nothing on the screen can actually hurt them in any way because none of it is real. By teaching the children in this way, the adults impart to the children the knowledge they need so that they too can be unafraid. This is a good analogy for what the buddhas and bodhisattvas do for ordinary individuals who take up the path of Dharma.

Therefore, even though it is the case that all phenomena are of the nature of emptiness, it is nevertheless important for us to be able to distinguish between the way of appearance and the way of reality, because it is as a result of not knowing the way of reality that we ordinary beings mistakenly think that appearances are real, and that is what causes all our problems.

The dream is also a good example to refer to here. The difference between how we regard appearances when we know we are dreaming and how we regard them when we do not is similar to the difference between the way noble beings

who have realized emptiness, and ordinary beings who have not done so, relate to the appearances they perceive.

As the glorious Chandrakirti states in his text Entering the Middle Way:

There are two ways of seeing every thing,
The perfect way and the false way,
So each and every thing that can ever be found
Holds two natures within.

And what does perfect seeing see?
It sees the suchness of all things.
And false seeing sees what appears, no more—
This is what the perfect Buddha said.

The Mahayana practice of the samadhi that sees everything to be like an illusion, the Vajrayana illusory body practice, and the Dzogchen practices of korde rushin all have as their purpose the dissolution of thoughts that cling to appearances as being real (fn Dzogchen, like Mahamudra, is a set of teachings that describes the true nature of reality and how to meditate upon it. *Korde rushin* is one of the Dzogchen practices.).

That is a description of the first reason Nagarjuna composed this chapter: to help us to distinguish between the mode of appearance and the mode of genuine reality, and thereby to stop thinking that they are the same thing—to stop mistaking the way things appear for the way things really are.

Even while accepting this distinction, however, there were those who claimed that apparent reality must have some true existence to it because genuine reality truly exists as "authentic undeceiving reality," as the Buddha taught. If there is genuine reality, they claimed, if there is emptiness that is the nature of apparent phenomena, then those apparent phenomena that have that emptiness as their nature must also exist. Otherwise, emptiness would have nothing to be the nature of, and therefore it could not exist either. This was their argument.

Therefore, the second reason Nagarjuna composed this chapter was to examine emptiness and demonstrate that in fact it does not truly exist after all. This effectively refutes the claim that apparent things truly exist because emptiness truly exists.

Nagarjuna takes up the analysis of emptiness in verse seven:

If there were the slightest thing not empty,
There would be that much emptiness existent.
Since, however, there is not the slightest thing not empty,
How could emptiness exist?

We can put this verse in the form of a logical reasoning in the following way: Given the true nature of reality, emptiness does not exist anywhere within it, because if there were something that was not empty, there would be that much emptiness as well, but in fact there is not the slightest thing that is not empty. Since there is not the slightest thing not empty, there can be no emptiness either, because emptiness can exist only in dependence upon there being something that is not empty, and something that is not empty can only exist if there is emptiness. These two notions of empty and not empty exist only in dependence upon each other, which means that neither one of them truly exists. Therefore, neither the conceptual fabrication of empty nor that of not empty applies to genuine reality. Therefore, in order to realize the nature of essential reality beyond conceptual fabrication, we must leave behind even our notion of emptiness. This will also be explained in chapter 22, "An Examination of the Tathagatha.

Supplemental Commentary

WESTERHOFF (Chapter 9)

9

Language

In contrast to such topics as causation, motion, the self, and the theory of knowledge, language is not given much explicit discussion in Nāgārjuna's works. This does not mean that such matters were not important to Nāgārjuna but merely that his extant writings do not contain an extended connected discussion of the impact of his theory of emptiness on our view of language. Nevertheless it is possible to extract some of Nāgārjuna's views on this philosophically highly interesting issue from remarks found at different places in his works.

9.1. Nāgārjuna's View of Language and the "No-Thesis" View

A good starting point for the discussion of Nāgārjuna's conception of how the theory of emptiness affects our view of language is his so-called no-thesis view. This is without a doubt one of the most immediately puzzling philosophical features of Nāgārjuna's thought and is also largely responsible for ascribing to him either sceptical or mystical leanings (or indeed both). The *locus classicus* for this view is found in verse 29 of the VV:

If I had some thesis the defect [just mentioned] would as a consequence attach to me. But I have no thesis, so this defect is not applicable to me.[1]

That this absence of a thesis is to be regarded as a positive feature is stressed in YS. 50, where Nāgārjuna remarks about the Buddhas:

For these great beings there is no position, no dispute. How could there be another's [opposing] position for those who have no position?[2]

Now it is important to observe that when these passages are considered in isolation, it is very hard to make any coherent sense of them, for even if we assume that the Buddhas do not hold any philosophical position anymore (having perhaps passed beyond all conceptual thinking), how are we to make sense of the first quotation which, in the middle of a work full of philosophical theses, claims that there is no such thesis asserted at all?

In fact this first statement is even more difficult to interpret than the famous last sentence of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, which is preceded by the equally famous ladder-metaphor.[3] Although Wittgenstein here denies that his preceding statements are of anything but instrumental value, claims that they turn out to be nonsensical *after* they have fulfilled their instrumental role, and that there is something outside of the grasp of these statements, at least he does not deny making any statements at all!

9.2. VV 29 in Context

In order to get a clearer understanding of what these passages might mean, it is important to consider them in the argumentative context in which they occur. The VV, which contains the first passage given above, is a work of seventy verses, accompanied by Nāgārjuna's autocommentary. As its title—which translates as "The Dispeller of Objections"—suggests, its main aim is to answer objections which had been advanced concerning Nāgārjuna's theses. Its being of a rather technical and specific nature makes it plausible to assume that the VV was written later than his main work, the MMK, and was meant to deal with particular problems arising from the arguments set out there.[4] The first twenty verses and their commentaries contain criticisms of Nāgārjuna's

1. *yadi kācana pratijñā syān me tata eṣa me bhaved doṣah. / nāsti ca mama pratijñā tasmān naivāsti me doṣah.* .

2. *che ba'i bdag nyid can de dag / rnams la phyogs med rtsod pa med / gang rnams la ni phyogs med pa / de la gzhan phyogs ga la yod*.

3. 6.54 My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually realizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)[. . .] 7. Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.

4. Mabbett (1996: 306–307); Bhattacharya (1999: 124).

position, which are answered in the remaining verses and their commentaries. Verse 29, given above, specifically addresses the problem raised by the opponent in verse 4.

The principal point the opponent makes at the beginning of the VV concerns the status of Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness. The opponent argues that Nāgārjuna faces a dilemma whose horns are *inconsistency* and *impotence*. If he assumes his claim not to be empty, he has contradicted his own thesis of universal emptiness (because there is now at least one thing that is not empty). If, on the other hand, Nāgārjuna takes his own claim to be empty too, the opponent argues, this claim is then unable to deny the existence of independently existing phenomena that the opponent asserts. As becomes clear later in verse 22, Nāgārjuna accepts the second horn of the dilemma: everything is empty, and his claim that everything is empty is empty too. As he stresses in the next verse, this reasoning, however, does not entail that the claim could not carry out its philosophical function. A key can open a door in a film even though it is only a key in the film, not a real key.[5] Verse 4 now considers a specific comeback Nāgārjuna could make in reply to the difficulty arising from accepting this second alternative, the charge of the argumentational impotence of his claim of universal emptiness. Nāgārjuna could argue that if universal emptiness renders his own claim impotent, the opponent's claims, being also subsumed under the universal statement of everything being empty, are similarly impotent and therefore cannot act as a refutation of Nāgārjuna's claim either. But as the opponent is quick to point out, this thinking involves a blatant *petitio principii*: only if we already accept that everything is empty will the opponent's arguments be rendered empty and impotent. But this is exactly the thesis the opponent denies. For him at least, some things are not empty, and in particular his own statements are not subject to Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness. The difficulty the opponent raised is one that arises because of the specific character (*lakṣaṇa*) of Nāgārjuna's system, namely the claim that everything is empty. It does not apply to someone who does not make that assumption.

Verse 29 then is made in reply to this supposed counterargument and its rejection as a *petitio*. There Nāgārjuna claims that the particular defect (of his thesis of universal emptiness rendering his own philosophical assertions impotent) would indeed apply *if he had any position*. But given that he has no position, the difficulty therefore does not apply to him.

Now it will strike the reader that this is a rather curious reply to make. It is evident that the opponent's criticisms formulated in verse 4 as well as in the preceding verses rest on a misunderstanding of the central term "emptiness." What exactly this misunderstanding amounts to is less clear. In fact the above set of arguments would make sense if we assumed that the opponent understood "empty" to mean "false," or "meaningless," or even "nonexistent."[6] But as a reply to a criticism based on misunderstanding of this kind Nāgārjuna's reply in verse 29 seems a little extreme, given that it would have been perfectly sufficient and far less controversial for him to point out that emptiness entailed neither falsity nor meaninglessness nor non-existence and that he thereby could assert that his claims both are empty *and* simultaneously are able to refute the opponent's objections (in fact he makes exactly these points in verses 21 and 22). Even if we agree with Mabbett that

> it may be the case that the objection addressed by a given verse has already been essentially refuted, but in turning to each new objection Nāgārjuna seeks to make a fresh rebuttal in order to administer the *coup de grâce*[7]

Nāgārjuna here seems to use a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Why deny holding any proposition whatsoever if it would have been perfectly sufficient to point out that since "empty" does not mean "non-existent," it is completely unproblematic to claim that one's own position is as empty as everything else?

We can distinguish at least three different ways in which Nāgārjuna's crucial statement that he has no position can be interpreted. I will refer to these as the *semantic*, *argumentational*, and *transcendent* interpretations. According to the *semantic* interpretation Nāgārjuna does not claim to hold no thesis whatsoever, but claims only to accept no statements that are taken to have a particular semantics. If we follow the *argumentational* interpretation, Nāgārjuna makes a claim about how one should proceed in debates, namely by always refuting

5. As Nāgārjuna points out in MMK 1:10, this is in fact a necessary condition for its being able to perform its function: only a cinematic key could open a cinematic door, a real key could not. See also the commentary on this verse in Garfield (1995: 119).

6. Indeed we might think that the argumentative context makes it most likely that the opponent misunderstands "empty" as "nonexistent." In this case the problem that nonexistent statements cannot really refute anything seems to be most pressing. But in the case of the other two alternatives other problems become more serious. If Nāgārjuna meant "meaningless" when he said "empty," his claim that everything is empty would obviously just be false, given that we perfectly well understand the claim he makes (in the same way as somebody saying "all statements, including this one, are not grammatically well formed" would be uttering a falsehood). If, however, "empty" meant "false," Nāgārjuna's thesis of universal emptiness would reduce to the liar paradox and there is no good textual evidence that *this* is the problem the opponent had in mind. On this last point compare also the discussion in Mabbett (1996) and Sagal (1992).

7. (1996: 307).

opponents via *reductio* arguments, without ever adopting any thesis oneself. The *transcendent* interpretation finally reads Nāgārjuna's statement as the assertion of the existence of an inexpressible reality beyond concepts and language.

All three of these interpretations have historical predecessors in the commentarial tradition. The semantic and argumentational interpretation can be found in works of the dGe lugs tradition, in particular those of Tsong kha pa[8] and mKhas grub rje,[9] while a variety of views which can all be regarded as some kind of transcendental interpretation can be found in the writings of scholars like rNgog blo ldan shes rab,[10] Go rams pa,[11] and dGe 'dun chos 'phel.[12] The following discussion will be restricted to an exposition of the semantic interpretation, primarily because this appears to give us the clearest understanding of the role of verse 29 in the context of Nāgārjuna's arguments.

The argumentational and transcendent interpretations tend to use Nāgārjuna's denial of a thesis as a textual peg on which to hang an argument concerned with quite different matters from those dealt with in the VV. Tsong kha pa, for example, refers to this verse in the context of expounding the distinction between Svātantrikas and Prāsaṇgikas; Sa skya Pandita[13] offers the transcendent interpretation in the context of a debating manual (advising the reader on how to debate with somebody who does not put forward a position); dGe 'dun chos 'phel's work, despite its title, is not a study of Nāgārjuna's thought in particular, but is concerned mainly with criticizing the then prevalent dGe lugs interpretation of Madhyamaka philosophy more generally.

This is not to say, of course, that the argumentational and transcendent interpretations are for this reason deficient or lacking in interest within the context in which they are presented. However, it is important to be aware that these contexts were not Nāgārjuna's context. There is certainly no reason for suspicion toward later Indian or indeed non-Indian works as not giving a valid interpretation of Nāgārjuna's thoughts. Nevertheless, the most interesting of these for the present purpose of a philosophical analysis of Nāgārjuna's thoughts are those that allow us to understand passages from his works in their argumentative context, rather than using them as a starting point for presenting their own ideas on a particular topic.

8. Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (2000–2004: III:230, 236–249).

9. Ruegg (2000: 173–187).

10. See Ruegg (2000: 32–33, n. 59).

11. See Ruegg (2000: 194–195, n. 135).

12. See Lopez (1994). A translation of dGe 'dun chos 'phel's *Klu grub dgongs rgyan* is in Lopez (2005).

13. In his *mKhas pa rnams 'jug pa'i sgo*, III: 37–39. See Jackson (1987: vol. 1, 271) for the Tibetan text, volume 2, 341–342 for an English translation. A summary with comments is in Ruegg (2000: 169–171).

9.3. The Semantic Interpretation

If we consider the major dGe lugs pa commentaries on verse 29 it becomes evident that these usually regard Nāgārjuna's statement as elliptical. What Nāgārjuna *really* means when saying that he has no position, these commentaries claim, is that he has no positions that are non-empty.[14]

The key to understanding the point made in these commentaries lies of course in a precise understanding of what it means for a position or statement to be empty. An object is empty if it does not exist from its own side and is therefore dependent on other objects, so that its existence is not grounded in its "own-nature" (*svabhāva, rang bzhin*). The Buddhist commentarial tradition considers a variety of dependence relations in which objects stand and which prevent them from existing in a non-empty way. These dependence relations include causal dependence, dependence of a whole on its parts, as well as dependence on a cognizing subject.[15] While in the case of certain objects their independent existence seems at least a *prima facie* plausibility which the Mādhyamika then attempts to refute by appropriate arguments, the emptiness of statements appears to be entirely uncontroversial. Material objects might be considered to exist in causal and mereological dependence, but independent of a cognizing subject; abstract objects, platonistically conceived, will be assumed to be independent in all three ways. Statements, however, can hardly be taken to "exist from their own side" in any of the three senses.

As even Nāgārjuna's opponent affirms in VV 1, *token*[16] utterances are events that arise in dependence on causes and conditions like all other events. When we consider utterances as *types*, it is equally clear that, assuming a compositional semantics, these are mereologically dependent on their parts, since the meaning of the sentence type is a function of the meanings of its constituents or parts. Finally, considering a constituent like the expression "red," we realize that its referring to the color red is no property the word "red" has independent of everything else: the connection of this particular phonetic or typographic object with the property is a convention that holds for speakers of English; for speakers of French the same property is connected (by a different set of conventions) with "rouge," for speakers of Tibetan with "dmar po," and so forth. That

14. "It is not being said that the Mādhyamika has no theses; he merely has not theses that inherently exist." Hopkins (1983: 471). The same point is made in mKhas grub rje's commentary on this passage; see Ruegg (2000: 179).

15. See, e.g., Gyatso (2005: 66–69).

16. A particular utterance of a sentence is a sentence-token, what is expressed by several such utterances that say the same thing is a sentence-type.

"red" refers to the color red depends on a complex framework of conventions connecting a community of cognizing subjects that share a language. Unless we mistakenly consider "empty" to mean "false" or "meaningless" or "nonexistent," the claim that utterances conceived of as either tokens or types are *not* empty seems to be a position it is hard to make sense of.

Despite the *prima facie* strangeness of their claims, theories of the nonemptiness of language have found their defenders. Perhaps the most extreme example is the view of language defended by the Mīm. āmsākas.[17] A primary motivation of the Mīm. āmsā theory of language was to provide a justification of the authoritative status of the Vedas. As opposed to the Naiyāyikas, who justify the Vedas by their divine authorship, the Mīm. āmsākas regard them as authorless (*apauruṣeya*). The elements of the Vedic language are assumed to exist eternally, without the necessity of a speaker. Any particular human utterance of course depends on a phonetic or typographical instantiation of a piece of language, but the types thus instantiated exist *ante rem*, without depending on the tokens instantiating them. The referents of expressions, which the Mīm. āmsākas take to be eternal and unchanging universals, are related to these expressions via a set of objective and necessary relations.[18]

While the Mīm. āmsā view of language attracted plenty of criticism from the Buddhist side (centred around Dignāgas *apoha* theory),[19] there is no good evidence that this is the view Nāgārjuna's opponent in the VV wants to defend.[20]

There is, however, some interesting evidence that at least some of Nāgārjuna's Indian commentators saw him as opposed to similar conceptions of language. When commenting on MMK 2:8 in his *Prajñāpradīpa*, Bhāviveka raises the question why the verbal root *gam*, "to go," is used in its *ātmanepada* form "*gacchate*" rather than being conjugated in the usual *parasmaipada* manner as a "*gacchati*."[21] Bhāviveka lists a variety of quotations from Indian grammarians illustrating the perils of wrong grammar. When the god Tvaṣṭr created a serpent to destroy Indra, he exclaimed *indraśatrur vardhasva*, intending to say "May you prosper, destroyer of Indra!" Since he intended the compound to be a *tatpuruṣa*, it should have been stressed on the ultimate syllable. Unfortunately Tvaṣṭr stressed it on the first syllable, turning it into a *bahuvrīhi* meaning "having Indra as a destroyer." The words did what they meant rather than what Tvaṣṭr intended them to mean, and Indra destroyed the snake, not the other way round.[22] Bhāviveka then continues to observe that Nāgārjuna's irregular use of *gacchate* not only was intentional, but served a philosophical purpose. By demonstrating that no disaster would strike from an irregular use of grammar, Nāgārjuna was aiming to convince his opponents to give up their attachment to mere words, together with the assumption that there was a substantial nature (*svarūpa*) of words which determined that they could appear only in certain grammatical forms.[23]

Nevertheless, for the purposes of interpreting the VV it makes better systematic sense to ascribe a different (and less extreme) theory than that to Nāgārjuna's opponent. According to this theory, whether a statement is empty or not does not depend on the mind-independent existence of language in some Platonic heaven but on the *semantics* we employ when interpreting the statement. Even if we accept that the link between "red" and the property of redness is conventional, this fact does not imply that we also think that the property of redness only has conventional existence as well. It can still be a property that exists in the world independent on human conventions and intentions. Moreover, even if the linkage of *particular words* to their referents should prove to be conventional, the linkage of entire sentences to the world might not be. For example we might suppose that the statement "The apple is red" is linked to the state of affairs it refers to by a relation of structural similarity, by their sharing of a common logical form, which in turn is not a product of convention. Once we have linked up the simple signs of our language with the simple objects in the world, we then do not need a *further* set of conventions to link up the complex signs (the sentences) with the complex objects (facts or states of affairs), in the same way as once we have settled by convention how the different chessmen are to move we do not have to bring in further conventions to decide whether a particular distribution of chessmen on the board will allow white to mate in five moves. This can be decided just by reference to the initial conventions, and in the same way the truth-conditions of a sentence such as "The apple is red" can be worked out by considering the simple signs it is made up of and how these are put together in the sentence.

17. The basic text of this school is Jaimini's *Pūrva Mīm. āmsā Sūtra*. For the Mīm. āmsā theory of language, see especially the first *adhyāya*, first *pada* of this text (Jaimini [1916: 1–22]). See also D'Sa (1980: 80–82, 113–140).

18. Sharma (1960: 220–222).

19. See Dreyfus (1997: 213–215).

20. That Nāgārjuna's opponent was a Naiyāyika (as claimed by Bhattacharya [1977: 265] and Bhattacharya et al. [1978: 1]) is supported by the close connection between the VV and the NS (Meuthrath [1999]). See Bhattacharya (1999: 124) for further references.

21. Ames (1995: 309). This form is not found in any version of Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* from which the Sanskrit text of the MMK is usually extracted. Here we just read "*gacchati*" (PP 97:14, see also de Jong [1978]). Only recently some fragments of older manuscripts of the MMK independent of the *Prasannapadā* have been discovered (see Ye [2006a; 2006b]). Unfortunately the verse in question is not among them. Nevertheless, recent palaeographical research strongly suggests that "*gacchate*" is indeed the correct reading MacDonald 2007: 32–33.

22. Ames (1995: 342, n. 65). Notes 64–70 provide very useful information for identifying some of the authors Bhāviveka quotes.

23. Ames (1995: 310).

In fact both the assumptions behind this picture of the non-emptiness of statements—the assumption that there is a "ready-made world," to borrow a phrase of Putnam's, and the assumption that there is a structural link between language and the world—are extremely widespread, so widespread indeed that we might refer to them jointly as the "standard picture." This standard picture provides us with a good idea of what is meant by the notion of *svabhāva* in the context of language, as opposed to an ontological understanding of *svabhāva* in terms of substance, or a cognitive understanding in terms of a superimposition (*samāropa*) which conceptualizes objects as permanent and observerindependent. The standard picture therefore represents the third, the semantic dimension of *svabhāva* mentioned in chapter 2.

It is evident that the standard picture does not sit well with the thesis of universal emptiness. Neither the existence of a world sliced up "at the joints" into particulars and properties nor the existence of an objective structural similarity between sentences and the world would be acceptable for the Mādhyamika. A Mādhyamika-compatible semantics would deny the existence of a world differentiated objectively into different logical parts and would try to replace the structure-based picture of the language-world link by a different one, perhaps by a theory built on speaker conventions.

There is good historical evidence that the standard picture is indeed what Nāgārjuna's opponent presupposes if we take into account how closely many of the arguments in the VV engage with the NS. Garfield[24] points out:

[I]n the Nyāya-influenced logico-semantic context in which these debates [in the VV] originate the dominant view of meaningful assertion (the one that Nāgārjuna calls into question) is one that from our vantagepoint can best be characterized as a version of Fregean realism: meaningful assertions are meaningful because they denote or express independently existent properties. A proposition is the pervasion of an individual entity or groups or entities by a real universal or sequence of universals.[25]

On this understanding of the emptiness of statements we can read the opponent as claiming in VV 1 that because of Nāgārjuna's thesis of universal emptiness, the Mādhyamika cannot accept the standard semantic interpretation for his utterances. For Nāgārjuna both questions of ontology (how the world is sliced up) and of semantics (how language and the world are linked) must be settled by appeal to conventions. The opponent, on the other hand, can assume that there is a "ready-made world," as well as an objective, structural way of linking this to our language.[26] Now the opponent argues that on this picture Nāgārjuna never gets out of his system of conventions to connect his claims with the things—and *that* is the reason why his claims are unable to refute the opponent's claims, which manage to connect with the things. Nāgārjuna's arguments can no more refute the opponent than the rain in a meteorological simulation can moisten real soil.[27] Nāgārjuna's opponent thus considers the interesting case of a language in which we have two kinds of statements: some are interpreted according to the standard semantics (referring via an objective reference relation to objects that exists independently of us), some are interpreted according to Nāgārjuna's semantics (which does not make these assumptions). The opponent argues that statements of the second kind could not possibly influence the first kind. To see this point, consider a similarly structured case. Assume we recognize two kinds of norms, norms that are real, objective, "out there," and norms that are the product of human convention. (Moral realists take certain ethical norms to be of the first kind, rules for the regulation of traffic are generally considered to be of the second kind). Now it is clear that although the two kinds of norms could be in conflict, a norm of the second kind could never override one of the first kind, since the former are part of the objective normative framework of the world while the latter are only a supplement of human design.

Although he does not explicitly say so, Nāgārjuna's arguments seem to imply that he agrees this situation would indeed be problematic. If there are two kinds of statements, the latter would be as impotent compared to the former as a film would be to reality: we could not escape the burning cinema by entering the scene projected onto the wall. Nāgārjuna counters the charge of impotence by denying that there are two kinds of statements, which differ like film and reality. All statements are to be interpreted in the same way, so that their interaction is not ontologically any more problematic than the interaction of different characters in a film.[28]

Understanding the emptiness of statements as their interpretation according to a non-standard semantics, we can also give a more interesting rendering

24. Garfield (1996: 12).

25. On the relation between the VV and the Nyāya school, see Oberhammer (1963), Bhattacharya (1977) and Meuthrath (1999). For some remarks on the realist background of the Navya-Nyāya see, Ingalls (1951: 1, 33–35).

26. Another manifestation of the Naiyāyika opponent's conception of a harmonious word-world link is the view that the simple terms of our language cannot fail to refer (as is discussed in chapter 3).

27. In VV(S) 43:2–6 the opponent claims, that "A fire that does not exist cannot burn, a weapon that does not exist cannot cut, water that does not exist cannot moisten; similarly a statement that does not exist cannot deny the *svabhāva* of all things." *na hy asatāgninā śakyam. dagdhum | na hy asatā śastreṇa śakyam. chettum | na hy asatībhir adbhiḥśakyaṃkledayitum | evam asatā vacanena na śakyah. sarvabhāvasvabhāvapratiṣedhah. kartum.*

28. See particularly VV 23, 27; MMK 17:31–33.

of the argument in VV 4. Remember that there the opponent claims that Nāgārjuna might want to say:

According to this very method, a negation of negation is also impossible; so your negation of the statement negating the intrinsic nature of all things is impossible.[29]

The opponent has just claimed that because Nāgārjuna's theory entailed a nonstandard semantics, his assertions did not manage to connect with the world and were therefore meaningless. But if the opponent then sets out to refute the thesis of universal emptiness, this attempt means either that he takes it to be meaningful after all (and therefore deserving refutation) or that the statement he wants to defend (which is the negation of Nāgārjuna's claim) is meaningless as well, since plugging in the word "not" will not help to turn nonsense into sense.

The opponent could reply to this charge by pointing out the difference between internal and external negation. While it is plausible to assume that the internal negation of a nonsensical statement is nonsensical too ("the number seven is *not* yellow [but rather some other color]" is as problematic as "the number seven is yellow"), this is not the case for an external negation ("*it is not the case that* the number seven is yellow" is not just meaningful but also generally taken to be necessarily true). Nāgārjuna's opponent could then claim that his negation of the claim of universal emptiness is external only and therefore not affected by the lack of meaning in the claim it negates.[30]

It is possible that the opponent had argued like this because a distinction between the different scopes of negation, as well as between the accompanying presuppositional and nonpresuppositional readings, was made in the philosophical literature of the time.[31] It has to be noted, however, that the passage in question fails to make any direct reference to different kinds of negation being involved.[32]

A more abstract way of employing the distinction between the two kinds of negation in the opponent's reply consists in rejecting Nāgārjuna's peculiar semantics. Here the opponent points out that he does not have to accept Nāgārjuna's semantics, since it is a particular characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) of Nāgārjuna's system but nothing the opponent would be forced to take on board.[33] The opponent negates not just Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness, but the entire non-standard semantics which comes with it. If *prasajya*-negation is seen as a presupposition-cancelling negation which negates not just a proposition but also that proposition's presuppositions,[34] and if the semantics according to which a speaker wants the set of his utterances interpreted is included among these presuppositions, denying a claim together with the semantics it comes with can be regarded as an example of *prasajya*-negation.

9.4. The Specific Role of Verse 29

It is interesting to note that verse 29, which is meant to be a reply to the opponent's argument given in verse 4, does not attempt a comeback in trying to argue that the opponent's negation of Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness is somehow impossible after all. Instead Nāgārjuna addresses a difficulty (*doṣa*) arising from the "specific character" of his system which the opponent raises at the end of verse 4.

In mKhas grub rje's *sTong thun chen mo*, an influential dGe lugs commentary which deals with the interpretation of this passage,[35] this difficulty is taken to be inconsistency. If Nāgārjuna assumed that his thesis of universal emptiness was non-empty itself (*rang bzhin gyis yod pa*) and, on our interpretation, would therefore have to be supplied with a semantics according to the standard picture, his position would be inconsistent (at least until he proposed a special reason why this statement should be excepted, which Nāgārjuna does not do). But, mKhas grub rje argues, since none of Nāgārjuna's claims of universal emptiness are taken to be non-empty, the difficulty of inconsistency does not arise.[36] The same point is made by Tsong kha pa:[37]

Therefore, the issue as to having or not having theses is not an argument about whether [Nāgārjuna] has them *in general*. It is an

29. *pratiṣedhapratiṣedho 'py anenaiva kalpenānupapannah. tatra yadbhavān sarvabhāvasvabhāvapratiṣedhavacanam. pratiṣedhayati tad anupapannam iti.* VV(S) 45:16–18.

30. Garfield (1996: 12) reads the argument in this way and argues that the opponent just wants to negate Nāgārjuna's position, without asserting the contrary.

31. For present purposes we can assume a (simplifying) identification of *paryudāsa* with internal negation and of *prasajyapratiṣedha* with external negation. For further differentiation, see Ruegg (2002: n. 6, 19–24) as well as the discussion in chapter 4, section 4.1.

32. Compare also the discussion in Ruegg (2000: 117).

33. "The objection applies only to the specific character of your proposition, not to that of mine. It is you who say all things are void, not I. The initial thesis is not mine." *tava hi pratijñālakṣaṇaprāptam. na mama | bhavān bravīti śūnyāh. sarvabhāvā iti nāham | pūrvakah. paks.o na mama.* VV(S) 45:19–66:2.

34. As, e.g., in Shaw (1978: 63–64).

35. See Ruegg (2000: 173–187) for a summary and analysis of the relevant part of the commentary.

36. 150a1–3: Ruegg (2000: 179).

37. *des na dam bca' yod med ni spyir yod med rtsod pa ma yin gyi | dngos po thams cad la rang bzhin med do zhes dam bcas pa'i tshig la rang bzhin yod med rtsod pa yin pas | de 'dra ba'i dam bcas pa'i tshig de la rang bzhin yod par khas blangs na dngos po thams cad rang bzhin med par dam bcas pa dang 'gal ba'i skyon nged la yod na'ng | nged de ltar mi 'dod pas skyon de nga la med* (1985: 687:13–17); (2000–2004: III:241).

argument as to whether the words of the thesis "all things lack intrinsic nature" have intrinsic nature. [Therefore the meaning of the lines from the VV is this:] If I accepted that the words of such a thesis had an intrinsic nature, then I could be faulted for contradicting the thesis that all things lack intrinsic nature, but because I do not accept that, I cannot be faulted.

What is unsatisfactory about this interpretation is that Nāgārjuna has already made the point ascribed to him here in verse 22. There he claims that his claim of universal emptiness is also empty, and he gives reasons why he thinks it can still have argumentative force, thus avoiding the charge of impotence. Unless we assume Nāgārjuna to be unnecessarily repetitive, it is not clear why we should assume that he makes the very same point once again a couple of verses later, and also formulates it in a much more obscure manner than the first time.

It is important to note that verses 21–28, which deal with the objections raised in the first three verses of the VV, are concerned primarily with solving the dilemma of inconsistency and impotence which is faced by Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness. Verse 29, however (*pace* mKhas grub and Tsong kha pa), is not again concerned with the thesis of universal emptiness. Nāgārjuna realizes that the twin problem of inconsistency and impotence is a problem not just for his thesis of universal emptiness, but for *any other claim* he holds as well. Any other claim either will face the problem of being a counterexample to Nāgārjuna's assertion that all claims should be given a non-standard semantics, or will fail to connect with the world in the way sentences with the standard semantics do, and will therefore be meaningless. I want to argue that this is the difficulty arising from the "specific character" of Nāgārjuna's system to which the opponent refers in verse 4 and which Nāgārjuna takes up again at the beginning of verse 29. He is not interested in defending the claim (attributed to him by the opponent in verse 4) that his thesis of universal emptiness could not possibly be negated. Instead he takes up the opponent's more important point that apart from defending his claim of universal emptiness from the twin problems of inconsistency and impotence, he should better say something about the status of his *other* assertions as well. This is why he says in verse 29 that none of his other assertions should be regarded as propositions with standard semantics (*pratijñā*) either.[38]

The plausibility of this interpretation rests on there being two meaning of "thesis" (*pratijñā*) in play here, one referring to theses with standard semantics (which Nāgārjuna rejects) and one refering to theses with nonstandard semantics (which Nāgārjuna does not reject). In fact there appears to be good textual evidence that the notion of "thesis" is indeed used in two different ways in Madhyamaka literature.

38. Oetke (2003: 468–471) reconstruction of Nāgārjuna's argument results in a different reading of verse 29; he argues that here Nāgārjuna claims that for the Mādhyamika there is no thesis to be made at the absolute level (*paramārtha*)—a reading entirely consistent with Nāgārjuna's other statements (e.g., MMK 18:9).

Candrakīrti's commentary on Nāgārjuna uses one sense of thesis (*pratijñā*) to refer to statements with clearly unproblematic status; indeed some utterances by Nāgārjuna himself are regarded as theses in this way,[39] while theses in another sense are firmly rejected. We might want to refer to the first kind of theses as *propositions*, and to the second as *views*. How are we to understand the distinction between them? It has been claimed that views are theses with philosophical or metaphysical commitments[40] and, more specifically, that they postulate an independently existing entity (*bhāva*).[41] Propositions, on the other hand, do not make such commitments and are therefore philosophically unproblematic. It is important to note at this point, however, that what distinguishes a view from a proposition is not just that the former asserts the existence of objects existing by *svabhāva* while the latter does not. On this understanding the statement "Object *x* does not depend in any way on any other object" would be a view concerning *x*, while "Object *x* stands in a variety of dependence relations with other objects" would not be. Ontological commitment comes into play only at the level of semantics. Whether someone asserting that the average man has 2.4 children is committed to an object that acts as the reference of the expression "the average man" depends on the semantics given. If we interpret the statement in the way statements such as "Paul has two children" are usually interpreted, such commitment to a strange man with partial children ensues; if, on the other hand, we read it (more plausibly) as a statement about ratios between the number of men and children in a certain set, there is no such commitment.

It therefore seems to be plausible to take the distinction between views and propositions and between theses with standard and non-standard semantics as coinciding. The views the Mādhyamika rejects are theses that are interpreted by referring to a ready-made world and a structural link between this world and our language. The propositions he takes to be unproblematic, and some of which he holds himself, are theses that are given a semantics that makes neither of these two assumptions.

39. For example, MMK 1:1 in PP 13:3. See Ruegg (1983: 213–214) for further examples. Oetke (2003: 458– 459), however, argues that the distinction between two senses of *pratijñā* arises only in the later Prāsan. gika literature and should not be read back into Nāgārjuna's works.

40. Sagal (1992: 83).

41. Ruegg (1983: 213).

Some support for this semantic interpretation of the difference between the two senses of “thesis” can be gained from MMK 13:8:

The Victorious Ones have announced that emptiness is the relinquishing of all views. Those who in turn hold emptiness as a view were said to be incurable.[42]

Although Nāgārjuna does not use the word *pratijñā* for “view” but rather talks of *dṛṣṭi*, it seems sensible to treat the two terms as synonymous in this context.[43] If the difference between propositions and views just depended on what the statement asserted, statements asserting the emptiness of some phenomenon such as “each spatio-temporal object depends causally on some other object” *ex hypothesi* could not be views, contrary to what Nāgārjuna says in the verse just cited. If, however, we treat “view” as denoting a statement together with the standard semantics, this is indeed possible. For if we read “each spatio-temporal object depends causally on some other object” as asserting the existence of various objectively existing individuals in the world, linked by a relation of causation, about which we speak by exploiting an objectively obtaining structural similarity between language and the world, it would indeed be turned into a view.

That the point at issue here is a specific (and, as Nāgārjuna sees it, inappropriate) conception of semantics is supported by Candrakīrti’s commentary on this verse. Candrakīrti argues that one taking emptiness to be a view is like one who, when being told by a shopkeeper that he has nothing to sell, asks the shopkeeper to sell him that nothing. The customer (like the White King in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*) treats “nothing” like a proper name and therefore expects it to denote a particular object, as proper names do. But though this view is justified by the surface grammar of the sentence concerned, it does not lead to an understanding of what the merchant wants to say. Similarly, giving a standard semantical interpretation of statements asserting emptiness does not lead to an understanding of what Nāgārjuna wants to say.[44]

The semantic interpretation outlined above provides a good way of making sense of verse 29 within the argumentative structure of the VV and also provides us with an idea of what a Madhyamaka theory of language would look like. What Nāgārjuna means when he says that he “has no thesis” is that none of his theoretical statements (including the claim of universal emptiness) is to be interpreted according to a semantics based on the standard picture. For the Mādhyamika no assertion is to be taken to refer to a ready-made world of mindindependent objects, nor can he assume that there is a structural similarity linking word and world which is independent of human conceptual activity.

42. *śūnyatā sarvadṛṣṭīnām. proktā nih. saraṇam. jinaih. / yeṣām. tu śūnyatādṛṣṭis tān asādhyān babhāṣire*.

43. As done by Ruegg (1986: 232–233) and Mabbett (1996: 301). For more details on the relation between the two terms *pratijñā* and *dṛṣṭi*, see Ruegg (2000: 129–136).

44. This interpretation does not imply, of course, that one could hold “any position at all” as long as one gives it the required nonstandard semantics, as Galloway (1989: n. 5, 27) asserts. A statement such as “Things arise from what is other than themselves” will be regarded as false by Nāgārjuna, independent of whether it is interpreted according to the standard or the non-standard semantics.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XIII

संस्कारपरीक्षा त्रयोदशमं प्रकरणम्।

saṃskāraparīkṣā nāma trayodaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀行品第十三(九偈)

zhōng lùn guān xíng;háng;xìng pǐn dì shí sān(jiǔ jié;jì)

།འདུ་བྱེད་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་སུམ་པའོ།།

| ’du byed brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa bcu sum pa’o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XIII - Examination of Mental Conformation

JONES (Skt):
13. What is Compounded

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Action and the Agent

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
13. Analysis of Disposition

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[13] Examination of Real Action (8 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
The Absence of Being in Things

STRENG (Skt):
Section 13 - An Analysis of Conditioned Elements (the real) In 8 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
13. the samskaras (composite things).

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 13 Contemplation of predispositions 9 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Samskaras

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XIII - Analysis of the Conditioned

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XIII: Examination of Compounded Phenomena

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XIII - Examination of Compounded Phenomena

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 13: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PRECISE NATURE OF REALITY

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Thirteen – Examination of Mental Conformation

PINGALA COMMENTARY

13/0 Question:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter XII]

As was shown in the preceding chapter (fn 1 not included in this translation – MMK XII), the arising of things, on being examined, is neither spontaneous nor caused by another, nor both, nor random; nor is there any other way for things to arise. Yet to the unenlightened whose wisdom eye is afflicted with the disease of ignorance they appear to arise. This is why things, though wholly without self-existence, deceive, as an illusory elephant or horse, the unenlightened who do not comprehend them as they are, but do not deceive those of insight. And so the compassionate Buddha, the awakener of all creation, who has the vision to see all things without mediation (*aparoksa*) as they are in themselves, uprooted totally all the illusions of ignorance and teaches unerringly the absence of being in things to protect helpless beings who, due to the four misbeliefs (see MMK XXIII), conceive things falsely.

The Madhyamika view

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Thirteen Examination of Action and the Agent (Samskara-pariksa .

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XIII Examination of Compounded Phenomena

In this chapter, Nāgārjuna begins to develop the idea of emptiness more explicitly. Up to this point, he has been arguing that phenomena are empty, but has not been characterizing emptiness itself, or its relation to entitihood or to conventional reality, except by example and by implication. At this point, through a general discussion of all compounded phenomena - that is, all phenomena constituted of parts or brought into being dependent upon causes - he argues explicitly both that emptiness is the lack of essence and that emptiness itself is wholly negative in character. It is not an essence that things have instead of whatever essence naive common sense or sophisticated reification might have thought they had - rather, it is the total lack of essence or inherent existence. This is, hence, an anticipation of the explicit discussions of the emptiness of emptiness to follow.

Kārikā XIII.1

तन्मृषा मोषधर्म यद्भगवानित्यभाषत।
सर्वे च मोषधर्माणः संस्कारास्तेन ते मृषा॥१॥

LVP 237,9-10 - LVP 249,3-4
tan mṛṣā moṣadharma yad bhagavān ity abhāṣata |
sarve ca moṣadharmāṇaḥ saṃskārās tena te mṛṣā ||1||

如佛經所說 虛誑妄取相
諸行妄取故 是名為虛誑

T1564: vol 30, pg 17a25
rú fú;fó jīng suǒ shuì xū kuáng wàng qǔ xiàng;xiāng
zhū xíng;háng;xìng wàng qǔ gù shì míng wéi xū kuáng

།བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས་ཀྱིས་ཆོས་གང་ཞིག།སླུ་བ་དེ་ནི་བརྫུན་ཞེས་གསུངས།
།འདུ་བྱེད་ཐམས་ཅད་སླུ་བའི་ཆོས།།དེས་ན་དེ་དག་བརྫུན་པ་ཡིན།།

Tg tsa 8a3 - Tg tsa 8a7
|| bcom ldan 'das kyis chos gaṅ źig | slu ba de ni brdzun źes gsuṅs |
| 'du byed thams cad slu ba'i chos | | des na de dag brdzun pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - The Blessed One has said that elements with delusive nature are untrue. All mental conformations are delusive in nature. Therefore, they are untrue.

JONES (Skt):
[1] The blessed one, the Buddha, has said "Whatever is characterized by deception is false." All phenomena that are compounded (i.e.. put together) are characterized by deception and thus they all are false.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The Blessed One has said that whatever is of deceptive nature, that is delusion. All things that are of deceptive nature involve dispositions. Therefore, they are delusions.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The Venerable One said, "whatever event is deceptive, that is false."
Deceptive events are in all dispositions, so they are false.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. Reality has become uselessly the robbers' World,
How many topics of merciful gods have been stopped for long time?
In everything there are many robbers' Worlds,
Therefore, because of such situations, human daily lives are totally useless.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 Whatever is not what it pretends to be is unreal, declared the illustrious one. All compound things are not what they pretend to be and are therefore unreal.

STRENG (Skt):
1. A thing of which the basic elements are deception is vain, as the glorious one said. All conditioned elements (samskara) are things that have basic elements (dharma) which are deception; therefore, they are vain.

BOCKING (Ch):
13v1 As is taught in the Buddhist sutras,
False deceptions have the mark of misapprehension.
All predispositions and misapprehensions
And therefore they are called deceptions.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The Bhagavan said that whatever dharma is deceptive, that is false. All conditions [are] deceptive dharmas, thus they are false.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The Transcendent Conqueror has taught
That all deceptive phenomena are false.
All conditioned phenomena are deceptive,
And, therefore, they are false. [XIII.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. The Victorious Conqueror has said that whatever
Is deceptive is false.
Compounded phenomena are all deceptive.
Therefore they are all false.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. The Transcendent Lord has said that whatever
Is deceptive is false.
All compounded phenomena are deceptive.
Therefore they are all false.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
13.1 (axiomatic) The Blessed One has said that whatever is of deceptive nature, that is delusion. All mental conformations are deceptive. Therefore, they are delusion.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

13/1 In the Buddhist sutras it says that false deceptions are characterized by misapprehension, but the supreme reality which is called nirvana is not characterized by misapprehension. Because of what these sutras say, we should know that all predispositions are false deceptions and characterized by misapprehension.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The sutra says, 'What is not what it pretends to be (*mosa-dharma*) is unreal (*mrsa*) and the realm of the compounded is that. The higher truth, o monks, does not pretend to be what it is not: it is *nirvāṇa*. All compound things pretend to be what they are not and are unreal.' Further, 'In this world there is no truth of things nor absence of untruth: these too are not what they pretend to be; they too are empty talk.' Thinking in this way the illustrious, realized one declared that what pretends to be what it is not is unreal, that all compound things pretend to be what they are not, that, therefore, because of this false pretence, they are unreal. They are like the mechanical puppets made by craftsmen or like the mechanical elephant of great verisimilitude with which Udayana, King of Vatsa, was tricked. In these cases the falseness lies in their ultimate incongruence (*visamvadaka*); it is like the error of perceiving the circling torch as a circle of fire.

Thus all things pretend to be what they are not because they lack self-existence and because they are unreal. They are like mirages and other illusory appearances of water. The true (*satya*), however, is what does not pretend to be what it is not; *nirvāṇa* is the sole instance of this. Both the arguments we have advanced and the authority of the texts establish that all things are devoid of self-existence, and for this reason that there is an absence of being in all elements as such. We can read this in the *Ardhasatika prajnaparamita Sutra*.

You may object that, if, in this way the illustrious one taught that all things are unreal because they are not what they pretend to be, then, if this is so, all things must be nonexistent (*na santi*). But the denial (*apavada*) of the reality of things would be a Buddhist heresy.

We reply. The fact is that the deceptive pretence of things is confusing you even now. For indeed,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

A chapter dealing with dispositions (samskara) immediately following an analysis of suffering (duhkha) need not create any confusion. Nor should the fact the the title of this chapter is presented in the Tibetan translation as tattva, instead of samskra (see Inada,), lead to difficulties in understanding it. There cannot be any doubt that the original chapter was named "Examination of the Dispositions." Even the most cursory glance at the statements of the Buddha in the discourses would reveal the naked fact that he never looked upon all phenomena (sabbe dhamma) as "suffering" or "unsatisfactory" (dukkha). However, the classical Hindu philosophers who misquoted the Buddhist texts, and some of the modem interpreters who were guided by such philosophers, have been responsible for portraying Buddhism as a pessimistic religion by misinterpreting the Buddha-word, especially the doctrine of "suffering" (see Kalupahana, "The notion of suffering in early Buddhism, compared with some reflections of early Wittgenstein," PEW 27 [1977]:423-431.) The three prominent characteristics, impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and non-substantiality (anatta) have been recklessly lumped together by these interpreters and applied to all phenomena when the Buddha in innumberable instances (M 1.228; S 3.133; 4.401; A 1.286; Dhp 277-279; Tsa 10.7 [Taisho 2.66b- 67a]; Tseng 23.4 [Taisho 2.668c] Ch'ang 1.1 [Taisho 1.9b]) and in every statement he made in regard to these three characteristics, always distinguished between sankhara and ahamma. These three characteristics are always mentioned as follows:

i. "All dispositions are impermanent" (sabbe sankhara anicca).

ii. "All dispositions are suffering" (sabbe sankhara dukkha).

iii. "All phenomena are non-substantial" (sabbe dhamma anatta).

In the first place, the clear distinction made by the Buddha between "dispositions" (samskara) and "phenomena" (dharma) and, secondly, the fact that he specifically referred to the former being subject to

suffering, could not have escaped the penetrating and careful eye of Nagarjuna, a philosopher whose writings have influenced some of the best brains in the East throughout the centuries. If all dispositions were considered by the Buddha to be subject to suffering, then there is no reason to doubt as to why Nagarjuna should not concentrate his attention on these "dispositions" after his examination of the problem of suffering. Hence the reason for the present chapter.

Why the Tibetan translators should consider this to be an examination of truth (tattva) is also not a mystery. They were simply looking at the conclusion of the chapter. Is there any connection between "dispositions" and "truth"?

As pointed out earlier (V.8), the "appeasement of dispositions" (samskaropasama) is the ultimate goal of Buddhism. Excessive lust (raga) is supposed to lead to the strengthening or solidification of one's dispositions, which in turn contributes to grasping, not only for the objects of sense pleasure, but also for ideas. The result would be the dogmatic grasping on to absolute truth or truths. The elimination of lust would then mean the elimination of the dispositions too (samskara-ksaya) which would imply virtual death and no motivation for any action or even to continue with one's present life. Thus, the Buddha himself was willing to characterize the death of a "freed one" (tathagata) as the "cessation of dispositions" (sankharakkaya) (Dhp 383) leading to the cessation of the stream of becoming (bhava-sota).

However, while recognizing the waning of lust (ragakkhaya) as the way to freedom, the Buddha did not encourage the complete elimination of dispositions which would mean suicide. It seems that the Buddha did not recognize a one-to-one relationship between the waning of lust and the cessation of dispositions. Hence his emphasis on the appeasement of dispositions while living and the cessation of dispositions at the time of death. The strengthening of dispositions, as mentioned earlier, leads to dogmatic beliefs. These would pertain to personal immortality, conceived in the form of a belief in an eternal soul or self (atman) or of a universal reality (loka, brahman). Any form of eternalism (sasvata) would be the consequence of such strong dispositional tendencies. The opposite of it would be annihilationism (ucceheda), and it is not difficult to understand why the critics of the Buddha would refer to him as an annihilationist (ucchedavadi) upholding the annihilation of really existing sentient being (M 1.140). They were probably referring to the Buddha's advocacy of the "cessation of dispositions" (sankharakkhaya) at death.

Yet, for the living human being the Buddha was not prescribing the elimination of dispositions. Rather he advocated their appeasement. This view has significant epistemological implications. A living human being needs to act. Action involves understanding. Conduct (carana) is preceded by knowledge (vidya). One needs knowledge of oneself as well of the external world. "Omniscience" or knowledge of everything was not available to the Buddha. Hence, neither the absolute origin of things nor the absolute end of things were discussed in Buddhism (see Chapter XI). Any theory that attempts to explain such origins and ends, whether it pertains to an eternal self or soul (atman) or a substance (svabhava), was unacceptable to the Buddha. Dispositions are invariably associated with the knowledge derived from the senses. The innumerable data provided by the senses cannot easily be handled by the human being. As William James characterized sense experience, it is a "big, blooming, buzzing confusion" (Some Problems of Philosophy). Being unable to deal with such confusion, human beings are compelled to be selective. They pick out the things that interest them, leaving out others. In that process, they develop dispositions and these dispositions in turn contributes their share in gaining knowledge of the world. As such, the world of ordered experience is one that is constructed, made, put together (sam + , "to do, to make"), by the human being. This is the pragmatic conception of truth (tattva) that is prominent in the Buddha's teaching. The appeasement of dispositions thus contributes to the elimination of dogmatism, of grasping after absolute truth or truths, when all the time human beings are creating truths. If a person is not aware of the process by which he constructs the truths about the world, he will not only be confused but also disappointed. Dispositions can thus turn out to be a great source of confounding and delusion (mrsa), unless one understands their function in the formulation of truths (tattva). The translators of Nagarjuna's text into Tibetan probably perceived the direction of the argument in this chapter and named it accordingly.

Note that the delusion (mrsa) is produced, not by all the phenomena (sarva-dharma) but only by the way in which these phenomena are put together (samskaroti) for purposes of understanding (see Websters' Seventh Collegiate Dictionary, 1965, where delusion is defined as "self-deception concerning facts or situations"). That putting together is the function of dispositions (samskara). Hence, for Nagarjuna, as it was for the Buddha, if anything is to contribute toward delusion that would not be all phenomena (sarve dharmah), rather it would be all dispositions (sarve samskarah).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. ("Compounded phenomena" fn 69. Kalupahana (1986) translates this term (Skt: *samskāra,* Tib: *'du byed)* as "dispositions." That is often correct. But it can also refer to compounded phenomena in general. Given the structure of the argument in this chapter, I (as do Tsong Khapa and his followers) prefer this reading. Kalupahana (p. 48) argues that it makes sense to follow 'a chapter on suffering with one on dispositions, inasmuch as the latter plausibly give rise to the former. He is right. But it also makes sense to follow a chapter on suffering with one on compounded phenomena since positing them as self-existent is what gives rise to suffering. Dispositions and compounded phenomena are - as the homonymy in question demonstrates - closely linked in Buddhist metaphysics. Dispositions are themselves compounded phenomena; but more importantly, they are what lead us to the conceptual compounding that gives ·phenomena their status as conventional entities.)

This is an important verse for any understanding of the relation of the two truths - the conventional and the ultimate - to one another. That relation is vexed because the conventional truth is sometimes referred to as a truth and sometimes as wholly false. Conventional phenomena are sometimes referred to as empirically real and not imaginary and sometimes as wholly imaginary. (fn 70. This, of course, is partially responsible for the kind of nihilistic misreading of the text one sees, e.g., in Wood (1994).) So it is important to see that the sense of "falsehood" in play when the conventional is characterized as false is "deceptive." That is, insofar as conventional phenomena present themselves as more than conventional as inherently existent - they deceive us. We take them to be what they are not - to be intrinsically identified, inherently existent entities. In that sense, they are false. But to the extent that we understand them as dependently arisen, empty, interdependent phenomena, they constitute a conventional truth. Yet one must bear in mind that, according to Nāgārjuna, perception untutored by Madhyamika philosophy and rigorous practice delivers objects to consciousness as inherently existent. In *this* sense, the things that we see are wholly false. For most of us, the best that we can do is reason our way into knowing, but not seeing, their true nature. The goal of meditation on emptiness is to bring this knowledge into perceptual experience and, hence, to see things as they are.

Kārikā XIII.2

तन्मृषा मोषधर्म यद्यदि किं तत्र मुष्यते।
एतत्तूक्तं भगवता शून्यतापरिदीपकम्॥२॥

tan mṛṣā moṣadharma yad yadi kiṃ tatra muṣyate |
etat tūktaṃ bhagavatā śūnyatāparidīpakam ‖2‖

虛誑妄取者 是中何所取
佛說如是事 欲以示空義

xū kuáng wàng qǔ zhě shì zhōng hé suǒ qǔ
fú;fó shuì rú shì shì yù yǐ shì kōng yì

།གལ་ཏེ་བསླུ་ཆོས་གང་ཡིན་པ། །དེ་བརྫུན་དེ་ལ་ཅི་ཞིག་བསླུ།
།བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས་ཀྱིས་དེ་གསུངས་པ། །སྟོང་ཉིད་ཡོངས་སུ་བསྟན་པ་ཡིན།

| gal te slu chos gaṅ yin pa | | de brdzun de la ci źig slu |
| bcom ldan ’das kyis de (4)gsuṅs pa | | stoṅ ñid yoṅs su bstan pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - If the elements with delusive nature are untrue, what is there which deludes? On account of this the Blessed One merely expounded the significance of sunyata.

JONES (Skt):
[2] If what is characterized by deception is false, what is deceived? This was said by the blessed one in explaining emptiness.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If, whatever that is of deceptive nature is delusion, what is it about which there is delusion? That too, namely, that which illuminates emptiness, has been spoken of by the Blessed One.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If whatever deceptive event is false, then it is deceived by what?
This was said by the Venerable One to illuminate openness.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. Reality has become uselessly the robbers' World,
By whom and when, what kind of things there have been robbed?
Such kinds of area are ironically called very happy places,
But the state of perfectly balanced autonomic nervous system is never brilliant.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 If whatever is not what it pretends to be is unreal, what is it in that case that pretends? The illustrious one said this in elucidating *sunyata,* the absence of being in things.

STRENG (Skt):
2. "If that which has deceptive basic elements is vain, what is there which deceives?" This was spoken by the glorious one to illuminate "emptiness."

BOCKING (Ch):
13v2 False deception and misapprehension;
What is apprehended in these?
The Buddha has spoken thus
In order to point to the meaning of emptiness.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If whatever is a deceptive phenomenon is false, what is deceptive about it [in what way is it deceptive]? That statement by the Bhagavan is a complete presentation of emptiness.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If a phenomenon that is deceptive is also false,
Then what is it that deceives?
With this, the Transcendent Conqueror
Has fully revealed emptiness. [XIII.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. If whatever is deceptive is false,
What deceives?
The Victorious Conqueror has said about this
That emptiness is completely true.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. If whatever is a deceptive phenomenon
Is false, then what deceives?
Saying that, the Transcendent Lord
Perfectly presents emptiness.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
13.2 [Opponent begins]: If whatever is of a deceptive nature is delusion, what deceives? [Nagarjuna]: The Blessed One has said of this that Emptiness is completely True.

13/2 If dharmas characterized by misapprehension are false deceptions, what is considered to be apprehended in the predispositions? When the Buddha speaks thus we should know that he is explaining the meaning of emptiness.

(17b6) Question: How do you know that the predispositions are empty?

Reply: Because all predispositions have the characteristic of falsity. The predispositions arise and cease without abiding; they have no self-nature and are therefore empty. 'Predispositions' means the five skandhas. Since they arise from predispositions, the five skandhas are called predispositions. These five skandhas are all false and unreal and have no fixed

(17b10) (17b15) nature, and why? For example; the form one has when an infant is not the form one has when crawling. The form one has when crawling is not the form one has when a toddler. One's form as a toddler is not the form one has as a boy. The form one has as a boy is not the form one has in manhood, and the form one has in manhood is not the form one has in old age. Thus form does not abide even momentarily, so that to distinguish any fixed nature in it is impossible. Either the infant's form is the same as the crawler's form and so on up to the form in old age, or they are different, but both (these ideas) are wrong, and why? Suppose that the infant's form were the same as the crawler's form, and so on up to the form in old age. If this were so, there would be only one form, that of the infant, and there would be no crawler and so on up to old age. Or again, it is like a lump of clay which is always a lump of clay and never becomes a pot. Why is this? Because a form is always fixed. If the form of an infant differs from that of a crawler, then an infant will not become a crawler, and a crawler will not become an infant, and why? Because the two forms are different. If things were thus, the forms of boyhood, youth, manhood and old age would not succeed each other, and there would be loss of any family structure, with no fathers and no sons. If things were thus, there would only be an infant, who would have to become a father - the other stages from crawling to old age would play no part. Therefore, both are erroneous.

(17b23) Question: Even though form is not fixed, when the infant's form has ceased, it arises in a succession (of forms) up to the form of old age. This does not involve the kind of errors discussed above.

(17b25) Reply: If the infant's form is successively reproduced, then either it is successively reproduced after having ceased (at each juncture) or it is successively reproduced without having ceased. If the infant's form has ceased, how can there be any successive reproduction, since there would be no cause? Even though, for example, there is firewood which could burn, there is no successive production (of fire) after the fire has gone out. If we suppose that there is successive reproduction of the childhood form without it having ceased, then the childhood form, since it never ceases, will surely continue with its original characteristics and there will be no successive reproduction here either.

(17c1) Question: We are not saying that there is successive reproduction because (the form) has ceased or not ceased. We are merely saying that because non-abiding characteristics seem to arise, we can speak of successive reproduction.

Reply: If this were so, it would be a fixed form arising again, and in that case there ought to be a thousand myriad kinds of form, but this is not so. In that case too, there should be no succession. Thus, though we may search everywhere for form, it has no fixed characteristics. It exists only through conventional expressions. It is like the banana tree - you can search for its core but you will not be able to find it, for it is merely bark and leaves. In such a way does the man of insight seek the characteristics of form. Ceasing moment by moment and utterly without reality, form is unattainable. The shape and characteristics of non-abiding form, seeming to arise consecutively are hard to distinguish, just as it is impossible to distinguish fixed forms in the flames of a lamp. It is impossible for there to be forms arising from such fixed forms (as you describe), therefore form has no nature and is empty, existing only through conventional expressions.

(17c11) Receiving is also like this. The wise man investigates it in various ways but since (receptions) are sequential and similar, it is difficult to distinguish their arising and ceasing; they are like the succession of flowing water.

It is only because we have r it that we say there are three receivings within the body. Therefore, you should know that receiving may be explained in the same way as form.

(17c13) (The skandha of) conception arises on account of names and marks, and without such names and marks it would not arise. Therefore the Buddha says that discriminative knowledge of names and terms is called conception. It is not fixed and pre-existent, but arises from conditions and has no fixed nature. Having no fixed nature, it resembles 'the shadow following the substance' The shadow is there because of the substance. Without the

substance there is no shadow, and the shadow has no fixed nature. If it did have a fixed existence, then the shadow would exist without the substance, but in reality this does not happen. Therefore it arises from conditions, has no own-nature and is unattainable. Conception too, is like this. It only exists because of external designations and through conventional worldly expressions.

(17c20) (The skandha, of) consciousness[185] arises because of form, sound, smell, taste, touch, etc., and eyes, ears, nose, mouth and body etc. Because the functions of eye, etc., are differentiated, consciousness is differentiated. This consciousness must be either in the form, or in the eye, or between them. It has no fixed nature, and only after it has arisen is there consciousness of the material world, consciousness of this person and consciousness of that person. The consciousness which cognizes a particular person is either the same as the consciousness which cognizes another person, or it is different. These two may be hard to distinguish, just as eye-consciousness may be difficult to distinguish from ear consciousness. Since they are hard to distinguish, we can either say that they are one, or that they are different. They are not fixed and differentiated, because they merely arise from conditions. Such distinctions as eye (consciousness), etc., are therefore empty and have no own-nature.

(17c27) It is like an entertainer who puts a pearl in his mouth, then having taken it out, shows it to the people who begin to doubt whether it is the original pearl, or some other different one. Consciousness is also like this, for having arisen, it arises again. Is it the original consciousness, or is it a different consciousness? Therefore you should know that consciousness, being non-abiding, has no own-nature and is false and deceptive, like an illusion.

(18a2) Predispositions[187] are also like this. Predispositions are those of body, speech and mind, and are of two kinds, pure and impure. Which are impure? The grasping attachment which afflicts beings is called impure. True speech, non-attachment etc. which do not afflict beings are called pure. These (two) either increase, or diminish.

(18a5) Those with pure predispositions, since they have already received their rewards either as humans, or in the heavens of desire, or in the heavens of form or the formless heaven, are 'diminishing', but now in resuming their activities they are called 'increasing'. Those with impure predispositions are also like this. Having already received their deserts in the hells, in animal births, and amongst the hungry ghosts and asuras[189] they are 'diminishing', but in resuming their activities they are called 'increasing'. Therefore, since all predispositions are increasing and decreasing they never abide. It is like a man who is ill. If he is given suitable treatment his illness will subside, but if it is unsuitable his illness will get worse. Predispositions are like this. Because they increase and diminish they are not fixed, but exist only through conventional worldly expressions. It is by means of the worldly truth that we manage to perceive the supreme truth.

(18a12) It is said that ignorance causes predispositions, because of predispositions there is consciousness and attachment, because of consciousness and attachment, there is name and form, from name and form derive the six avenues, from the six avenues there is contact, from contact there is reception, from reception there is desire, from desire there is grasping, from grasping there is existence, from existence there is birth and from birth there is old age and death, sorrow, grief, suffering affliction, the pain of separation from those you love, and the pain of association with those you hate, and so on. In this way all sufferings have their origin in predispositions. The Buddha's teachings rely on conventional worldly truth, (but) if you attain to the truth of the supreme meaning and develop true insight (prajna) then ignorance will cease. When ignorance ceases the predispositions do not accumulate, and because the predispositions do not originate, that which the perception of truth cuts off, the view of the body (as the self) and doubts, rituals and attachments and so on are all cut off.

(18a19) In addition, that which meditation cuts off, namely attachment and craving, anger, contamination by forms, contamination by non-form, lust and ignorance are also cut off. Because these are cut off, each link (of causation) ceases, which is to say that ignorance, pre-dispositions, consciousness, name and form, the six avenues, contact, reception, desire, grasping, existence, birth, old age, death, sorrow, grief, suffering, affliction, the pain of separation from those you love, and pain of associating with those you hate, and so forth, all cease. Because of this cessation the five skandhas completely cease, with nothing at all remaining, only emptiness.

(18a24) This is why the Buddha, wishing to point to the meaning of emptiness, taught that all predispositions are false deceptions. Furthermore, all dharmas, since they are without (own) nature, are false deceptions. Being false and deceptive, they are empty. As the verse says:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

2ab *If whatever is not what it pretends to be is unreal, what is it in that case that pretends?*

When we say, 'What pretends is unreal', and 'What in that case pretends?' we mean, How, then, can the non-existent (*abhava*) exist (*bhavati*)? If any object whatsoever existed then the denial of it and the theory of non-existence would constitute a Buddhist heresy. So long, however, as we discern no actual object whatsoever, then what can do the pretending? No non-existent object can exist. So your accusation is not appropriate. You may ask, if the theory of non-existence is not taught by this text, what, then is?

We reply:

2cd *The illustrious one said this in elucidating sunyata, the absence of being in things.*

What the illustrious one uttered was not the elucidation of the non-existence of things, but rather the absence of being in things: that self-existent things do not arise. This is the meaning of the Sutra. The *Anavataptahradapasamkramana Sutra* says, 'What is born of conditions is not truly born; and it does not arise as self-existent; what depends on conditions is said to lack being. Whoever comprehends the absence of being in things is free of delusion.'

Absence of being as changeableness

You may object that this text (*kārikā* 1) does not state that self-existent things do not arise, but rather that things are without self-existence in the sense that their essential nature is inconstant and perishable (fn 1 This view predominates in the early *sutras;* the radically new depth given the notion of *sunyata* by Nagarjuna can mark the philosophical maturation of Buddhism.) If you ask how this is meant:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If dispositions cause delusions, what is it about which there are delusions? The answer would be: "The world of experience." The Buddha has spoken of that world too. It is the world that is non-substantial, is empty of any permanent and eternal entity. All delusions arise regarding that world which is dependently arisen and nonsubstantial, but which is being understood as being either eternal or absolutely unreal.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. ("The Victorious Conqueror" fn 71. An epithet of the Buddha. (The translation reflects the sense of the Tibetan. The Sanskrit would read "Blessed One."))

The opponent then asks what we are deceived about. Here is what motivates the question: If there are no real tables, for instance, then when I believe that there is a table in front of me and am therefore deceived, what is deceiving me? We don't want to say that a nonexistent phenomenon is pretending to be existent since it would have to exist in order to pretend. Nāgārjuna replies that what actually exists is an empty table. (That is not to say, however, that that empty table is *inherently existent - only* that the correct way to characterize the entity that exists conventionally is as an "empty table.") That empty table is misperceived by an ordinary mind as a truly existent table. To the extent that it appears *as empty*, it appears as it truly is. In the first two lines of the next verse, Nāgārjuna notes that it is the absence of essence that permits change:

Kārikā XIII.3

भावानां निःस्वभावत्वमन्यथाभावदर्शनात्।
अस्वभावो भावो नास्ति भावानां शून्यता यतः॥३॥

bhāvānāṃ niḥsvabhāvatvam anyathābhāvadarśanāt |
nāsvabhāvaś ca bhāvo 'sti bhāvānāṃ śūnyatā yataḥ ||3||

諸法有異故 知皆是無性
無性法亦無 一切法空故

zhū fǎ yǒu yì gù zhī jiē shì wú xìng
wú xìng fǎ yì wú yī qiè fǎ kōng gù

|དངོས་རྣམས་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་མེད་དེ*||གཞན་དུ་འགྱུར་བ་སྣང་ཕྱིར་རོ|
|དངོས་པོ་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་མེད་མེད||གང་ཕྱིར་དངོས་རྣམས་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད||

| dṅos rnams ṅo bo ñid med de | | gźan du 'gyur ba snaṅ phyir ro |
| dṅos po ṅo bo ñid med med | | gaṅ phyir dṅos rnams stoṅ pa ñid |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - (The opponent contends) From the perception of varying natures all entities are without self-natures. An entity without self-nature does not exist because all entities have the nature of sunyata.

JONES (Skt):
[3] Since we see change, all entities lack self-existence. Without self-existence, an entity does not exist - thus the emptiness of all entities.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Because of the perception of change, the absence of self-nature of existents is [recognized]. Because of the emptiness of existents, there is no existent without self-nature.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Since beings are viewed as having no self-nature in a changing nature
and a being lacking self-nature does not exist, then openness [is the self-nature] of beings.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. In many existences, poverties are clear,
But in another case the attitudes of looking at, has been omitted.
The unnatural birth does not exist really,
And in the miscellaneous existences, the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system is going on.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 Things are without an essential nature because they are seen to alter. No thing is without an essential nature as all things are without being.

STRENG (Skt):
3. An opponent says: There is non-self-existence of things since a thing, by observation, becomes something else. (i.e. impermanence) A thing without self-existence does not exist—due to the emptiness of existing things.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XIII.3a By the observation of change [we can infer] the lack of *svabhāva* of things. . . .

ROBINSON (Skt):
That existents are without own-being is because their alter-being is seen; an existent without own-being does not exist; hence the emptiness of existents.

BOCKING (Ch):
13v3 Since all dharmas vary
We know that they have no nature.
Dharmas without a nature do not exist
Because all dharmas are empty.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Things have no essential nature because they are seen to change into something else. Things do not lack an essential nature because things are emptiness.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Things are devoid of essence
Because they are perceived to change.
There are no entities without essence
Because entities possess emptiness. [XIII.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. All things lack entitihood,
Since change is perceived.
There is nothing without entity
Because all things have emptiness.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. All entities are natureless,
Since transformation into something else is perceived.
All entities lack naturelessness
Because all entities have emptiness.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
13.3 [Nagarjuna]: Because change is perceived, all things are without self-nature. [Opponent]: Because of the emptiness of existents, there is no existent without self-nature.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

13/3 Dharmas have no nature, and why? Though dharmas arise, they do not abide in an own-nature, and hence they have no nature. It is as if an infant had a fixed, abiding own-nature. He could never become a crawler, and so on up to old age. Yet an infant, through consecutive phases, does have different characteristics manifesting as crawling and so on up to old age. This is why we say that, since we see dharmas having varying characteristics we know that they have no nature.

Question: Even if dharmas have varying characteristics and no nature, what is wrong in saying that dharmas with no nature exist?

Reply: If they have no nature, how-can they be dharmas, how can they have characteristics? Why is this? Because they have no basis. It is solely in order to refute their (presumed) nature that we say they have no nature. If dharmas which had no nature existed, we would not describe all dharmas as empty. If all dharmas are empty, how can dharmas with no nature exist? Question:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

3ab *Things are without an essential nature because they are seen to alter.*

Alteration (*anyathatva*) in things means that their transformation is directly observed. That is to say, if there were no essential nature in things, that is, if things were not self-existent, their alteration could not be perceived. But transformation is directly observed and so it should be recognized that the sutra is speaking of the changeableness of the essential nature of things.

This is so, because

3cd *No thing is without an essential nature as all things are without being.*

A thing lacking an essential nature does not exist, as the absence of being is conceived of as an attribute of all things. But it is not logically possible that an attribute could be based in a non-existent subject, as the skin colour of a non-existent son of a barren woman is not logically possible. There is therefore an essential nature in things (fn 2 To hypostatize *sunyata* is virtually irresistible; within metaphysics it is inescapable.).

Furthermore,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is a clear statement that truth or reality (tattva) (there being no provisional truth and ultimate reality) is neither substantial existence nor nihilistic nonexistence. The perception of change or variation (anyathabhava) confirms the non-substantiality of phenomena (nihsvabhava). This is another way of expressing the idea embodied in the discourse to Kaccayana that "to him who perceives through right wisdom the cessation of the world as it has come to be, the notion of existence (atthita) in the world does not occur," (S 2.17). Cessation (nirodha) or change (anyathabhava) does not imply complete annihilation. Hence Nagarjuna's view that there is no existent that is without substance (a-svabhava), that is, something that goes into complete oblivion after existing for a while (bhutva prativigacchati) leaving no trace at all. The discourse to Kaccayana says that he who perceives arising (samudaya) does not hold on to the non-existence of the world. In other words, arising (samudaya or samutpada) contradicts nihilistic non-existence (nastita, a-svabhava). Nagarjuna perceives this to be emptiness (sunyata).

This, then, is the way in which "dependent arising" of phenomena (prati tyasamutpada) becomes a synonym for "emptiness" (sunyata) or "non-substantiality" (nairatmya) which will be further elaborated in Chapter XXIV.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. It is emptiness that makes change possible. If things had essences, they would be incapable of real change. But since they are seen to change, Nāgārjuna argues, they must be empty of essence. The opponent, though, rejoins: Since according to Nāgārjuna all things are empty and since this is their ultimate nature, all things in fact do have a kind of entitihood, namely, *existence as empty phenomena.* Nāgārjuna is here anticipating the charge that he has rejected *other* essences only to posit emptiness as an essence, subject to all of the problems he has already adumbrated for essentialist metaphysics.

The opponent then asks (XIII: 4), “If everything lacks being, and is therefore empty, what could change?” Change would seem to have to be change of something, and the doctrine of emptiness seems to rob us of those somethings. Nāgārjuna, hence, presents himself, in the voice of the opponent, with a dilemma: He seems to have propounded, his protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, a theory of the essence of all phenomena. That theory, according to this hypothetical objection, is that emptiness just is the essence of all phenomena. He could deny having propounded such a theory, of course. But the consequence of such a denial, the opponent charges, would be no better. For then, the very basis of the argument here offered for emptiness - the reality of change would have to be rejected. This is because without real entities there would no longer be a possible subject of change. Nāgārjuna replies in the third and fourth lines of XIII: 4 that the opponent has things backward: If there was entitihood - if things were nonempty change would be impossible. It is emptiness itself that makes change comprehensible:

Kārikā XIII.4 (Ch)

[Robinson states that this verse in the Chinese has no correlate in the Sanskrit]

[n/a]

[n/a]

諸法若無性 云何說嬰兒
乃至於老年 而有種種異

zhū fǎ ruò wú xìng yún hé shuì yīng ér;er
nǎi shì yū;yú;wū lǎo nián ér yǒu zhǒng zhǒng yì

[n/a]

[n/a]

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

BOCKING (Ch):
13v4 If dharmas have no nature
How can you say that from infancy
To old age and so on
Various differences-exist?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

13/4 If dharmas had no nature, then they would not have varying characteristics, yet you say that they do have varying characteristics. Therefore dharmas do have a nature. If there were no dharma-natures, how could there be varying characteristics?

Reply:

Kārikā XIII.4

कस्य स्यादन्यथाभावः स्वभावश्चेन्न विद्यते।
कस्य स्यादन्यथाभावः स्वभावो यदि विद्यते॥४॥

kasya syād anyathābhāvaḥ svabhāvaś cen na vidyate |
kasya syād anyathābhāvaḥ svabhāvo yadi vidyate ||4||

若諸法有性　云何而得異
若諸法無性　云何而有異

ruò zhū fǎ yǒu xìng yún hé ér dé;děi;de yì
ruò zhū fǎ wú xìng yún hé ér yǒu yì

།གལ་ཏེ་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་མེད་ན། །གཞན་དུ་འགྱུར་བ་གང་གི་ཡིན།
།གལ་ཏེ་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་ཡོད་ན། །གཞན་དུ་འགྱུར་བར་ཇི་ལྟར་རུང་*།།

| gal te ṅo bo ñid med na | | gźan du ’gyur ba gaṅ gi yin |
| gal te ṅo bo ñid yod na | | (5)gźan du ’gyur bar ji ltar ruṅ |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - (Nagarjuna asserts) If self-nature does not exist, what is it that has this varying nature? (On the other hand), if self-nature does exist, again, what is it that has this varying nature?

JONES (Skt):
[4] If there is no self-existence, what thing would change? If there is self-existence, what thing would change?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whose change would there be, if self-nature were not evident? Again, whose change would there be, if self-nature were evident.?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Whose would be the changing nature if self-nature does not occur?
Whose would be the changing nature if self-nature does occur?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. Where is the existence of another world other than this exists?
The real existence of myself itself is not recognized at all.
Where is the existence of another world other than this exists?
Then the real existence of myself itself is recognized at that time.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 If there were no essential nature, what would this becoming other be of? If there is an essential nature what would this becoming other be of?

STRENG (Skt):
4. If self-existence does not exist, whose "other-existence" would there be? Nargarjuna answers: If self-existence does exist, whose "other-existence" would there be?

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XIII.4b If *svabhāva* was found, what would change?

ROBINSON (Skt):
If own-being does not occur, to whom might alter-being belong? If own-being does occur, to whom might alter-being belong?

BOCKING (Ch):
13v5 If dharmas had a nature
How could they vary?
If dharmas had no nature
How could they vary?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there were no essential nature, whose [nature] would it be to change into something else? If there were an essential nature, how would it be possible to change into something else?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there is no essence,
To what does change pertain?
If there were essences,
How could there be change? [XIII.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. If there is no entitihood,
What changes?
If there were entity,
How could it be correct that something changes?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. If they are natureless,
What transforms?
If there were nature,
How could there be transformation?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
13.4 [Opponent]: Whose change would there be if self-nature were not evident? [Nagarjuna]: Whose change would there be if self-nature were evident?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

13/5 If dharmas had a fixed and definite nature, how could they possibly vary? 'Nature means a fixed, settled existence which cannot be transformed, just as true gold cannot be transformed, or the nature of darkness cannot be changed into light, and the nature of light cannot be changed into darkness. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

4ab *If there were no essential nature, what would this becoming other be of?*

If there were no essential nature in things what would this becoming other which has the character of transformation be of?

Unintelligibility of change

At this point we reply. Allowing this way of conceiving things to stand, still,

4cd *If there is an essential nature what would this becoming other be of?*

A characteristic which is invariable in a thing is commonly said to be its essential nature; that is, it is not conjoined with any other thing. For example, heat is said to be the essential nature of fire because in all experience it invariably accompanies fire. Heat is not the essential nature of water because it arises from extraneous conditions and because it is something artifically produced. But if this invariable essential nature is something real, then because of its invariableness it could not become other. After all coldness cannot become a property of fire. Thus, if we accept an essential nature in things, alteration is not possible. But alteration is directly perceived in things so there can be no essential nature.

Further, this becoming other of things, from the observation of which it is thought that there is an essential nature in things, is simply not possible.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna is here contrasting identity and difference. If things are completely different from one another, then there is no reason to speak of the change of things (anyathabhava). If, on the contrary, there were to be a substance (svabhava) which is assumed to be permanent and eternal, it could not change.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. Now Nāgārjuna begins a brief explanation of how to understand change in the context of emptiness and of why entitihood would preclude change. This discussion is certainly grounded in the analysis in Chapter II, but is more explicitly tied to the doctrine of emptiness at this point in the text:

Kārikā XIII.5

तस्यैव नान्यथाभावो नाप्यन्यस्यैव युज्यते।
युवा न जीर्यते यस्माद्यस्माज्जीर्णो न जीर्यते॥५॥

是法則無異 異法亦無異
如壯不作老 老亦不作壯

།དེ་ཉིད་ལ་ནི་གཞན་འགྱུར་མེད།།གཞན་ཉིད་ལ་ཡང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།གང་ཕྱིར་གཞོན་ནུ་མི་རྒ་སྟེ།།གང་ཕྱིར་རྒས་པའང་མི་རྒ་འོ།།

tasyaiva nānyathābhāvo nāpy anyasyaiva yujyate |
yuvā na jīryate yasmād yasmāj jīrṇo na jīryate ||5||

shì fǎ zé wú yì yì fǎ yì wú yì
rú zhuàng bù zuò lǎo lǎo yì bù zuò zhuàng

| de ñid la ni gźan ’gyur med | | gźan ñid la yaṅ yod ma yin |
| gaṅ phyir gźon nu mi rga ste | | gaṅ phyir rgas pa’aṅ mi rga’o |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - It is not possible for this or another entity to have a varying nature. This is from the fact that youth does not age (over again).

JONES (Skt):
[5] Change is not admissible for something in itself or for something different - since “youth” does not age, nor does “aging” age.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Neither change of something in itself nor of something different is proper. The reason being that a youth does not age nor does an aged person age.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
No changing nature, either of itself or of another, occurs.
This is because a youth does not age and an aged one does not age.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Existence in other world does never belong to this world.
At the same time what belongs to the different world, is never attached to this world.
For the same reason, young men do not become old at the present moment,
For the same reason, old men do not become old at the present moment.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 Becoming other is not comprehensible either of the same thing or of another thing. So the young man does not grow old nor does the old man grow old.

STRENG (Skt):
5. Just as there is no other-existence of a thing, so also an-other-existence of something else is not possible— Since a youth is not aging (jiryate), and since "who has already aged" is not aging (jiryate).

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XIII.5 Neither the change of a thing itself nor of something different is suitable: as a young man does not become old, so an old man does not become old either.

BOCKING (Ch):
13v6 A particular dharma does not vary,
A different dharma does not vary.
Just as youth does not become old age
And old age does not become youth.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
This itself does not change into something else. The other itself too does not [either]. Because youth does not age. Because age too does not age.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Change is not in that itself
Nor is it in something else,
Because the young do not age,
And because the aged do not age. [XIII.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. A thing itself does not change.
Something different does not change.
Because a young man doesn't grow old,
And because and an old man doesn't grow old either.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. A thing itself is without transformation.
Nor is transformation in something else,
Because a young man does not age,
And because an aged man does not age either.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
13.5 Becoming something else is not comprehensible either of the same thing or of another thing. Thus neither a youth nor an elder grow old.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

13/6 If a dharma did vary it ought to have varying characteristics. Either it is the same dharma which varies, or it is a different dharma which varies, but neither of these is correct. If it was the same dharma which varied, then old age ought to become old age, but in reality old age does not become old age. If it is a different dharma that is the variant, then, old age being different from youth, youth should become old age, but in reality youth does not become old age. Both are wrong.

Question: What is wrong in saying that the same dharma varies? We see with our own eyes that youth, with the passing of the seasons and the years, becomes old age.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The alteration of something which continues to exist just as it did in a previous state is not logically possible. For example a young man cannot alter so long as he exists in his state of youthfulness. You may suppose that the alteration is realized in the immediately succeeding state, but that is not logically possible either. Alteration is just a synonym for old age. And if you try to think that the alteration is not in the young man, but rather in the other - the old man — that too is impossible. A second conjunction of ageing with the old man would be pointless. What would be achieved by attributing old age a second time to an old man? As an old man does not exist before the advent of old age it makes no sense to say 'an old man becomes old'. On the other hand, it makes no sense to say that the alteration is in the youth because the term youth is used of the stage in which old age has not been attained, and because the two stages — youth and old age — are mutually exclusive.

What is more,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna continues to emphasize the view that change (anyathabhava) is inexplicable in the context of identity or difference. "Of itself" (tasya eva) means "of something that has substantial existence;" "of another" (anyasya eva) implies "belonging to something completely different." As mentioned previously (VII.24), "decay" jara) was not rejected by Nagarjuna. In the present context, what he intends to convey is that such decay makes no sense when applied to explain a person who is metaphysically conceived either as possessing an eternal self or as being different from moment to moment.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. When we imagine change, we imagine one thing retaining its identity, but changing its properties. But if identity is understood strictly, it is only possible as an internal relation that a thing bears to itself. To the extent that a thing changes, it becomes, strictly speaking, a different thing. But the relation between two things is not the change of a thing - it is simply the difference between two nonchanging entities. A young man does not grow old. When he is old he is no longer a young man. The relation between the young man and the old man is simply the difference of two things. But an old man doesn't grow old either. He is already old. So if change and things that change are thought of nonrelationally, we can make no sense of change at all.

Kārikā XIII.6

तस्य चेदन्यथाभावः क्षीरमेव भवेद्दधि।
क्षीरादन्यस्य कस्याथ दधिभावो भविष्यति॥६॥

tasya ced anyathābhāvaḥ kṣīram eva bhaved dadhi |
kṣīrād anyasya kasyacid dadhibhāvo bhaviṣyati ||6||

若是法即異 乳應即是酪
離乳有何法 而能作於酪

ruò shì fǎ jí yì rǔ yīng jí shì lào
lí rǔ yǒu hé fǎ ér néng zuò yū;yú;wū lào

།གལ་ཏེ་དེ་ཉིད་གཞན་འགྱུར་ན།།འོ་མ་ཉིད་ནི་ཞོར་འགྱུར་རོ།
།འོ་མ་ལས་གཞན་གང་ཞིག་ནི།།ཞོ་ཡི་དངོས་པོ་ཡིན་པར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te de ñid gźan ’gyur na | | ’o ma ñid ni źor ’gyur ro |
| ’o ma las gźan gaṅ źig ni | | źo yi dṅos (6)po yin par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - If an entity does have a varying nature, then it will be possible for milk to become butter. But butter-nature will have to arise in something other than milk.

JONES (Skt):
[6] If a thing itself changed, then milk would itself be curds; otherwise, being curds would be something other than milk.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If change were to be of something in itself, then milk itself would be butter Butter-ness would then be something other than milk.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If a changing nature [were] of itself, then milk would be butter.
Since milk differs, the nature of butter will be of what?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. Mind in this world can exist in another world,
And so condensed milk can exist similarly as if it were yoghurt.
Leaving from condensed milk, something different can exists in a different thing.
Therefore the existence of condensed milk might be possible in future.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 If one and the same thing becomes other, then milk itself would be curd. Curd will arise from anything whatsoever other than milk.

STRENG (Skt):
6. If there would be an other-existence of a thing, milk would exist as curds. But surely "being curds" will be something other than milk.

BOCKING (Ch):
13v7 If a dharma is the same as its variant,
Then milk should itself be cream.
What dharma is there apart from milk
That can produce the cream?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If this itself changes into something else, milk itself would be curds. Something other than milk would be the being of curds.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If that itself changes,
Then milk itself is yogurt.
What, other than milk,
Would turn into yogurt? [XIII.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If a thing itself changed,
Milk itself would be curd.
Or curd would have come to be
An entity different from milk.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If a thing itself transformed,
Milk itself would become yoghurt.
But what other than milk
Could become the entity that is yoghurt?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
13.6 If a thing could remain itself and yet change, then milk could be butter. But butter is something other than milk.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

13/7 If a dharma were the same as its variant, then milk itself ought to be cream, and would need no causes or conditions at all, but this is not correct, and why? Because milk differs from cream in various ways. Milk itself is not cream, and therefore dharmas are not their own variants. If you say that it is a different dharma which varies, this too is incorrect, for what other thing could be considered as cream? Looked at in this way, a dharma does not vary itself, but it is not a different dharma that varies either. Therefore you should not cling to a one-sided position.

Question: Destroying both 'itself' and 'different' dharmas, you seem to be abiding in emptiness. Emptiness is itself a doctrine.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

6ab *If one and the same thing becomes other, then milk itself would be curd.*

It may be thought that it is only by passing beyond the state 'milk' that the state 'curd' comes into existence, so that it is not the milk itself which becomes curd.

We reply. If you do not wish to think that milk becomes curd because they are mutually exclusive, then,

6cd *Curd will arise from anything whatsoever other than milk.*

Is curd to arise from water? Thus it is illogical to say that curd arises from what is other than itself. As, in this way, alteration is impossible, how can it be established that things have an essential nature from the observation of change? That would be absurd.

As is said in the *Ratnakaramahayaua Sutra*, 'The truth of things as revealed by the victorious one, the lion among men, is neither born nor does it arise, it does not decay, it does not die. In it are merged all living beings.

'What is not self-existent in any sense, cannot attain other- existence either from within or from without; the lord is realized everywhere.

'Buddha has revealed the way of being at peace, though no definable way has been attained; there you will walk what is called the way of liberation. Yourself free, you will free many other beings.

'Buddha, you declare all elements of existence devoid of self; you liberate men from belief in the individual being. Free from any path you have attained liberation; you have reached the other shore without leaving this one.

'Having crossed the ocean of existence you have reached the other shore. But there is no individual as such who has gone beyond. There is neither a shore here nor there; it is merely a manner of speaking to say you have crossed over.

'Neither do the words you utter exist, nor does what you speak about exist, nor does he with whom you speak exist nor he who comprehends.

'The whole world is deluded because it clings to false obsessions. The self-existent Tathagata has been seen by those who clearly comprehend that all elements of existence are at peace.

'One who fully knows that the subtlest elements of existence are at peace attains happiness and makes other beings joyful. Overcoming the afflictions of existence, he becomes a conqueror.

'And he knows the pure mind of the victorious ones and enlightens all creation.'

Absence of being as the exhaustion of all views

You stated earlier that no thing was lacking an essential nature as absence of being is to be attributed to all things. That is, there is an essential nature in things which is the base for the absence of being in them. Nagarjuna says that this does not make sense either.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If change were to be applied to something recognized as existing in itself, i.e., a substance, then the conception of change would be negated. Here we find the example of milk and butter (ksira-dadhi) utilized by the Vatsiputriyas, along with the metaphor of "fire and fuel" (Akb p), to illustrate the relationship between the aggregates and the self. If butter is considered to be substantially the same as milk, then butterness will have to belong to something different from milk. Otherwise we will be left with two different substances having the same substantial constitution.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. If we think of identity persisting through change, there is a single thing that changes as conventionally, milk becomes curd. Since that thing is identical to milk and to curd, by transitivity we would have to say that curd and milk are identical. But no one would want to put curd in his/her tea! The only way to avoid this result while retaining the idea that milk and curd are entities would be to consider them to be wholly different entities. In that case, there is still no change in an entity - only the difference between two unrelated phenomena. (fn 72. My reading of these last two verses appears to conflict with that of Inada (1970), who reads Nāgārjuna as here denying that there is change. Rather, 1take it, Nāgārjuna denies that there is any inherently existent change or any substantial entity that could be the subject of change, in virtue of the conventional reality of change and the changed.)

Kārikā XIII.7

यद्यशून्यं भवेत्किंचित्स्याच्छून्यमिति किंचन।
न किंचिदस्त्यशून्यं च कुतः शून्यं भविष्यति॥७॥

若有不空法 則應有空法
實無不空法 何得有空法

།གལ་ཏེ་སྟོང་མིན་ཅུང་ཟད་ཡོད། །སྟོང་པ་ཅུང་ཟད་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར།
།མི་སྟོང་ཅུང་ཟད་ཡོད་མིན་ན། །སྟོང་པ་*ཡོད་པར་ག་ལ་འགྱུར།།

yady aśūnyaṃ bhavet kiṃcit syāc chūnyam iti kiṃ cana |
na kiṃcid asty aśūnyaṃ ca kutaḥ śūnyaṃ bhaviṣyati ||7||

ruò yǒu bù kōng fǎ zé yīng yǒu kòng fǎ
shí wú bù kōng fǎ hé dé;děi;de yǒu kòng fǎ

| gal te stoṅ min cuṅ zad yod | | stoṅ pa cuṅ zad yod par 'gyur |
| mi stoṅ cuṅ zad yod min na | | stoṅ pa yod par ga la 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - If something devoid of the nature of sunya exists, then there also will be something else which may have the nature of sunya. But as anything devoid of the nature of sunya does not exist, how could there exist the nature of sunya?

JONES (Skt):
[7] If there were anything at all that is not empty, then there would exist something we could call "empty." However, there exists nothing nonempty - how then can there be the "empty"?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If there were to be something non-empty, there would then be something called empty. However, there is nothing that is non-empty. How could there be something empty?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If something would be nonopen, then nothing would be "open."
If nothing is nonopen, why will there be open?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. When a small amount of unbalanced state exists,
Even a small amount of the balanced state can never exist at all.
However, when a bit of unbalanced state does not stay at all,
Where is it possible for the balanced state to exist even in future at all?

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 If there were something not devoid of being there would be something devoid of being; but there is nothing not devoid of being, so how will anything be devoid of being?

STRENG (Skt):
7. If something would be non-empty, something would logically also be empty But nothing is non-empty, so how will it become empty?

ROBINSON (Skt):
If there were something non-empty, there might be something termed empty, there is no non-empty something, and so where might there be an empty something?

BOCKING (Ch):
13v8 If dharmas which are not empty exist
Then empty dharmas should exist
But in reality non-empty dharmas do not exist
How can there be empty dharmas?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If a bit of the non-empty existed, a bit of the empty would also exist. If there did not exist a bit of the non-empty, how could the empty exist?

DOCTOR (Tb):
It there were a bit of something that is not empty,
There could be a bit of something that is empty.
As there is not a bit that is not empty,
How could there be anything that is empty? [XIII.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. If there were even a trifle nonempty,
Emptiness itself would be but a trifle.
But not even a trifle is nonempty.
How could emptiness be an entity?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. If there were even the slightest bit nonempty,
Emptiness itself would be the slightest bit existent.
But when not there is not even the slightest nonempty thing,
How could emptiness exist?

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
If there were the slightest thing not empty,
There would be that much emptiness existent.
Since, however, there is not the slightest thing not empty,
How could emptiness exist? (7)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
13.7 If there were a non-empty thing, there would be an empty thing as well. But there is nothing that is non-empty. How could there be something empty?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

13/8 If non-empty dharmas existed, then empty dharmas should exist interdependently with them. But in what has gone before we have refuted non-empty dharmas with various types of reasonings. Since no dharmas exist which are non-empty, there is no reciprocal dependence, and since there is no reciprocal dependence, how can empty dharmas exist?

(18c11) Question: You say that because no non-empty dharmas exist, empty dharmas do not exist either. If so, this is a doctrine of emptiness. But since there is no reciprocal dependence there should not be any clinging (to a position). If there are opposites, there must be interdependence. If there are no opposites, then there will be no interdependence. If there is no interdependence there will be no characteristics, and if there are no characteristics there will be no clinging (to a position). It is in this way that we regard your doctrine of emptiness.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

(fn 3 This implies that meaningful statements derive from pairs of opposite concepts. And 'absence of being' cannot be asserted of things: one of the variants of the Madhyamika paradox.)

If there were something called devoidness of being (fn 4 i.e. if devoidness were ontic.) there would be an essential nature in each thing as its basis (*asraya*). But it is not so. The reasoning here is that, if we suppose devoidness of being to be the universal characteristic of all elements of existence there can be no non-devoidness (*asunyata*) because there is no element which is not devoid. If there are no non-devoid entities, that is if there is no non-devoidness, then because it will not be related to its antithesis (*pratipaksa*), there will certainly not be any devoidness either, as there is no garland of flowers in the sky. If there is no devoidness of being no entities will exist as basis for it. This is dead certain.

You may object that the illustrious one, for the purpose of liberating those who follow him, taught three ways to liberation, namely, devoidness, causelessness and desirelessness. These are not learned in the systems of non-Buddhists but only in the teaching of Buddha. The illustrious Buddhas, the sole light of all creation, are born solely for the purpose of these three truths. They are born into this world which is given over to the dark confusion of false teachings and are the unquenchable flame of the truth of the absence of being in things. But you (fn 5 Candrakīrti; opponent still speaks.), sir, by a deceitful interpretation of the teaching of the realized one, are about to destroy this very absence of being.

Good gracious! Like one whose head is held high in pride, you have overlooked, through a total misconception, the superior, blissful, direct path to the city of *nirvāṇa*. You thirst for liberation and depend on a path which, though it seems to lead to the city of liberation, winds through the forests of the cycle of death and re-birth. You are confused by a stubborn predilection for reality and roam about in the forests of the cycle of death and re-birth. The wise should reproach you, but you, subject to the obstinacy of pride, reproach them. Indeed, according to the great monarchs of medicine who completely cure the disease of the afflictions:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The conception of "emptiness" or "non-substantiality" is intended to eliminate the belief in substance and attribute conceived in a metaphysical sense. However, if "emptiness" itself were to be used in an attributive sense, that is as a characteristic of something substantial, then "emptiness" itself becomes "something" (kimcana). A substantial thing is a "non-empty-something" (asunyam kimcit). Such a thing does not exist. If so, there cannot be something called "empty" (sunyam iti kimcana). This is the clearest warning from Nagarjuna against moving towards the metaphysics of "emptiness" (sunyata drsti, see below).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. Verses 7 and 8 are critical for any understanding of the subtle doctrine Nāgārjuna is developing of the emptiness of emptiness. In XIII: 7, Nāgārjuna is emphasizing that emptiness is not one of the many properties that a thing might or might not have. It is not that some things are empty and some are nonempty, or that all things happen to be empty although they might have been otherwise. Emptiness is important because it is the only way that things can exist. Moreover, emptiness is not an entity. It is not a distinct phenomenon to which other phenomena are related. It is exactly the emptiness of all phenomena. (fn 73. So here I agree with Wood (1994, p. 174) when he concludes that the purport of this verse is that emptiness is not an entity. But unlike Wood, I do not think that entails a nihilism with respect to emptiness. It remains a characteristic <if all phenomena (including itself) and, hence, like them, is conventionally real. See also Siderits (1989).) The conventional character of conventional entities and their emptiness are one and the same.

Kārikā XIII.8

शून्यता सर्वदृष्टीनां प्रोक्ता निःसरणं जिनैः।
येषां तु शून्यता दृष्टिस्तानसाध्यान् बभाषिरे॥८॥

śūnyatā sarvadṛṣṭīnāṃ proktā niḥsaraṇaṃ jinaiḥ |
yeṣāṃ tu śūnyatādṛṣṭis tān asādhyān babhāṣire ||8||

大聖說空法 為離諸見故
若復見有空 諸佛所不化

dà shèng shuì kōng fǎ wéi lí zhū jiàn gù
ruò fù jiàn yǒu kòng zhū fú;fó suǒ bù huà;huā

།རྒྱལ་བ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད།།ལྟ་ཀུན་ངེས་པར་འབྱུང་བར་གསུངས།
།གང་དག་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ལྟ་བ།།དེ་དག་བསྒྲུབ་ཏུ་མེད་པར་གསུངས།།

| rgyal ba rnams kyis stoṅ pa ñid | | lta kun ṅes par ’byuṅ bar gsuṅs |
| gaṅ dag stoṅ pa ñid lta ba | | de (7)dag bsgrub tu med par gsuṅs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - The wise men (i.e., enlightened ones) have said that sunyata or the nature of thusness is the relinquishing of all false views. Yet it is said that those who adhere to the idea or concept of sunyata are incorrigible.

JONES (Skt):
[8.] The victorious ones have proclaimed emptiness to be the forsaking of all views. Those for whom emptiness is a view are said to be incurable.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The Victorious Ones have announced that emptiness is the relinquishing of all views. Those who are possessed of the view of emptiness are said to be incorrigible.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The conquerer taught openness as the refutation of all views.
But those who hold openness as a view are called irremediable.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. The perfectly balanced autonomic nervous system, is all the origin of intuitive Truth,
Therefore the contents of those Buddhist Masters' teachings are all unchangeable True Pursuit.
Those are just the doctrine, which is based on the perfectly balanced autonomic nervous system,
And they are all never defeated Proclamation.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 The spiritual conquerors have proclaimed the absence of being in things to be the exhaustion of all theories and views; those for whom the absence of being is itself a theory they declared to be incurable.

STRENG (Skt):
8. Emptiness is proclaimed by the victorious one as the refutation of all viewpoints; But those who hold "emptiness" as a viewpoint—the true perceivers have called those "incurable" (asadhya).

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XIII.8 The Victorious Ones have announced that emptiness is the relinquishing of all views. Those who in turn hold emptiness as a view were said to be incurable.

ROBINSON (Skt):
The Victors have declared emptiness as the expeller of all views; but those who hold emptiness as a view they have pronounced incurable.

BOCKING (Ch):
13v9 The Great Sage speaks of the emptiness of dharmas
In order to wean us from all views.
If you then reinstate a view of 'emptiness',
You cannot be taught by all the Buddhas.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The Conquerors taught emptiness as the forsaking of all views. Those who view emptiness are taught to be without realisation [incurable/incorrigible].

DOCTOR (Tb):
The Victorious Ones have taught emptiness
As a deliverance from all views.
For those whose view is emptiness, they teach,
Nothing can be accomplished. [XIII.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. The victorious ones have said
That emptiness is the relinquishing of all views.
For whomever emptiness is a view,
That one will accomplish nothing.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. The victorious ones have said
That emptiness is the elimination of all views.
Anyone for whom emptiness is a view
Is incorrigible.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
13.8 (axiomatic) The Victorious Ones have said that emptiness is the relinquishing of all views. Those possessing a view of emptiness are incorrigible.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

13/9 It was in order to destroy the sixty-two views, as well as ignorance, craving etc., and all the afflictions, that the Buddha spoke of emptiness. If a person produces further views about emptiness, such a person is incorrigible. As an example, a sick man has to take medicine to be healed. If the medicine makes him ill again he cannot get better. Or it is like a flame coming out of firewood which can be extinguished by water. If it had been produced by water, what could one use to extinguish it? In the same way emptiness is the water which can extinguish the fires of affliction. There are some people who, because they carry a heavy load of karma, have a mind steeped in craving and attachment and are dull in insight, produce views of emptiness. They either say that there is emptiness, or that there is not emptiness, and through (these ideas) they again generate afflictions. If one (tries to) instruct this kind of person in emptiness, he will say 'I have known this emptiness for a long time'. But without this emptiness there is no way to nirvana, for as the sutra says, 'Unless you pass through the gate of emptiness, marklessness and non-doing, your liberation will be nothing but words'.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The exhaustion (*nihsaranam*), the ceasing to function of all ways of holding to fixed concepts stemming from theories or views (*drsti*) of any kind whatsoever, is the absence of being in things. Hut the mere ceasing to function of what stems from holding views is not itself a real thing. With those who obstinately hold to the reality of things, even in the case of the absence of being, we can have no dialogue. How could we, who teach that liberation ensues on desisting from all conceptual thinking whatsoever? It is as if one man said to another. 'I have no wares at all to sell you.' If this other man were then to say, 'Give me what you call those "no wares at all" ', how would he be able to take hold of any real wares? Similarly, how can there be an end to the pertinaceous holding to reality (*bhavabhinivesa*) on the part of those who pertinaceously hold to reality even in the case of the absence of being? That is why the great healers, the realized ones, greatly wise, having diagnosed this disease in the light of the great art of healing, do not attend to them.

As the illustrious one said in the *Ratnakuta Sutra*, 'It is not devoidness of being which renders the elements of existence devoid of being; rather the elements are devoid by nature. It is not causelessness which renders the elements of existence causeless; rather the elements are by nature without cause. It is not purposelessness which renders the elements of existence purposeless; rather the elements are purposeless by nature. Just this way of regarding things. Kasyapa, I call the middle way; it is the true way of regarding the elements of existence. But those, Kasyapa, who seize on the absence of being as an object they assail the absence of being and such, I say, are hopelessly lost. Indeed, Kasyapa, it were better if one resorted to a belief in the reality of the individual as unshakable as Mount Sumeru, than to hold to a theory of the absence of being through the stubborn belief in the unreality of things. Why is that? Because Kasyapa, the absence of being is the exhaustion of all theories and views.

'One for whom, in turn, the absence of being itself becomes a dogmatic view I call incurable. It is, Kasyapa, as if a sick man were given a medicine by a doctor, but that medicine, having removed his ills, was not itself expelled but remained in the stomach. What do you think, Kasyapa, will this man be freed of his sickness? No indeed, illustrious one, the sickness of this man in whose stomach the medicine, having removed all his ills remains and is not expelled, would be more violent.

The illustrious one said: In this sense, Kasyapa, the absence of being is the exhaustion of all dogmatic views. But the one for whom the absence of being itself becomes a fixed belief, I call incurable.'

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The inevitable conclusion to be derived from XIII. 7 is that the conception of "emptiness" (sunyata) or "nonsubstantiality" (nairatmya), utilized by the Buddha in order to free oneself from all metaphysical views (drsti), can turn out to be an equally unsatisfactory view, if its application is to be carried beyond its proper limits. Indeed, Nagarjuna perceives such activity as leading to worse forms of dogmatism.

8. The sense of "view" (Tib: *Ita-ba,* Skt: *dwi)* at work in verse 8 is crucial. By a view, Nāgārjuna here means a theory on the same level of discourse at which reificationist-nihilist debates proceed. A view in this sense is a view about what does or does not exist when existence is taken to mean inherent existence, or about the nature of phenomena, presupposing that the idea of a nature is coherent. So both the theory that compounded phenomena exist in virtue of having natures and identities and the theory that since they don'! have such natures and identities they don't exist at all are views in this sense. Both presuppose that things exist at all if and only if they do so inherently. But the analysis in terms of emptiness is not a view at all in this sense. For the claim is *not* that things exist in virtue of having the property of emptiness as an essence. Rather it is the claim that they are empty *because* they have *no* essence.

It is also very important to see that this understanding of what a view is is closely bound up with Nāgārjuna's account of assertion and of the role of language in Madhyamika dialectic. For Nāgārjuna, assertion in the literal sense is always the ascription of a property to an entity. As long as we are talking from the conventional standpoint, there is no problem here. There are plenty of conventional entities and conventional properties to go around and, so, lots of available conventionally true assertions. That is the basis of conventional truth. It is also important to note here that corresponding to these conventional assertions are real propositions that make them true or false - entities with or without the ascribed properties. Again, as long as we remain and are aware that we remain within the framework of conventional designation and conventional assertion, this poses no problems. But, when we start to do metaphysics, it is easy to slip into nonsense: For now, when we want to characterize the essence of a thing, we take ourselves to be positing a non-conventional thing and ascribing to it an essential property. And there not only are no such things, but there are not even *possibly* such things. There is no ultimate *way the world is* that we are characterizing, truly or falsely.

The danger to which Nāgārjuna is here adverting with respect to Madhyamika philosophy (of treating Madhyamika as a view) is then connected to assertion in the following way: If one were to think that in asserting that things are empty that one is positing entities and ascribing to those independent entities the property of I emptiness, one would be treating the language of Madhyamika as making literal assertions. But from the standpoint from which these would be true, there are no entities and no characteristics, and a fortiori, there are no entities having the characteristic of being empty. The language must hence be understood, from the ultimate perspective, not as making assertions, but rather as ostending - indicating that which cannot be literally asserted without falling into nonsense - as Wittgenstein puts it in the *Tractatus,* showing that which cannot be said.

Nāgārjuna makes this much more explicit in his discussion of positionlessness in *Vigrahavytivartani* XXI-XXVIII, where he explicitly denies that the Madhyamika assert any propositions, in virtue of there being no entities or properties presupposed by their use of language existing independently and corresponding to the words used. Aryadeva makes the same point at *Catusataka* XVI:

"21. Candrakīrti in his comments on these verses compares one who treats emptiness as an essential property - as opposed to the lack of any essential property, thus treating Madhyamika language as assertoric in the sense of asserting the view that all things have the essential nature of emptiness - to one who, upon entering a shop and learning that there are no wares for sale, asks the shopkeeper to sell him the 'no wares.'"

(fn 74. Murti (1985) puts this point nicely: "Criticism of theories is no theory. Criticism is but the awareness of what a theory is, how it is made up, it is not the proposing of a new theory. Negation of positions is not one more position" (p. xxiii). See also Siderits (1989) for an interesting discussion of the connection between Nāgārjuna's claim to positionlessness and contemporary antirealism. Siderits puts the point this way: - (Nāgārjuna) neither asserts nor intimates any claims about the ultimate nature of reality, for he takes the very notion of a way that the world is independently of our cognitive activity to be devoid of meaning.... The slogan 'The ultimate truth is that there is no ultimate truth' is merely a striking way of putting the point that an acceptable canon of rationality will have to reflect human needs. interest, and institutions. (p. 6) I am neither completely comfortable with Siderits's construction of the contemporary realism-antirealism debate nor with his location of Nāgārjuna on the antirealist side. (I rather think that Nāgārjuna would reject the presupposition of that debate - that the relevant sense of "real" is coherent in the first place.) But the connection he establishes between positionlessness and the rejection of a realist ontology is instructive. All of this will become much more explicit (if not much clearer) in the discussions in XXII, XXIV, XXV, and XXVII below. I discuss this at greater length in Garfield (unpublished).)

(fn 75. Ng (1993), however, argues that this verse should be read "all false views." So he claims that, according to Nāgārjuna, to understand emptiness is to relinquish all false views and that anyone who holds false views about emptiness is incurable. But Nāgārjuna doesn't say this, and the interpretation seems unfounded. See pp. 18-25.)

To hold a view of emptiness - to reify it and then attribute it to phenomena - would then involve simultaneously reifying those phenomena as having a fixed nature and denying their existence at all, in virtue of disparaging their conventional reality as unreality by contrast with the reality of emptiness. It is this incoherence, so characteristic of essentialist philosophies, that leads Nāgārjuna to assert that one holding such a view is completely hopeless - incapable of accomplishing anything, philosophically or soteriologically.(fn 76. The Tibetan *"bsgrub-tu-med-pa"* (will accomplish nothing) translates the Sanskrit term *"asādhyān,"* which car

also be translated “incurable.”) (fn 77. This does not entail, however, pace Sprung (1979, p. 9,15-16), that nothing is intelligible. Nāgārjuna spends a good deal of time developing quite lucid analyses of conventional phenomena and their relation to emptiness. What fails to be intelligible is, rather, the idea of inherent existence. But since no phenomena exist that way. and since emptiness is intelligible, the actual nature of phenomena is intelligible.)

This argument against the coherence of any understanding of emptiness as itself an essence is tied very tightly to the analysis in Chapter XXIV: 18-40 of the emptiness of emptiness and of the connection between emptiness, dependent arising, and convention and tied most directly to the concluding verse of the text, XXVII: 30. (The commentaries on XXIV: 36 and XXVII: 30 below may be useful in elucidating this verse as well.) It is clearly an early anticipation of the powerful and climactic conclusions drawn in those two discussions.

Chapter XIV

संसर्गपरीक्षा चतुर्दशमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀合品第十四(八偈)

།ཕྲད་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་བཞི་པའོ།།

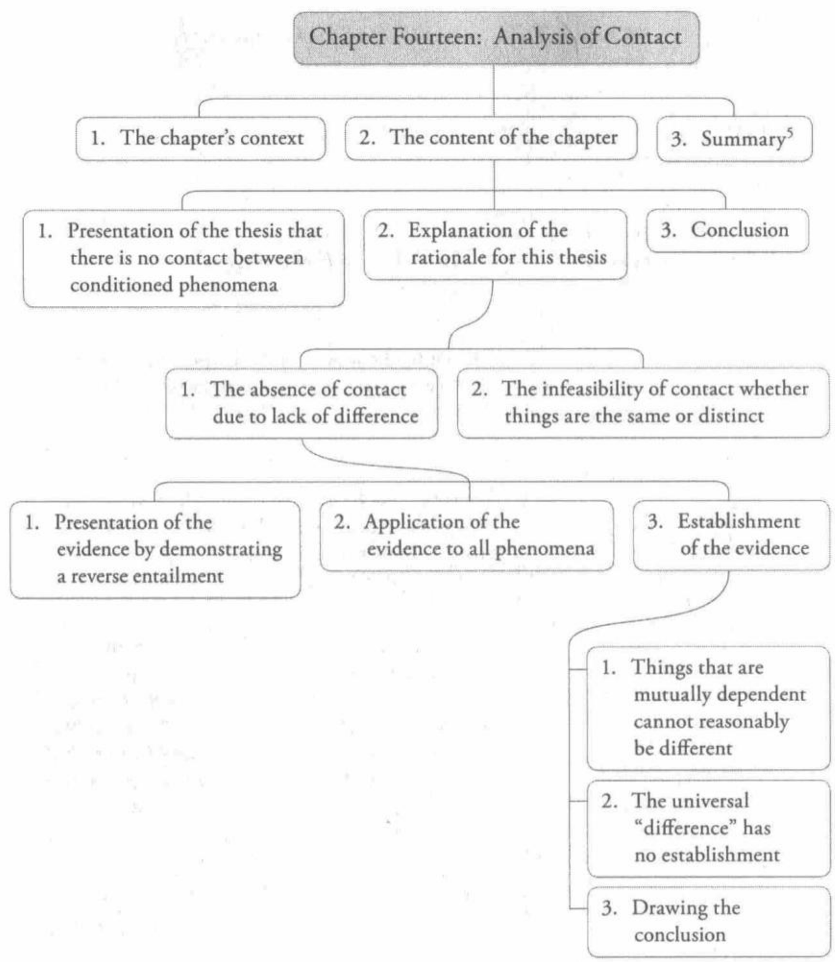
saṃsargaparīkṣā nāma caturdaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XIV: Examination of Connection

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter XIV

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the second part of the second major section of the text—that on the two selflessnesses—the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. We have completed the first part of that section: the refutation of the essential existence of things. **[262:7]** We now begin the second of those two parts: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of things. This part has three sections: the refutation of the essential existence of contact, the refutation of the essential existence of appropriation of causes and conditions, and the refutation of the essential existence of bondage and liberation. This chapter is the first of those three parts.

EXPLANATION:

Here someone might argue as follows: Things exist essentially because their contact is presented, because it says frequently in sutra that, depending on eye and material form, visual consciousness arises. And depending on the assembly of these three, there is contact. That which arises along with contact is feeling.1 In the same way these two phenomena called "feeling" and "discrimination" are in contact and are not out of contact. Attachment, anger, and ignorance—the three overpowering passions—overpower one. Thus, all compound phenomena involve contact.

Refuting this thesis has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of contact and the demonstration that this refutes things being in the process of contact.

SUMMARY:

While if the contact, possession, coalescing, and collection of phenomena existed through their own power they could not be posited, one should be firm in one's ascertainment, through the framework of the two truths, of the tenability of all of these things when they are posited as essenceless.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XIV - Examination of Combination or Union

This chapter discusses the concept of combination or union (samsara) and once again Nagarjuna resorts to the three temporal moments in discussing any concept or entity. Verse I has direct relationship to Chapter III which examines the six ayatanas (seats of sense perception) and Verse 2 to Chapter VI which examines the passion and the impassioned self. But quite explicit in the whole discussion is the fact that Nagarjuna has in mind two ideas of the Madhyamika Credo, i.e., with respect to non-identity and non-difference. His argument is to show the absurdity of these ideas combining and evolving one from the other or from their identical or different natures. Thus, finally, he arrives at the conclusion that the presently combining, an already combined, and the agent which combines are untenable.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

14. *Association* (*samsarga*). The dispositions are instrumental in our forming of views on the basis of experience. It was also pointed out that if we were not to formulate such views we would be no different from the sessile sea-anemone. Dependent arising *(pratityasamutpada*), impermanence (*anityata*), nonsubstantiality (*anatmata), emptiness (sunyata*), etc. are all concepts which would be rendered meaningless unless they were to be identified with the "dependently arisen," "the impermanent," "the non-substantial," and "the empty" given to us in experience. They are views or theories formulated by stretching out our experiences into the dim past as well as the future.

However, some of the Buddhist metaphysicians, as explained earlier, had complicated the situation for Nagarjuna by their analysis of experience into discrete momentary events. Such as analysis, which led to the formulation of the metaphysical notion of self-nature (*svabhava*), also created other problems that these metaphysicians were never able to solve satisfactorily. One of them is the distinction they made between mind (*citta*) and matter (*rupa*). In their ultimate constitution, these were explained as having completely distinct natures (*svabhava*). Mind was considered to be im-material (*a-rupa*) and matter was looked upon as being non-mental (*a-citta*).

Avoiding such a reductive analysis, early Buddhism was able to maintain that depending upon the eye, the visible form, and consciousness perception (*samjna*) arises.92 However, following that reductive analysis, the Buddhist metaphysicians experienced difficulty in explaining not only perceptual experience, but also conceptual formulation of such perceptual experience.

This accounts for the need to have a chapter on "association" (*samsarga*) following the chapter on the "dispositions" (*samskara*). How is it possible to bring together into association (*samsarga*) the object (*drastavya*) and the subject (*drastr*) in order to have a visual perception (*darsana*)? Nagarjuna begins this chapter with a denial of such a possibility. In doing so he is specifically denying the possibility of an association of events that are considered to be ultimately distinct, and this idea is being emphasized in Kumarajiva's translation of XIV.1. The problems of identity and difference that arise as a result of such a reductive analysis are once again clearly brought out in this chapter.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Connection

I the beholder,
The one I behold,
The beholding itself
Do not connect with one another-

Just as I who desire,
The one I desire,
The desiring itself
Do not connect.

We do not connect
Because we are not
Apart from one another;
We would not be together

If we were apart.

I am other than you
In relation to you;
I could not be your other without you.

Were I other than you,
Then even without you
I would be someone else;
I cannot be your other without you.

There is no otherness
In either you or me;
Without otherness,
There is no me or you.

I do not connect with me
Nor do I connect with you –
No connecting, no
Connections, no connectors.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

14. Connections

This topic naturally follows the topic of compoundedness. For Nagarjuna, a self-existing reality is either *identical* to something else or absolutely *different* - no other connection is possible for self-existent realities. Here, the question is how the connection of an object that is seen, the act of seeing itself, and one who sees can be connected if they are three real entities.

"Otherness" does not exist in one entity alone but is an inherently relational property: one thing cannot be an "other" without another thing (v. 5). (The same is applied in Chapter 19 to the segments of time.) So, one thing's property of "otherness" is dependent on another thing. Hence, "another thing" does not exist without the other thing (v. 6).

With self-existent entities, no connections of independent entities or of identical entities or of an entity and its properties are possible. Nor can any connections themselves be real (self-existent) since they depend on the realities being related. And without self-existence, there are no real entities to connect. So if everything is empty, there are no "real" entities to connect. Thus, no connections are really possible whether we accept either a self-existence metaphysics or an emptiness metaphysics. Connections can be accepted on the conventional level, but ultimately there no realities to connect.

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

14

An Examination of Contact

In the Sutra Requested by the Bodhisattva "Shining Intelligence," the Buddha taught:

Forms neither meet nor part.

THIS TEACHING IS EASY to understand if we think of appearances in dreams. Since the things that appear in dreams never truly meet, they never truly part either. Even so, meeting and parting still appear to happen and we conceive of them as being real, and therefore we must train in understanding their true nature. To put this into verse for you:

In this great expanse of space, without center or end,
On this planet, where there is neither top nor bottom,
Friends and enemies, it seems,
Are forever meeting and parting,
But please know that it is all just like a dream!

Please do not take meeting and parting to be real.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to those who asserted that things do essentially exist because meeting and parting exist. Meeting and parting occur all the time, they claimed, and therefore there must be something to meet and part! However, the mere appearance of meeting and parting and the corresponding thought that they are real are not enough to establish their true existence, because these appearances and thoughts also occur in dreams. Therefore, in

order to help these people understand that things do not truly exist, Nagarjuna had to demonstrate logically that meeting and parting are not real.

Nagarjuna analyzes meeting, or contact, with regard to sense perception. If sense perception truly occurred, there would have to be some contact between the perceived object, the sense faculty, and the perceiving sense consciousness. Thus the question is, is there any contact between these three or not? Nagarjuna gives the answer in the first verse of the chapter:

The object seen, the eye that sees, and the seer—
These three do not meet each other,
Either in pairs or all together.

Three things must come together in order for there to be a moment of eye sense perception: the object that is seen, the eye sense faculty that sees, and the seer—the eye sense consciousness. "These three do not meet each other in pairs" means that the eye does not come into contact with the object that it sees; the eye sense consciousness does not come into contact with the object; and the eye sense consciousness does not come into contact with the eye. Therefore, they do not meet in pairs, nor do they all three meet together at the same time.

The reason the eye sense consciousness and the form that it perceives cannot meet each other is that the form is one of the causes of the eye sense consciousness—it is called the eye consciousness' focal condition. Therefore, the form that is the cause and the consciousness perceiving the form that is the result cannot exist at the same time, because if they did, one could not be the cause of the other. If the object perceived and the consciousness perceiving it come into existence simultaneously, then the former could not cause the latter to arise, because it would have no opportunity to do so. Logically, then, the form would have to occur before the eye sense consciousness if it were going to be its cause. It would have to cease before the eye sense consciousness arose, and that is why the two cannot meet.

Of course, this second possibility—that the perceived form precedes the sense consciousness that perceives it—is also impossible. If that were the case, the perceived object and the perceiving subject would be unable to make any connection with each other. If the perceived object ceased before the consciousness that perceived it arose, what precisely would that consciousness perceive? Its object would no longer exist! It would have nothing to perceive at all.

Since the perceived object and perceiving subject do not occur simultaneously or sequentially, sense perception is a mere appearance that does not truly exist.

The "self-liberation of contact through recollection" is an important Mahamudra practice in which one recalls again and again that the apparent meeting of consciousness and object is not a real occurrence; it is a mere appearance, the union of appearance and emptiness. The five sense consciousnesses are nonconceptual—they are free from any thoughts that things truly exist. The conceptual aspect of the mental consciousness, however, follows this direct valid cognition of the sense consciousnesses and conceives of the sense consciousnesses* experiences as being real. By following this thought of sense perception as being real with the recollection that the sense perception is appearance-emptiness, one practices self-liberation of contact through recollection, the remedy for that mistaken belief in the sense perceptions' true existence. Milarepa sang of this practice in several of his songs. It is an important practice because we have to realize the transcendence of the meeting of object, faculty, and consciousness if we are to realize the genuine nature of reality. If we still believe that the meeting of object, faculty, and consciousness is real, it is a sign that our certainty in emptiness is not stable yet.

Nagarjuna applies his analysis of meeting to the mental afflictions and the remaining sources of consciousness in the second verse:

Desire, the desirous one, and the object of desire do not meet either,
Nor do any of the remaining afflictions,
Nor any of the remaining sources of consciousness:
In these sets of three there is neither meeting in pairs nor all together.

The contact between desire, the individual who experiences the desire, and the desired object, just like the meeting of object, faculty, and consciousness, is a mere appearance that occurs due to the coming together of causes and conditions—it is not the slightest bit real. The same can be said for anger, the angry individual, and the object of the anger, as well as for the other mental afflictions (pride, desire, and stupidity), those who experience them, and their objects. You should also apply this analysis to the remaining sources of consciousness: sound, the ear, and the ear sense consciousness, and the remaining four (nose, tongue, body, and mind) sets of three (object, sense faculty, and consciousness).

Concerning this, Mipham Rinpoche explains in his commentary, "Sense objects, faculties, and consciousnesses meet neither in pairs nor all together, just like the son and daughter of a childless woman." This is a good example! It is an example coming from the perspective of object, faculty, and consciousness having no existent essence, an example from the perspective of their emptiness. From the perspective of their appearance, their meeting is an incidence of dependent arising, a mere coming together of causes and conditions, like in a dream. It is the union of appearance and emptiness. So there is no need to be afraid of emptiness meaning "nothing-ness," because it does not.

When we think that the meeting of object, faculty, and consciousness is real, suffering increases. In fact, you could say that most of the suffering in the world is the result of believing sense contact or the absence of sense contact to be truly existent. However, when we gain certainty that sense contact is a dependently arisen mere appearance, like in a dream, the quality of our meditation increases. Therefore, do not be attached to the meeting of object, faculty, and consciousness as being real. Know that the appearance of their meeting is illusory and dreamlike.

For all ignorant beings without exception,
Clinging to contact as being real increases their suffering,
So they are in need of instruction in the practice
Of self-liberation through recollection.

Our suffering increases in direct proportion to the extent that we cling to the meeting of object, faculty, and consciousness as being real. That is why the practice of self-liberation through recollection is so important.

In his song The Eight Wonderful Forms of Happiness, Milarepa sang of how he used this practice to cut the rope that binds perceived object and perceiving subject:

The meeting of appearances and the six kinds of consciousness—
This is the guide that turns adverse conditions into a path.
Is there anyone here who is able to keep to this path and follow it through?
The one for whom desire and craving self-liberate is happy.
The rope that ties perceiver and perceived when cut is emaho!

(fn *Emaho* is a Tibetan word that expresses surprise or amazement.)

The connection between perceiver and perceived is not truly existent; it is a dependently arisen mere appearance. Therefore, we have to cut the rope of clinging to duality as being real. The way to do that is to reflect on the emptiness of the meeting of perceiver and perceived with our precise knowledge of the genuine nature of reality.

When we remember that the true nature of sense perceptions is appearance-emptiness, our experience of them will be open, spacious, and relaxed. This is the method that turns experiences we would otherwise consider to be adverse conditions into the path of Dharma. We can begin to experience what we would otherwise consider to be painful and difficult as open, spacious, and relaxed, just as we would experience the appearance of difficulty when we were dreaming and we recognized that it was a dream. You need to train in this again and again, first with minor experiences of suffering, and then gradually you will be able to apply it even to experiences of great suffering. Recognizing that both happiness and suffering are mere conceptual imputations, and that therefore genuine reality transcends them both, you will experience the inconceivable and inexpressible equality of happiness and suffering, an experience that is, as Milarepa sang, a most wonderful form of happiness.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XIV

संसर्गपरीक्षा चतुर्दशमं प्रकरणम्।

saṃsargaparīkṣā nāma caturdaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀合品第十四(八偈)

zhōng lùn guān hé;gé pǐn dì shí sì(bā jié;jì)

།ཕྲད་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་བཞི་པའོ།།

| phrad pa brtag pa źes bya ste rab tu byed pa bcu bźi pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XIV - Examination of Combination or Union

JONES (Skt):
14. Connections

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Association

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
14. Analysis of Combination

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[14] Examination of Fusion (8 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
[omitted]

STRENG (Skt):
Section 14 - An Analysis of Unification (Combination) In 8 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
14. combination (the self-other relation).

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 14 Contemplation of Combination 8 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Connections

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XIV - Analysis of Contact

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XIV: Examination of Connection

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XIV - Examination of Contact

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 14: AN EXAMINATION OF CONTACT

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Fourteen - Examination of Unification

PINGALA COMMENTARY

14/0 The proponent says: In the earlier chapter (Ch 3) refuting the sense-functions, we explained that seeing, what is seen, and the seer cannot be established. Since these three things are not different dharmas, they do not combine, and the meaning of no-combining will now be explained.

Question: Why is there no combination of the three elements of eye etc?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter omitted by Sprung]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Fourteen Examination of Association (Samsarga-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XIV Examination of Connection

The word here translated as "connection" *(phrad-pa)* is the term denoting the relation between the components that are compounded in any compounded phenomenon. It can also describe the relation between two things coming together in space and time or colliding, or two things fitting together, and while this can be taken fairly literally in the context of physical objects when they are understood as compounded of their parts, the relation is actually much more general than that. In fact, the example that Nāgārjuna takes as central, and one that is used by some earlier Buddhist theorists as an example of a case of connection in this sense, is visual perception. In such a case, according to the proponent of the reality of meeting, or compounding, the subject, the sensory organs, the sensory faculty, and the object join together, or "connect," not in a literal physical sense of spatiotemporal coincidence, but rather in the sense of forming an ensemble. Sense perception is, on this view, the entire compound ensemble.

So, dialectically, this chapter follows quite naturally on the heels of the examination of compounded entities. For we can imagine an opponent might reason as follows: Nāgārjuna may be right in denying the inherent existence of compounded entities in virtue of their dependence upon their parts and upon their parts being compounded, but surely since these phenomena depend upon being compounded that relation - the connection - exists. This chapter is aimed at replying to this position.

Kārikā XIV.1

द्रष्टव्यं दर्शनं द्रष्टा त्रीण्येतानि द्विशो द्विशः।
सर्वशश्च न संसर्गमन्योन्येन व्रजन्त्युत॥१॥

LVP 250,9-10 - LVP 258,6-7
draṣṭavyaṃ darśanaṃ draṣṭā trīṇy etāni dviśo dviśaḥ |
sarvaśaś ca na saṃsargam anyonyena vrajanty uta ||1||

見可見見者 是三各異方
如是三法異 終無有合時

T1564: vol 30, pg 18c28
jiàn kě jiàn jiàn zhě shì sān gè;gě yì fāng
rú shì sān fǎ yì zhōng wú yǒu hé;gé shí

།བལྟ་བྱ་ལྟ་བ་ལྟ་བ་པོ། །གསུམ་པོ་དེ་དག་གཉིས་གཉིས་དང་།
།ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱང་ནི་ཕན་ཚུན་དུ། །ཕྲད་པར་འགྱུར་བ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།

Tg tsa 8a7 - Tg tsa 8b4
|| blta bya lta ba lta ba po | | gsum po de dag gñis gñis daṅ |
| thams cad kyaṅ ni phan tshun du | | phrad par ’gyur pa yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - The three phases of the object perceived, the perceiving function, and the perceiver cannot mutually combine in twofold senses or all together. - Note: The twofold senses refer to: (1) The object and the perceiving function, (2) The perceiving function and perceiver, and (3) The perceiver and the object.

JONES (Skt):
[1] The object seen, the seeing itself, and the seer - these three do not connect to each other in pairs or collectively.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The object of seeing, the seeing and the seer - these three do not function in mutual association either in pairs or all together.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
These three, seeing, the seen, and the seer, in pairs or collectively,
also do not become mutually combined.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. To be seen, an action to see, and a man, who sees,
Those three kinds of miscellaneously colorful mixture are produced by combination between the two and the two.
Never being totally fused together,
But mutually combined one by one actually.

STRENG (Skt):
1. That which is seen, sight, and the "seer": these three Do not combine together either in pairs or altogether.

BOCKING (Ch):
14v1 Seeing, what is seen and the seer;
Each of these three has a different realm,
The three dharmas being thus different
They will never for a moment combine.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The seen, the seeing and the seer: these three do not mutually connect [as] pairs or all [together].

DOCTOR (Tb):
The seen, sight, and the seer-
Do not, either in pairs
Or as a group,
Ever come into contact. [XIV.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. The seen, seeing, and the seer:
These three-pairwise or
All together -
Do not connect to one another.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. The seen, seeing, and the seer;
These three—neither pairwise nor
All together—do not
Exist in contact with each other.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
The object seen, the eye that sees, and the seer—
These three do not meet each other,
Either in pairs or all together. (1)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
14.1 The seen, seeing, and the seer do not combine in any way, either all together or in pairs.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

14/1 'Seeing' is the function of the eye, 'what is seen' is the material form, and 'the seer' is the self. Each of these three things occupies a different place and there will never be a time when they combine. 'Different place' means that the eye is inside the body, and forms are outside the body, while the self may be said to be either inside the body or to be everywhere and in all places. This is why there is no combination.

(19a8) Furthermore, if you say that a dharma of seeing exists, it must be either seeing involving combination, or seeing not involving combination, but both of these are wrong, and why? If it is seeing with combination, then according to where the object is, the sense-function and self should be there as well, but this is not the case, and consequently there is no combination. If it is seeing with no combination, then there would have to be seeing with sense-function, the self and the object each occupying different places, but then there would be no seeing, and why? Because if, for example, the eye-function is here, it cannot see a jug in a distant place. Consequently in neither case is there seeing.

(19a13) Question: Through the combination of four things; self, mind, sense-function and object, knowing is produced. We do have the ability to know the myriad objects such as pots, clothes etc., and therefore there must be seeing, what is seen and the seer.

(19a15) Reply: These matters have already been refuted in the chapter on the sense-functions, but we will now explain them once again. You say that four things combine to produce knowing. This knowing is either produced after seeing objects such as pots, clothes, etc., or it arises before seeing them. If it arises after having seen them, such knowing is useless. If it arises before seeing them, it would be before any combination, so how would knowing have been produced? If you say that the four things combine simultaneously to produce knowing this also is incorrect. If they arose simultaneously there would be no interdependence and why? First the pot exists, then you see it, and then afterwards knowledge arises. In simultaneity there is no before or after.

Since knowing does not exist, seeing, what is seen and the seer likewise do not exist. In the same way all dharmas are like an illusion, like a dream, without fixed characteristics. How could they combine? And since they do not combine, they are empty.

Further:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. First, he claims, these things simply don’t occur in the same place at the same time. There is no literal sense in which they connect.

Kārikā XIV.2

एवं रागश्च रक्तश्च रञ्जनीयं च दृश्यताम्।
त्रैधेन शेषाः क्लेशाश्च शेषाण्यायतनानि च॥२॥

evaṃ rāgaś ca raktaś ca rañjanīyaṃ ca dṛśyatām |
traidhena śeṣāḥ kleśāś ca śeṣāṇy āyatanāni ca ||2||

染與於可染 染者亦復然
餘入餘煩惱 皆亦復如是

rǎn yǔ yū;yú;wū kě rǎn rǎn zhě yì fù rán
yú rù yú fán nǎo jiē yì fù rú shì

།དེ་བཞིན་འདོད་ཆགས་ཆགས་པ་དང་།།ཆགས་པར་བྱ་བ་ཉོན་མོངས་པ།
ལྷག་པ་རྣམས་དང་སྐྱེ་མཆེད་ཀྱི།།ལྷག་མའང་རྣམ་པ་གསུམ་གྱིས་སོ།།

| de bźin 'dod chags chags pa (8b1)daṅ | | chags par bya ba ñon moṅs pa |
| lhag ma rnams daṅ skye mched kyi | | lhag ma'aṅ rnam pa gsum ñid kyis |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - The passion, impassioned self, and the impassionable can be seen in the same manner. The rest of the klesas (i.e., mental defilements) and ayatanas (i.e., seats of sense perception) depends on these three phases (for exposition).

JONES (Skt):
[2] So too with passion, the impassioned person, and the object of passion. And so too with the remaining afflictions and the fields of the senses.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Lust, the lustful as well as the object of lust should be seen in the same way. The remaining defilements as well as the remaining spheres of sense should be seen in the triadic mode.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Thus passion, the impassioned, and object of passion would be seen by means of these three,
as well as the remaining defilements and the remaining spheres of sensation.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. Similarly to the cases of action to dye and what is dyed,
Being dyed and Action to dye are similar to each other.
And being maintained as three, that is, what has been left, pain,
And altars, which have been left also.

STRENG (Skt):
2. Desire, the one who desires, and the object of desire have to be regarded in the same way, As also the impurities which remain and the three kinds of "base of sense" (ayatana) which remain.

BOCKING (Ch):
14v2 Passion, and the object of passion
And the impassioned one are also thus.
The other avenues, the other afflictions
Are also all like this.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Likewise desire, desiring and the desired, the remaining afflictions and also the remaining sense-fields do [not connect] by three aspects.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The same goes for desire, the desirous one,
And the object of desire, the other afflictions,
The remaining sense sources,
And for all such triads. [XIV.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. Similarly desire, the desirous one, the object of desire,
And the remaining afflictions
And the remaining sources of perception
Are understood in this threefold way.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. Similarly, desire, the desirous, and the desired
And the remaining afflictions,
And the remaining faculties,
Should be regarded in this threefold way.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Desire, the desirous one, and the object of desire do not meet either,
Nor do any of the remaining afflictions,
Nor any of the remaining sources of consciousness:
In these sets of three there is neither meeting in pairs nor all together. (2)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
14.2 Like so is desire, the object of desire and the desirous one, and the remaining afflictions as well as the remaining fields of sense.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

14/2 In the same way that seeing, what is seen and the seer are not combined, so passion, the object of passion and the impassioned one also should not combine. And what is said of the three dharmas of seeing, what is seen, and the seer, may also be said of hearing, what is heard and the hearer, and the remaining avenues. What is said of passion, the object of passion and the impassioned one, may also be said of hate, the object of hate, and the hater, and the remaining afflictions, etc.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The pragmatic theory of truth, that is, truth as something put together according to human dispositions (samskara) depending upon something experienced (dharma), is not a very palatable one, especially for some analytical philosopher who wants to carry his analysis to the very extreme. In the present treatment of Nagarjuna's philosophy, it has been repeatedly pointed out that an extremist analysis left the Buddhist metaphysician with absolutely distinct entities. For him (and this was the position accepted even by a philosopher like Hume), "What is distinguishable is also separable." Of course, these metaphysicians would then proceed to explain events in terms of "composition," of putting different entities together (samskarana) according to one's dispositions (samskara) or, as Hume insisted, in terms of one's imagination. However, they will have to carry the burden of explaining how only certain things can be so put together and not anything and everything. For example, one can insist that it is possible to bring together events such as the eye, color, and visual consciousness together to produce the impression called "perception of color." Yet, one cannot, either in terms of dispositions or according to any imagination, put together the eye, sound, and gustatory consciousness and produce either a visual impression or an auditory impression.

The only way in which such metaphysicians can explain any possible association is by assuming a substantial relation, an inherent nature among those events that are so associated. This is how the analysis of events into absolutely different entities contributed to the recognition of mysterious substances. The Sarvastivada notion of substance or self-nature (svabhava) was, therefore, an inevitable answer to such extremist analysis, in the same way as Bertrand Russell's theory of relations, defined as neither mental or physical, was the answer to the Humean analysis.

For such philosophers, a pragmatic theory of truth, where truth is defined as something "made" (samskrta), becomes a problem because their analysis has deprived them of any empirical relations in terms of which things can be associated. It is, therefore, not surprizing to see Nagarjuna taking up the question of association (samsarga), in order to show that it does not work in the background of the metaphysical assumptions of certain analysts.

Thus it becomes necessary to keep in mind that Nagarjuna's criticism of association is specifically related to the association of events that were so distinguished that each was assumed to have its own nature (svabhava). He begins this chapter with a reference to the various categories he has already examined at the very outset in this section of the book, namely, seeing (darsana), the object of seeing (drastavya) and the seer (drastr) (Chapter III). XIV.2 refers to another set of categories examined in Chapter VI. This application is then extended to all occurrences such as the defilements and faculties.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. In the various chapters on the relation between characteristic and characterized, Nāgārjuna has argued that it makes no sense to think of the relation between individuals and their properties or between entities as any kind of relation between independent entities at all, and that these phenomena cannot be understood as the same, as different, or as neither.

Kārikā XIV.3

अन्येनान्यस्य संसर्गस्तच्चान्यत्वं न विद्यते।
द्रष्टव्यप्रभृतीनां यन्न संसर्गं व्रजन्त्यतः॥३॥

anyenānyasya saṃsargas tac cānyatvaṃ na vidyate |
draṣṭavyaprabhṛtīnāṃ yan na saṃsargaṃ vrajanty ataḥ ||3||

異法當有合 見等無有異
異相不成故 見等云何合

yì fǎ dāng yǒu hé;gé jiàn děng wú yǒu yì
yì xiàng;xiāng bù chéng gù jiàn děng yún hé hé;gé

།གཞན་དང་གཞན་དུ་ཕྲད་འགྱུར་ན།།གང་ཕྱིར་བལྟ་བྱ་ལ་སོགས་ལ།
།གཞན་དེ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་པ།།དེ་ཕྱིར་ཕྲད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།།

| gźan daṅ gźan du phrad 'gyur na | | gaṅ phyir blta bya la sogs la |
| gźan de yod pa ma yin pa | | de phyir phrad par mi 'gyur ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - There is combination of something with something different. But there are (essentially) no different natures in the object perceived, etc. and these, therefore, cannot coalesce.

JONES (Skt):
[3] There are connections of distinct things only by means of another thing, but the distinction of the object seen, the seeing itself, and the seer is not found. Therefore, they cannot connect.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Association is of the mutually different [events]. Such difference is not evident in the objects of seeing, etc. Therefore, they do not function in mutual association.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
That combined difference of some event with some other does not occur.
Hence, beginning with seeing, which of these do not become combined?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Fusion relies upon different things, and at the same time it belongs to different things.
Fusion is never recognized as different characteristics.
It might be offerings for it to be seen,
And since then Fusion does not go on further.

STRENG (Skt):
3. Some hold: There is unification (samsarga) of one different thing with another different thing; but since the different-ness Of what is seen, etc. does not exist, those factors do not enter into unification.

BOCKING (Ch):
14v3 Different dharmas should combine
But seeing, etc., are not different
Since their characteristics have not been established as different,
How can seeing, (and seer) etc., combine?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the other connects to the other, because the seen and so forth do not exist [as] other, therefore there is no connection.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Contact occurs between different things,
So because the seen and so forth
Do not exist as different things,
They do not come into contact. [XIV.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. Since different things connect to one another,
But in seeing, etc.,
There is no difference,
They cannot connect.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. Since different things contact one another,
But in such things as seeing
There is no difference,
They cannot make contact.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
14.3 Combination occurs only where there is difference. Since difference is not evident in seeing, etc., combination is also not evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

14/3 Ordinary things combine by virtue of being different, but no difference in characteristics can be found in seeing, (seer) etc., and consequently there is no combination.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Association, as mentioned above, becomes a philosophical problem only when distinctions or differences are rendered absolute. Nagarjuna, basing himself on the principle of "dependent arising," insists that such distinctions are not available among objects of seeing, etc. If these are distinguished or differentiated in the way metaphysicians do, then they cannot enjoy mutual harmony or association.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. In order to have things that connect in the relevant sense, they must be different from one another, but as we saw in the chapters on characteristics, on desire, on seeing, on action, on motion, and on the self, the differences of the relevant kind are not found on analysis.

Kārikā XIV.4

न च केवलमन्यत्वं द्रष्टव्यादेर्न विद्यते।
कस्यचित्केनचित्सार्धं नान्यत्वमुपपद्यते॥४॥

na ca kevalam anyatvaṃ draṣṭavyāder na vidyate |
kasyacit kenacit sārdhaṃ nānyatvam upapadyate ||4||

非但見等法 異相不可得
所有一切法 皆亦無異相

fēi dàn jiàn děng fǎ yì xiàng;xiāng bù kě dé;děi;de
suǒ yǒu yī qiè fǎ jiē yì wú yì xiàng;xiāng

|བལྟ་བྱ་ལ་སོགས་འབའ་ཞིག་ལ། །གཞན་ཉིད་མེད་པར་མ་ཟད་ཀྱི།
།གང་ཡང་གང་དང་ལྷན་ཅིག་ཏུ། །གཞན་པ་ཉིད་དུ་མི་འཐད་དོ།

| blta bya la sogs (2)’ba’ źig la | | gźan ñid med par ma zad kyi |
| gaṅ yaṅ gaṅ daṅ lhan cig tu | | gźan pa ñid du mi ’thad do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - Not only do different natures in the object perceived, etc., not exist, but it is also not possible for an entity to have a different nature jointly with another.

JONES (Skt):
[4] Not only are there no distinctions between the object seen, the seeing itself, and the seer, distinctions do not occur between anything existing with anything else.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
It is not only that the difference with regard to objects of seeing, etc. is not evident; the possibility of something possessing difference jointly with another is also not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Not only does difference [in reference to] seeing, etc., not occur,
even the difference of one event joined in another does not take place.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. Something excluding others is different from characters of another.
Characters to be seen, and so forth, are not recognized.
Something belonging to it, and something relying upon to it, are over all.
And so, different character does not appear at all.

STRENG (Skt):
4. Not only does the different-ness of that which is seen, etc. not exist, Also the different-ness of something coming from another does not obtain.

BOCKING (Ch):
14v4 Not only in the dharmas of seeing, etc.
Can no difference in characteristics be found
But all dharmas which exist
Are also without different- characteristics.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Not only are the seen and so forth alone not existing as other, it is invalid for anything simultaneous with something to be other [than it].

DOCTOR (Tb):
It is not only the seen and the rest
That do not differ from each other;
Wherever there is coexistence
There cannot reasonably be difference. [XIV.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. Not only in seeing, etc.,
Is there no such difference:
When one thing and another are simultaneous,
It is also not tenable that there is difference.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. Not only with respect to such things as the seen
Is there no such difference:
When one thing and another are simultaneous,
It is also not tenable that there is difference.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
14.4 (axiomatic) Not only is difference not evident in seeing, etc., it is not possible that there can be difference between objects jointly conceived.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

14/4 Not only can we find no difference in characteristics among the three elements of seeing, what is seen, and the seer, but all dharmas are without such different characteristics.

Question: Why do they not have different characteristics?

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is an interesting analysis of identity and difference. The dilemma of substance is brought out clearly in this analysis. In order to relate things, differences need to be recognized. Once the differences are recognized as being absolute, each thing is assumed to have its own nature. It becomes a substance different from any other substance. If each substance is different, it cannot have a substance that is shared by another. If it does, the difference breaks down. Either there is difference or there is identity.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. This problem emerges not only in the analysis of intuitively unitary phenomena like vision, but is perfectly general. Things that are separate from one another cannot be coherently thought of as inherently different entities either. For without any inherent identity, there is no basis for inherent difference. This recalls the argument of Chapter I.

Kārikā XIV.5

अन्यदन्यत्प्रतीत्यान्यन्नान्यदन्यदृतेऽन्यतः।
यत्प्रतीत्य च यत्तस्मात्तदन्यन्नोपपद्यते॥५॥

anyad anyat pratītyānyan nānyad anyad ṛte ’nyataḥ |
yat pratītya ca yat tasmāt tad anyan nopapadyate ‖5‖

異因異有異 異離異無異
若法從因出 是法不異因

yì yīn yì yǒu yì yì lí yì wú yì
ruò fǎ cóng yīn chū shì fǎ bù yì yīn

།གཞན་ནི་གཞན་ལ་བརྟེན་ཏེ་གཞན།།གཞན་མེད་པར་གཞན་གཞན་མི་འགྱུར།
།གང་ལ་བརྟེན་ཏེ་གང་ཡིན་པ།།དེ་ནི་དེ་ལས་གཞན་མི་འཐད།།

| gźan ni gźan la brten te gźan | | gźan med par gźan gźan mi ’gyur |
| gaṅ la brten te gaṅ yin pa | | de ni de las gźan mi ’thad |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - Differentiation comes about by the relational conditions of different (entities) and it does not exist removed from them. And yet by virtue of the relational factor, there cannot be a differentiation between the entities involved.

JONES (Skt):
[5] To be “another thing,” one thing depends upon another thing - an “other” is not *other* without another thing. But it is not admissible that what is dependent upon something occurs without it.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Different things are dependent upon different things.
Different things are not without different things.
Because something depends upon something, a different thing is not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Differences of one event from another depend on [the fact that] one event is not different from another without that other.
Which which depends on which so that from which it differs does not take place?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Different, different, clearly different,
What is not different, and what is different, both move as something different.
But something very clear is just that,
And so the different from it does never appear.

STRENG (Skt):
5. A thing is different insofar as it presupposes a second different thing. One thing is not different from another thing without the other thing.

BOCKING (Ch):
14v5 Difference is difference because of difference
Difference without difference is not difference.
If a dharma issues from a cause
That dharma does not differ from its cause.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The other is other in dependence upon the other.
Without the other, the other would not be other. It is invalid for whatever is dependent on something to be other than that.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which is different differs in dependence on something else.
It does not differ without that different thing from which it differs.
Where something depends on something else,
The two cannot reasonably be different. [XIV.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. A different thing depends on a different thing for its difference.
Without a different thing, a different thing wouldn't be different.
It is not tenable for that which depends on something else
To be different from it.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. One different thing depends on another for its difference.
Without a different thing, another would not be different.
It is not tenable for that which depends on something else
To be different from it.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
14.5 (axiomatic) Things depend on different things for their difference - they cannot appear without this. But a thing dependent on another is not different from it.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

14/5 The difference of which you speak is a difference which is called difference on account of it being a different dharma. Unless there are different dharmas we cannot regard things as different, and why? If a- dharma is produced from conditions, that dharma is not different from its cause. When the cause is destroyed, the effect is also destroyed. For example, a house exists because of its beams and rafters. The house is not different from the beams and rafters, so that for the beams and rafters to decay is for the house, too to decay.

Question: What is wrong in saying that there are fixed, different dharmas?

Reply:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. For there to be substantial difference, it must be possible to independently establish the identity and natures of the relata. But this, Nāgārjuna has argued repeatedly, is impossible.

Kārikā XIV.6

यद्यन्यदन्यदन्यस्मादन्यस्मादप्यृते भवेत्।
तदन्यदन्यदन्यस्माद्दृते नास्ति च नास्त्यतः॥६॥

yady anyad anyad anyasmād anyasmād apy ṛte bhavet |
tad anyad anyad anyasmād ṛte nāsti ca nāsty ataḥ ||6||

若離從異異 應餘異有異
離從異無異 是故無有異

ruò lí cóng yì yì yīng yú yì yǒu yì
lí cóng yì wú yì shì gù wú yǒu yì

།གལ་ཏེ་གཞན་ནི་གཞན་ལས་གཞན། །དེ་ཚེ་གཞན་མེད་པར་གཞན་འགྱུར།
།གཞན་མེད་པར་ནི་གཞན་འགྱུར་བ། །ཡོད་མིན་དེ་ཡི་ཕྱིར་ན་མེད།།

| (3)gal te gźan ni gźan las gźan | | de tshe gźan med par gźan 'gyur |
| gźan med par ni gźan 'gyur pa | | yod min de yi phyir na med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - If a different (entity) is different because it arises from another different (entity), then it will also exist removed from the latter. But such a situation of a different (entity) cannot possibly exist.

JONES (Skt):
[6] If one thing is other than another thing, it would also exist without that other thing. But without the other thing, a thing is not "an other thing" - thus, it does not exist.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If a thing is different from another because it arises from a different thing, then it would exist even without that other thing. However, that other thing does not exist without the other, and therefore, it does not exist.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If one event is different than another from which it differs, it would be without that from which it differs.
But that difference does not exist without the one from which it differs and so it does not exist.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. In that case, difference, difference, and because of the differences,
And just because of those differences, motion can exist.
But the Real Facts are difference, difference, and because of the differences,
So any motion does not exists really, and since then anything does not exist.

STRENG (Skt):
6. If one different thing is different from a second different thing, it exists without a second different thing; But without a second different thing, one different thing does not exist as a different thing.

BOCKING (Ch):
14v6 If a' difference' means a separate thing arising from something different,
Then it should be different from that other different thing.
There are no 'different' things which arise separated from different things.
Therefore there is no 'difference'.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the other was other than the other, then, without the other, it would be other. Without the other it would not be other. Therefore, it does not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the different differed from something different,
It would be different even without anything different.
But nothing differs without something different,
And, hence, this is not the case. [XIV.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If a different thing were different from a different thing,
Without a different thing, a different thing could exist.
But without that different thing, that different thing does not exist.
It follows that it doesn't exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If one different thing were different from another,
Without another, a thing could be different.
But without that other, that different thing does not exist.
Therefore this is not the case.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
14.6 (axiomatic) If a different thing arises from a different thing, it could exist without the different thing. Since it doesn't, no such things exist.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

14/16 If there were (genuinely) different dharmas, separate and arising from other different (dharmas), then these different dharmas would be separate from those other different (dharmas). But in reality there are no (genuinely) different dharmas, separate and arising from different dharmas, consequently those other different dharmas do not exist. it is as if the fist were different and separate from a different (entity) of five fingers. If the fist were different, it should be (equally) different to different things such as pots, etc. Now, one cannot find a different fist, quite separate from a different (entity of) five fingers. Therefore there is no different dharma of a fist which is different to pots, etc.

(19b22) Question: Our sutras say that different characteristics do not arise from conditions. Different characteristics result from our making distinctions within the universal characteristic, a-ad it is because of these different characteristics that there are different dharmas.

Reply:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. That is, the only way that difference or the identity of a different thing as different could be shown to exist inherently would be for that difference to be present independently of the existence of another different thing. But that is not so. The only alternative would be to argue that difference is present independently in single things. But this ignores the relational character of difference.

Kārikā XIV.7

नान्यस्मिन् विद्यतेऽन्यत्वमनन्यस्मिन्न विद्यते।
अविद्यमाने चान्यत्वे नास्त्यन्यद्वा तदेव वा॥७॥

nānyasmin vidyate 'nyatvam ananyasmin na vidyate |
avidyamāne cānyatve nāsty anyad vā tad eva vā ||7||

異中無異相 不異中亦無
無有異相故 則無此彼異

yì zhōng wú yì xiàng;xiāng bù yì zhōng yì wú
wú yǒu yì xiàng;xiāng gù zé wú cǐ bǐ yì

།གཞན་ཉིད་གཞན་ལ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།གཞན་མ་ཡིན་ལ་འང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།གཞན་ཉིད་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།གཞན་ནམ་དེ་ཉིད་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| gźan ñid gźan la yod ma yin | | gźan ma yin la'aṅ yod ma yin |
| gźan ñid yod pa ma yin na | | (4)gźan nam de ñid yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - It is not possible for a differentiation to exist in a different or a non-different (entity). When a differentiation does not exist, difference and identity also do not exist.

JONES (Skt):
[7] Otherness is not found in the other thing, nor in what is not another thing. And when otherness is not found, there is neither an "other thing" nor a "not other thing."

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A difference is not evident in relation to a different thing. Nor is it not evident in a different thing. When difference is not evident, there is neither difference nor identity.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where no difference occurs, the difference in the different does not occur.
And where difference is not present, neither identity nor difference exist.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Because of not relying upon anything,
The different situations are not recognized,
Never being upon non-consciousness, or another consciousness,
Never something, which does not really exist in another world, or in the real world.

STRENG (Skt):
7. Different-ness does not exist in a different thing, nor in what is not different. When different-ness does not exist, then there is neither what is different nor "this" from which something can be different.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Otherness does not occur in an other and does not occur in a non-other; and when otherness does not occur, there is neither an other nor an identity.

BOCKING (Ch):
14v7 Within difference there are no different characteristics.
Nor are there any within non-difference.
Since there are no different characteristics
There is no difference between this and that.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Otherness does not exist in the other. Nor does it exist in what is not other. If otherness does not exist, neither the other nor that itself exists.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Difference does not exist in the different,
Nor does it exist in what is not different.
As difference as such does not exist,
Nothing is different and nothing is the same. [XIV.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. Difference is not in a different thing.
Nor is it in a nondifferent thing.
If difference does not exist,
Neither different nor identical things exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. Difference is not in a different thing.
Nor is it in a nondifferent thing.
If difference does not exist,
Neither difference nor identity exists.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
14.7 (axiomatic) Difference is not evident in a different thing, nor in a non-different thing. If difference is not evident, there is neither difference nor identity.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

14/7 You say that different characteristics are a result of making distinctions within a universal characteristic, and that because of these different characteristics there are different dharmas. If this were so, these different characteristics would arise from conditions, and this being the case they would be described as (causally) conditioned dharmas. Since these different characteristics cannot be found apart from different dharmas, the different characteristics merely exist because of different dharmas, for they cannot be established in isolation. But, there are no different characteristics within different dharmas, and why? If the different dharmas are already in existence, what use have they for different characteristics? Neither are these different characteristics in dharmas which are non-different, and why? Because if the different characteristics were in dharmas which were not different, they would not be called non-different dharmas. Since they do not exist in either situation, there are no different characteristics, and since there are no different characteristics there is no 'this dharma' and 'that dharma'.

Moreover, since there are no different dharmas, there is also no combination.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

These verses seem to highlight the fact that one cannot speak of dependence so long as one recognizes absolute difference among events. They are a reminder of the detailed treatment of the relation of contingence (apeksa) undertaken previously in relation to the metaphor of "fire and fuel" (Chapter X).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. So difference cannot be located either as a relation between things or as a unary property of individual things. So there is no inherently existent difference. But it is the existence of inherent difference that grounds the problem of connection. So there is no such relation, and no problem to be solved.

Kārikā XIV.8

न तेन तस्य संसर्गो नान्येनान्यस्य युज्यते।
संसृज्यमानं संसृष्टं संस्रष्टा च न विद्यते॥८॥

na tena tasya saṃsargo nānyenānyasya yujyate |
saṃsṛjyamānaṃ saṃsṛṣṭaṃ saṃsraṣṭā ca na vidyate ||8||

是法不自合 異法亦不合
合者及合時 合法亦皆無

shì fǎ bù zì hé;gé yì fǎ yì bù hé
hé;gé zhě jí hé;gé shí hé fǎ yì jiē wú

།དེ་ནི་དེ་དང་ཕྲད་པ་མེད།།གཞན་དང་གཞན་ཡང་ཕྲད་མི་འགྱུར།
།ཕྲད་བཞིན་པ་དང་ཕྲད་པ་དང་།།ཕྲད་པ་པོ་ཡང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| de ni de daṅ phrad pa med | | gźan daṅ gźan yaṅ phrad mi ’gyur |
| phrad bźin pa daṅ phrad pa daṅ | | phrad pa po yaṅ yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - The combination of identical entities or of different entities is not justifiable. For, there cannot exist a presently combining, an already combined, and the agent which combines.

JONES (Skt):
[8] A connection of one thing with itself or of another thing with itself is not admissible. A current connection, a thing connected, and the thing connecting are not found.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The association of identical things or of different things is not proper. Neither the associating nor the associated nor even the agent of association is evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The combination of identical events [of one to another] or different events [of one differing from another] is not found.
The connecting, the connector, and the connected is not reasonable.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Fusion does not belong to Reality, or does not rely upon Reality.
Fusion does not belong to another world, or in the real world.
Fusion is just perfectly mixed situations, and perfectly combined situations.
Fusion is never recognized as any kind of mixture at all.

STRENG (Skt):
8. Unification is not possible by uniting one thing with that one thing, nor by uniting one thing with a different thing; Thus, the becoming unified, the state of being united, and the one who unites are not possible.

BOCKING (Ch):
14v8 A dharma does not combine with itself.
Different dharmas do not combine either.
Combiner, moment of combining
And dharma of combining; none of these exists.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
That does not connect with that. The other too does not connect with the other. The connecting, the connection and the connector too do not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Nothing comes into contact with itself,
Nor do different things come into contact.
Contacting, contacted, and contactor
Do not exist either. [XIV.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. That does not connect to itself.
Nor do different things connect to one another.
Neither connection nor
Connected nor connector exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Nothing contacts itself.
Nor does one different thing contact another.
Neither that which is being contacted,
Nor the contact, nor the contactor exists.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
14.8 The unity of identical things or of different things is not proper. Neither connection, the connected, nor a connector are evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

14/8 A dharma does not combine with its own substance, because it is one, just as one finger does not combine with itself. Different dharmas also do not combine because they are different, and different things already established do not' need to combine. Contemplated thus, a dharma of combination is untenable, and this is why we say that a combiner, a moment of combining and a dharma of combining are all untenable.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Identity and difference assumed by the Buddhist metaphysicians cannot solve the problem of truth, especially its pragmatic version. The only solution available to them is a recognition of the Buddha's "omniscience" (sarvajnatva), which they unhesitatingly attributed to him, even without attempting to define what "omnis" (sarvam) stood for in the Buddhist context (see commentary on IX.3).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. The conclusion is a powerful one and, especially when conjoined with the conclusion of the previous chapter, goes to the heart of any Buddhist (or non-Buddhist, for that matter) ontology that seeks to reify the entities that appear at any stage of ontological analysis. It is quite tempting when examining dependent, compound phenomena to think that while they themselves might not be inherently existent, and might not be the ultimate entities of the empirical world, it must at least be a fundamental fact that their being constituted of parts, or dependent upon their location in a causal and mereological nexus, exists as a fact. That would seem, in fact, to be the natural way to interpret the doctrine of dependent origination and the emptiness of macroscopic entities. But Nāgārjuna here pulls the rug out from any such analysis, pointing again to the emptiness of emptiness: Not only are compounded phenomena empty of inherent existence, but so is the relation among their constituents and determinants in virtue of which they are compounded.

Chapter XV

स्वभावपरीक्षा पञ्चदशमं प्रकरणम्।

觀有無品第十五(十一偈)

རང་བཞིན་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅོ་ལྔ་པའོ།།

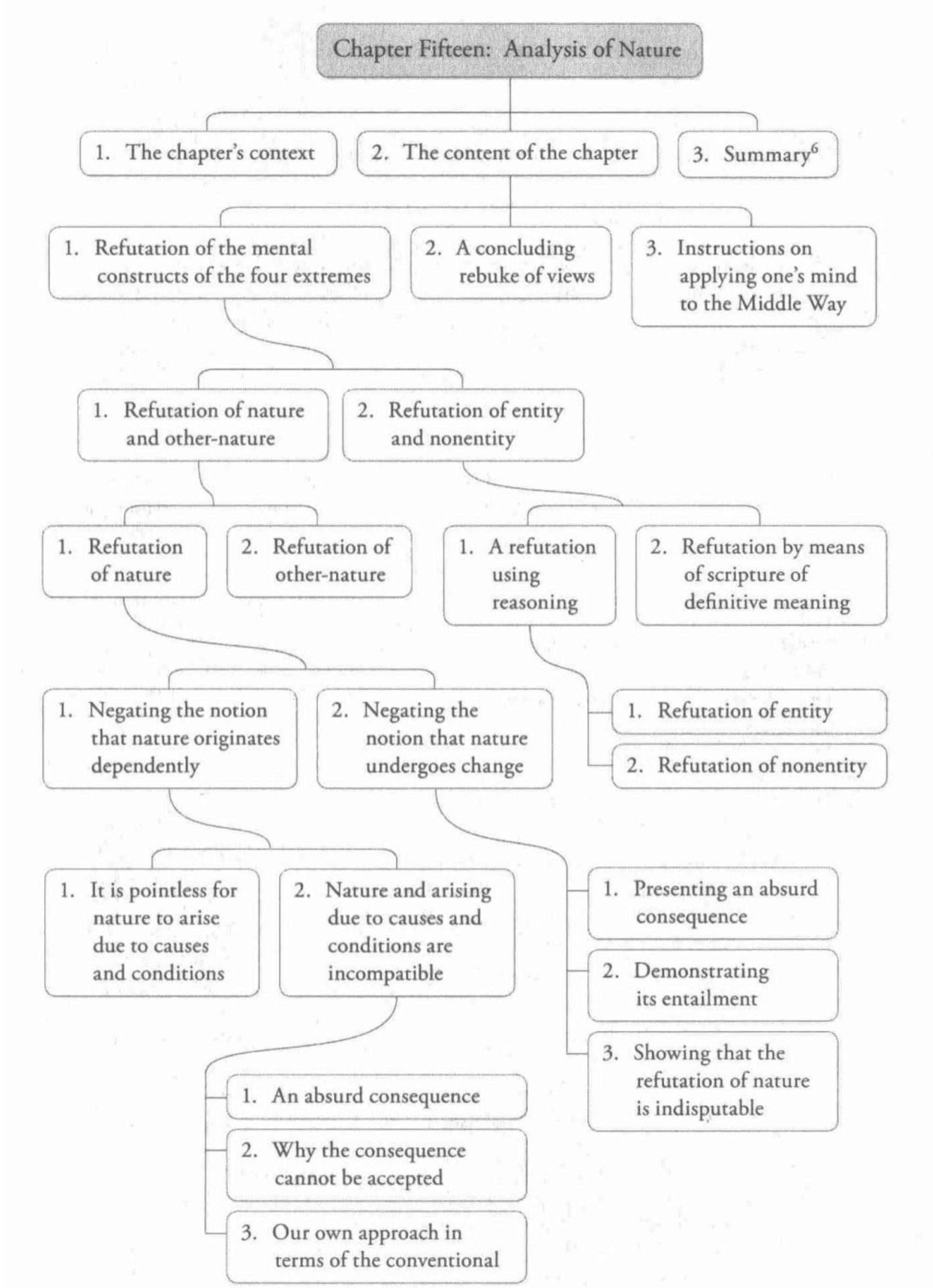
svabhāvaparīkṣā nāma pañcadaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XV: Examination of Essence

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter XV

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the second part of the section on the two selflessnesses, the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. We are still in the second of its two sections: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of things. We have completed the first of the three parts of that section: the refutation of contact. This chapter comprises the second part: the refutation of the

appropriation of causes and conditions as essentially existent.

EXPLANATION:

Here one might say that things exist essentially, because there is appropriation of such things as causes, conditions, seeds, and ignorance, which give rise to such things as sprouts and actions, respectively. This is the motivational introduction to the chapter in *Prasannapada,* [87b] but Buddhapalita motivates it as follows:

You maintain that all phenomena are dependently arisen and at the same time that they are not inherently existent. But how could things arise and not exist inherently? If the nature of things does not arise from causes and conditions, then what else could arise from them? If the nature of the cloth does not come from the warp and weft, do they simply give rise to warp and weft themselves? If nothing arises from them, why do we say "It arises"?

We respond: Are you not the man riding the horse who does not see that horse? While you say that things are dependently arisen, you do not see that they are not inherently existent? [224a]

Thus, this provides a motivational introduction to this chapter, which explains that it is not contradictory to say that it is inconsistent for things to have even the slightest nature of inherent existence and to be arisen from causes and conditions. The most important point of this argument is to distinguish rather than to confuse these two.

The refutation of essence has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of things and the demonstration that maintaining that things exist essentially cannot avoid the extremes.

SUMMARY:

One should ascertain the explicit meaning of this presentation—that nature and naturelessness in general, one's *own* nature and the nature of being *other* in particular—and the essence of phenomena as they really exist cannot be posited in the framework of inherent existence. One should thereby ascertain the implicit meaning—dependent origination—with the understanding that they are all only tenable when they are merely posited conventionally.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XV - Examination of Self-nature

Nagarjuna here discusses the idea of self-nature or self-existence (svabhava) and the possible ways of conceiving it. He introduces the interesting concept of extended or other nature (parabhava) to show that it too cannot help in the understanding of the character of self-nature. It is interesting to note that Stcherbatsky translates parabhava as relational existence with an eye, it seems, to capture the sense of relativity of objects.

In Verses Nos. 6 and 10 Nagarjuna strikes at the heart of the matter by reassuring all that the truth expounded by the Buddha cannot be grasped by a play or interplay of concepts, such as, self-nature, extended nature, existence, or non-existence and that the wise should abandon all ideas which tend to treat existence in terms of static notions, such as, permanency (sasvata) or interruption (uccheda), notions which are antithetic to the Madhyamika Credo.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

15. *Self-nature* (*svabhava*). The problem of association (*samsarga*), discussed above in the specific context of seer, object of seeing, and seeing, arose as a result of admitting a self-nature (*svabhava*) in each one of these phenomena. This provided Nagarjuna with an opportunity to come into grips with the most difficult issue he had to deal with, self-nature or substance. In our earlier discussions we have shown how the Sarvastivadins utilized this conception to explain the relationship between a cause and an effect, Nagarjuna's basic argument against this notion of self-nature is that it contradicts the conception of the occurrence (*sambhava*) of an event depending upon causes and conditions (*hetu, pratyaya*). Nagarjuna's understanding of self-nature is that it is not made (*akrtaka*) by anything else. It is not dependent upon causes and conditions for its existence; hence independent. A "caused substance," according to him, is a contradiction in terms. This analysis should, therefore, be supplemented by his analysis in Chapter I. As we have pointed out there, Nagarjuna was not denying either dependently arisen phenomena or dependent arising. He was merely showing the inconsistency in explaining causally conditioned phenomena in terms of self-nature. It is in the present chapter that he is giving a definition of self-nature that contradicts the notion of dependent arising or causation. He says: "Indeed, an unmade self-nature is also non-contingent upon another," (*akrtrimah svabhavo hi nirapeksah paratra ca*) (XV.2). The argument in Chapter I is then repeated to show that in the absence of self-nature, there cannot be other-nature (*parabhava*). Buddha's famous discourse to Katyayana, discussed at length at the beginning of this Introduction, is then quoted in order to reject the "existent" (*bhava*) or "self-nature" (*svabhava*) and the "non-existent" (*abhava*) or "other-nature" (*parabhava*). These then are aligned with views regarding existence (*astitva*) and non-existence (*nastitva*).

Existence (*astitva*) is further defined as the original or primordial existence (*prakrti*), a conception developed in the Sankhya school of Indian philosophy which had close affinity, if not identity, with the Sarvastivada conception of existence. The empirical and logical difficulties involved in this conception are then laid bare. Reiteration of the fact that the beliefs in self-nature and other-nature, in the existent and the non-existent, in existence and non-existence, lead to beliefs in permanence and annihilation respectively provides a conclusion to this rather significant chapter.

The topics taken up for discussion in this section (Chapters III-XV), as pointed out above, deal with elements of experience (*dharma*) which were originally explained in terms of dependence, but which were complicated by the introduction of the notions of self-nature (*svabhava*) and other-nature (*parabhava*), of metaphysical identity and absolute difference, by some of the later Buddhists. Nagarjuna's attempt in this section was mainly directed at getting rid of the conception of self-nature or identity (the notions of other-nature or difference falling apart as a result). This is the way in which he attempted to establish the non-substantiality of elements (*dharma-nairatmya*). The non-substantiality of the human personality (*pudgala-nairatmya*) turns out to be his next concern.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Essence

If my essence came
From causes and conditions,
It would have been constructed-
Essences are neither contingent nor contrived.

If I have no essence, how can you?
What is other for me is for you your own –
How can you not be
Yourself or someone else?

Without something,
There could be no nothing –
Do not people say:
A thing becomes nothing
When it changes into something else?

You who behold
Somethings and nothings,
Yourselves and others,
Are blind to what the Buddha taught.

Through understanding
Somethings and nothings,
Gautama told Katyayana
To relinquish being and nothingness.

If I had an essence,
I would never cease to be me –
My nature could never be anything else.
If I had no essence,
Whose nature would it be to be anything else?

"I am me, I will never not be" –
The longing for eternity.
"I used to be, I am not any more" –
The cut of annihilation.

The sage avoids being and nothingness.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

15. Self-Existence

This chapter presents the independence and permanence of anything self-existent. This is applied to entities *(bhavas)* that exist through self-existence and the *absence* of such entities *(abhavas).* A non-entity is a change in a self-existent entity, and so if no self-existent entity can be established (since all entities are dependently arisen), the absence of an entity cannot be established either (v. 5). That is, if there are no truly real entities, then their absence or destruction is not possible either. But this does not deny that there are entities in the conventional sense - they are simply not self-existent. If is-ness existed by self-existence, then there can be no is-not-ness since the latter would be a change in the former and the nature of what exists by self-existence cannot change (v. 8). Emptiness becomes the position between the views of "It is" (i.e., permanent, eternal, and changeless) and "It is not" (i.e., the destruction of what "was") (vv. 10-11).

"Other-existence *(para-bhava)"* is the self-existence *(sva-bhava)* of something else. Thus, in the absence of self-existence, other-existence is not possible (v. 3).

Verse 7 has the only reference to a specific Buddhist text in the *Karikas* or any of the other texts in this book - the *Discourse to Katyayana (Samyutta Nikaya* 11.17)· In this discourse, the Buddha rejects the views of "All exists *(sarvam asti)"* and "All does not exist *(sarvam na-asti)"* and charts a middle way between them through dependent-arising (and

refers to "right views"). This is interpreted in verses 10-11 to mean the rejection of the views that everything is eternal (eternalism, *shashvata-vada)* and that everything is annihilated (annihilationism, *uccheda-vada)*. The *Discourse with Katyayana* is not a Mahayana text, but part of the earlier Pali canon. The lack of any citations to Mahayana texts may be become they were too contentious at the time. (See Walser 2005.) Or it may be that the author of the *Karikas* did not think of himself as a Mahayanist at all. (See Warder 1973.) But other texts attributed to Nagarjuna do quote Mahayana texts.

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

15

An Examination of Things and the Absence of Things

In the *Sutra Requested by the Bodhisattva "Shining Intelligence,"* the Buddha taught:

Forms are neither extinct nor permanent.

PERMANENCE AND EXTINCTION, existence and nonexistence these are just conceptual fabrications that cannot describe the genuine nature of reality. Therefore, the Buddha taught that forms' true nature transcends both permanence and extinction.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to those who claimed, "Things have an inherent nature because when their causes and conditions come together, they come into existence. When there is an absence of things, it is because causes and conditions have not come together to produce anything, as is the case with flowers in the sky." In this way, these people believed that the existence of things and the nonexistence or absence of things was real. In order to help them overcome this mistaken belief, Nagarjuna analyzes the existence of things and the absence of things and demonstrates that neither one has any inherent nature.

It is important to distinguish between the way things appear to the sense consciousnesses and the way they appear to the conceptual aspect of the mental consciousness. When sense consciousnesses perceive forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations, they do not think that there is something there, nor do they think that there is nothing there. They just perceive their objects nonconceptually. Then the mental consciousness comes along and thinks, for example, "I see something" or "I do not see that thing." It is thoughts, therefore, that conceive of there being something or nothing, not the sense consciousnesses. "Something" and "nothing" are therefore purely conceptual imputations. They are merely the fabrications of conceptual mind.

At the same time that thoughts are thinking, "There is something" or "There is nothing," the true nature of reality is beyond something and nothing. Something and nothing are only dependently existent. For example, if the entity of this earth really existed, it would have to exist independent of our idea of nothing, independent of our idea of space. It would have to exist objectively as a thing, independent of our thought of nothing. Similarly, space is the mere absence of things, and if it truly existed it would have to exist independent of our thought of the existence of things.

In reality, however, "something" and "nothing" must depend upon each other for their existence. You can only have a thought of something being there if you have a notion of what it means for nothing to be there, and vice versa. You can only have a thought of space, the absence of things, if you have some idea of what is missing, the thing that is absent. Therefore, whatever it maybe, it cannot be said to be inherently existent or nonexistent—existence and nonexistence are just dependently existent concepts that our thoughts superimpose onto genuine reality, whose nature transcends all such fabrications.

In the seventh verse of this chapter, Nagarjuna states:

In his Pith Instructions to Katyayana,
The one who knows all things and all absences of things,
The Transcendent Conqueror,
Refuted both existence and nonexistence.

The commentary quotes from this sutra called The Pith Instructions to Katyayana as follows:

Katyayana, most people in the world fixate intensely on things as being existent, and others on the thought that things are nonexistent. As a result of their clinging, they are not free from birth, aging, sickness, or death; from agony, crying, suffering, mental anguish, or agitation. Especially, they are not free in any way from the torments of death.

Teaching in this way, the Buddha refuted both extremes of existence and nonexistence.

The reason it is important for us to understand that the true nature of reality transcends both existence and nonexistence is that all of the suffering in the world comes from either the thought that there is something or the thought that there is nothing. For example, people who are wealthy have the suffering that goes along with having a lot of things, the suffering related to existence, while people who are poor have the suffering that comes from not having enough, the suffering related to nonexistence. That rich and poor both suffer, however, shows that neither type of suffering truly exists. If suffering truly came from having material things, then the rich would suffer but the poor would not; and if suffering truly came from not having material things, then the poor would suffer but the rich would not. Since both rich and poor suffer, however, this shows that their suffering has no real cause or inherent existence, that it is just the confused projection of conceptual mind.

In this way, we have to examine with our intelligence all the limitless kinds of suffering that can come from existence and nonexistence. We have to examine the actual reasons they occur and what their true nature really is.

This particular quote from The Pith Instructions to Katyayana is also important because it comes from the Vinaya teachings of the Shravakayana, and therefore all Buddhist schools must accept its validity (fn The Vinaya is the set of teachings the Buddha gave on the subject of prescribed and proscribed conduct for those who hold vows of the various *yanas* (vehicles) of Buddhism.). No one can claim that it is not the authentic words of the Buddha. These days, the followers of the Shravakayana assert that the Mahayana sutras are not really the words of the Buddha, but rather that they are Nagarjuna's extensive commentaries on this passage that the Buddha spoke to Katyayana. They do not believe that the Prajnaparamita Sutras are the teachings of the Buddha himself. They say that those teachings are in fact Nagarjuna's extensive explanations of what the Buddha actually said in this teaching to Katyayana.

In verse ten, Nagarjuna instructs us how to train our minds in the Middle Way that is free from all extremes. This means that we have to realize with precise knowledge what Middle Way actually means. One can follow the Middle Way path by refuting all extremes, but one needs to be free from the concept of abiding in the middle in between the extremes as well. The verse reads:

"Existence" is the view of permanence,
"Nonexistence" is the view of extinction,
Therefore, the wise do not abide
Either in existence or in nonexistence.

The views of permanence and extinction have both coarse and subtle levels. The coarse view of extinction is to deny the existence of past and future lives and of karmic cause and result. The coarse view of permanence is to believe that this life is truly existent. The subtle view of extinction is to have any concept at all of nonexistence, while the subtle view of permanence is to have any notion at all of existence.

There are those who, when they think that things exist, do not know how to understand existence in terms of dependently arisen mere appearances. They think that existence means that there is something truly there. That is the extreme of permanence. Then there are others who believe that emptiness means total nonexistence, complete nothingness. That is the view of extinction, the other extreme. Understanding, however, that appearances are appearance- emptiness eliminates the extremes of both existence and nonexistence, in the following way: That appearances lack inherent nature eliminates the extreme of existence. With a water-moon, for example, not a single particle of the moon exists there in the water, so it cannot be called existent. At the same time, that appearances do appear due to the coming together of causes and conditions is undeniable, and this eliminates the extreme of nonexistence. For example, no one could deny the vivid appearance of the moon there in the water. Therefore, in order to follow the Middle Way that falls into neither the extreme of existence nor that of nonexistence, we must understand that all phenomena are the union of appearance and emptiness, like dreams, illusions, and water-moons. Along these lines, Karmapa Rangjung Dorje taught:

The way that the wise ones assert things to be
Is that all phenomena are neither true nor false,
They are like water-moons.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XV

स्वभावपरीक्षा पञ्चदशमं प्रकरणम्।

svabhāvaparīkṣā nāma pañcadaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

觀有無品第十五(十一偈)

guān yǒu wú pǐn dì shí wǔ (shí yī jié;jì)

རང་བཞིན་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅོ་ལྔ་པའོ།།

| raṅ bźin brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa bco lṅa pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XV - Examination of Self-nature

JONES (Skt):
15. Self-Existence

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Self-nature

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
15. Analysis of Self-Nature

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[15] Examination of Subjective Existence (11 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Self-Existence

STRENG (Skt):
Section 15 - An Analysis of a Self-existent Thing (being and non-being) In 11 Verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
15. own-being.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 15 Contemplation of Existence and Nonexistence 11 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Essences

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XV - Analysis of Nature

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XV: Examination of Essence

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XV - Examination of Essence

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of Self-nature

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 15: AN EXAMINATION OF THINGS AND THE ABSENCE OF THINGS

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/0 Question: Every dharma has a nature, because it has a function. For example, a pot has the nature of a pot, and cloth has the nature of cloth. This nature emerges when there is a combination of conditions.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter XIII]

Refutation of the realist thesis

Some argue that things in fact have essential natures which exist as such (*bhavanam svabhava*) and take such essential natures to be produced, as effects, from certain causes and conditions (*hetupratyaya*) (fn 1 Or 'causal conditions', i.e. conditions of the nature of material cause.). They do not take things which have no ontic existence (*nasti*), like the sky-flower, to be the effects of causes and conditions. But they take a seed, for example, to be the cause which has the sprout as effect, or primal ignorance (*avidya*) to be the cause which has personal dispositions (*samskara*) as its effect. Thus, things do have essential, self-existent natures, they say.

In reply we say that if things like personal dispositions and sprouts have self-existent natures what would be the purpose of their being caused, as they exist already? As personal dispositions truly exist one does not have to posit primal ignorance as their cause for the sake of producing them a second time, nor for sprouts must one posit seeds. Thus nothing other than itself is required for the genesis of anything, because its essential nature is in existence. Nagarjuna puts it this way:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Fifteen Examination of Self-nature (Svabhava-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XV Examination of Essence

This chapter continues the discussion begun in Chapter XIII and carried on in Chapter XIV of the fundamental nature of things and the· relation between emptiness and existence. Here Nāgārjuna rejects the coherence of the concept of essence and explores its ramifications for the concept of inherent existence, the concept of an entity, and the concept of a nonentity. This chapter is also aimed at dispelling any nihilistic interpretation of the Madhyamika philosophical orientation and in explaining the deep connection between the analysis of phenomena as empty of essence and the demonstration of the possibility of empirical reality.

Kārikā XV.1

न संभवः स्वभावस्य युक्तः प्रत्ययहेतुभिः।
हेतुप्रत्ययसंभूतः स्वभावः कृतको भवेत्॥१॥

LVP 259,9-12 - LVP 279,5
na saṃbhavaḥ svabhāvasya yuktaḥ pratyayahetubhiḥ |
hetupratyayasaṃbhūtaḥ svabhāvaḥ kṛtako bhavet ||1||

眾緣中有性 是事則不然
性從眾緣出 即名為作法

T1564: vol 30, pg 19c19
zhòng yuán zhōng yǒu xìng shì shì zé bù rán
xìng cóng zhòng yuán chū jí míng wéi zuò fǎ

།རང་བཞིན་རྒྱུ་དང་རྐྱེན་ལས་ནི།།འབྱུང་བར་རིགས་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།
།རྒྱུ་དང་རྐྱེན་ལས་གང་བྱུང་བའི།།རང་བཞིན་བྱས་པ་ཅན་དུ་འགྱུར།།

Tg tsa 8b4-5 - Tg tsa 9a3
|| raṅ bźin rgyu daṅ rkyen las ni | | (5)’byuṅ bar rigs pa ma yin no |
| rgyu daṅ rkyen las byuṅ ba yi | | raṅ bźin byas pa can du ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - The rise of self-nature by relational and causal conditions is not justifiable. For, such a self-nature will have a character of being made or manipulated.

JONES (Skt):
[1] That self-existence arises from causes and conditions is not admissible - if self-existence arose from causes and conditions, it would be something produced.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The occurrence of self-nature through causes and conditions is not proper. Self-nature that has occurred as a result of causes and conditions would be something that is made.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
There is no arising of self-nature connected with causes and conditions.
Self-nature from causes and conditions would be artificial.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. Total existence does not belong to the subjective existence,
And what is spoken is the Truth, which is supported by Reason.
The Reason and the Truth exists being compound,
And the subjective existence exists what has been produced artificially.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 The genesis of a self-existent nature from causes and conditions is not intelligible. A self-existent nature which arises from causes and conditions would be something created.

STRENG (Skt):
1. The production of a self-existent thing by a conditioning cause is not possible, For, being produced through dependence on a cause, a self-existent thing would be "something which is produced" (krtaka).

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XV.1 *Svabhāva* cannot result from causes and conditions, because if it was produced from conditions and causes it would be something artificially created.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Emergence of own-being through cause-and-conditions is not valid; an own- being that had emerged through cause-and-conditions would be a made thing.

BOCKING (Ch):
15v1 That a nature exists within conditions
Is not correct.
And a nature issuing from conditions
Would be termed a 'created dharma'.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is unreasonable for an essence to arise from causes and conditions. Whatever essence arose from causes and conditions would be something that has been made.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Nature cannot reasonably occur
Due to causes and conditions.
A nature that arises due to causes and conditions
Would be a nature that is produced. [XV.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Essence arising from
Causes and conditions makes no sense.
If essence came from causes and conditions,
Then it would be fabricated.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Essence arising from
Causes and conditions makes no sense.
Essence arisen from causes and conditions
Would be created.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[axiomatic] Self-nature arising from causes and conditions makes no sense, for such a self-nature would be something that has been made.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/1 If dharmas have natures, they should not issue from conditions, and why? Because if they issue from conditions they are 'created' dharmas and have no fixed nature.

Question: What is wrong in saying that a dharma's nature is created from conditions?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

1ab *The genesis of a self-existent nature from causes and conditions is not intelligible.*

You may agree that before its genesis there can be no self- existent nature (*svabhava*) of anything, as, being in existence, its genesis would be pointless. But, you may say, what if a self- existent nature which does not exist before its genesis arises subsequently from causes and conditions? If one so thinks, Nagarjuna continues:

1cd *A self-existent nature which arises from causes and conditions would be something created.*

You may say: But that self-existent natures are created (*krtaka*) because they issue from causes and conditions, is just what we mean, and, as we presuppose that self-existent natures are created, the logical objection of their being created does us no harm. Nagarjuna says that this too is not intelligible:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter XV is the conclusion to Part II of Nagarjuna's text. The main thrust of Part II, as explained in the Introduction, is in the direction of clarifying the conception of dharmas (in the plural), whether they represented ideas, things, events, or phenomena. As was evident from an examination of the preceding twelve chapters, Nagarjuna's analysis of dharmas was intended to eliminate the metaphysical ideas relating to identity and difference (ekartha-nanartha). In that process, he refuted the metaphysical notions of arising and ceasing (utpada-nirodha), of eternalism and annihilationism (sasvata-uccheda) and of appearance and disappearance (agama-nirgama). These metaphysical notions were the result of assuming a substance or self-nature (svabhava) in phenomena, an assumption that is mutually related by a conception of absolute "otherness" (parabhava).

Self-nature or substance (svabhava) thus being the major issue, it is natural for Nagarjuna to conclude this section with an examination of this particular conception. In refuting the conception of substance, Nagarjuna relies heavily upon the Buddha's own conception of a "middle position," namely, "dependent arising." Because he was here concerned mainly with refuting the metaphysical extremes, Nagarjuna refers only to that section of his locus classicus (i.e., the discurse to Katyayana) that deals with the two extremes of existence (astitva) and non-existence (nastitva). In the very fast verse, Nagarjuna states his own pragmatic view of truth as something made (krtaka) depending upon causes and conditions (hetu-pratyaya-sambhutah). Substance or self-nature, if it were to exist, could not escape the principle of dependent arising (prati tyasamutpada).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. Essence by definition is eternal and independent. So it can't arise dependently. Chapter XV: 1, 2 develop this point directly. But since all entities arise dependently, it follows that none of them have essence. (fn 78. But see Bhattacharya (1979), pp. 341-42, for a contrary view. Bhattacharya argues that we can make sense of dependent, changeable essences. Perhaps. But these are not the essences Nāgārjuna has in mind and are not those that lie behind the kind of pernicious reification or its counterpart. nihilism. that he is out to extirpate.)

Kārikā XV.2

स्वभावः कृतको नाम भविष्यति पुनः कथम्।
अकृत्रिमः स्वभावो हि निरपेक्षः परत्र च॥२॥

svabhāvaḥ kṛtako nāma bhaviṣyati punaḥ katham |
akṛtrimaḥ svabhāvo hi nirapekṣaḥ paratra ca ||2||

性若是作者 云何有此義
性名為無作 不待異法成

xìng ruò shì zuò zhě yún hé yǒu cǐ yì
xìng míng wéi wú zuò bù dài yì fǎ chéng

|རང་བཞིན་བྱས་པ་ཅན་ཞེས་བྱར།|ཇི་ལྟར་བུར་ན་རུང་བར་འགྱུར།
|རང་བཞིན་དག་ནི་བཅོས་མིན་དང་།|གཞན་ལ་ལྟོས་པ་མེད་པ་ཡིན།|

| raṅ bźin byas pa can źes byar | | ji ltar bur na ruṅ bar ’gyur |
| raṅ bźin dag ni bcos min daṅ | | gźan la ltos pa med pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - How is it possible for the self-nature to take on the character of being made? For, indeed, the self-nature refers to something which cannot be made and has no mutual correspondence with something else.

JONES (Skt):
[2] But how could there be “produced self-existence”? Self-existence is non-produced and not dependent upon anything else.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Again, how could there be a self-nature that is made? Indeed, an unmade self-nature is also non-contingent upon another.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, how will what is called self-nature be artificial?
Self-nature is not made artificially and, indeed, it is independent of others.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. The subjective existence is what has been produced artificially as only a common name,
And how is it possible for it to continue existence longer?
Because what are not artificial products are the subjective existence,
And so it might be not so interesting, and it might belong to future.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 How can a self-existent nature be something created. Self-existent nature is not created nor is it dependent on anything other than itself.

STRENG (Skt):
2. How, indeed, will a self-existent thing become "something which is produced"? Certainly, a self-existent thing by definition is "not-produced" and is independent of anything else.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XV.2 But how could *svabhāva* be artificially created, as it is not artificially created and not dependent on anything else?

ROBINSON (Skt):
How can own-being be a made thing, since own-being is unmade and not dependent on anything else?

BOCKING (Ch):
15v2 Suppose its nature were created;
But what would be the meaning of this?
'Nature' means something uncreated
Established without reliance on other dharmas,

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How is it possible for there to be “an essence which has been made?” Essences are not contrived and not dependent on anything else.

DOCTOR (Tb):
“A nature that is produced,”
How could that be right?
The natural is not fabricated,
And does not depend on anything else. [XV.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. How could it be appropriate
For fabricated essence to come to be?
Essence itself is not artificial
And does not depend on another.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. How could it be appropriate
To call that which is created “essence”?
Essence itself is not constructed
And does not depend on another.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[axiomatic] How could there be a self-nature that is made? Unmade self-nature is not dependent upon another.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/2 Just as gold mixed with copper is not true gold, so if a nature exists then it has no need of conditions. If it issues from conditions we will know that it is not a true nature. Also, if a nature is fixed, then it should not emerge in reliance upon anything else. It is not like length and shortness, or this and that, which, having no fixed natures, rely upon other things for their existence.

Question: If dharmas have no self-nature, they must have other-nature.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

2ab *How can a self-existent nature be something created.*

As the terms 'created' and 'self-existent nature' are contradictory (*parasparaviruddhatva*) there is no intelligible meaning in such a statement. Self-existent nature means, etymologically, what is itself through itself. A created thing, for example, the heat of water, which is produced by fuel or the activity of spirits, or such things as quartz appearing to be a ruby is not commonly spoken of by anyone as self-existent. On the other hand, what is not created, for example, the heat of fire or the genuine rubiness of rubies, is a self-existent nature, it is commonly said. Whatever it is in such things that is not born from conjunction with something else, is said to be a self-existent nature.

Although it is the convention in everyday transactions (*lokavyavahara*) to say that the self-existent is uncreated, we claim further that even the very heat of fire must be understood as not being self-existent because it is created. In this case the dependence of fire on causes and conditions is directly perceived when lens, kindling and sun conjoin or when sticks are rubbed together. But heat does not occur in the absence of fire;andso heat itself is born of causes and is therefore created. It is clear and certain that, being created, it, like the heat of water, is not self-existent.

You may say: It is evident even to the womenfolk of the cowherds that heat is the self-existent nature of fire. But did we say that it was not evident? What we claim is that it is not capable of being a self-existent nature because it lacks the characteristics of a self-existent nature. The unenlightened person, however, victim of misbelief due to primal ignorance, treats all things as if they had self-existent natures, though they have not.

As those of defective eyesight, because of their defect, persist in treating non-existing hairs and such things as if they were self-existent, so unenlightened people, their spiritual vision being afflicted with the defect of primal ignorance, persist in treating things which have no essential, self-existing nature as if they did. They frame their definition according to this fixed prejudice. Heat is the unique, inherent characteristic (*svalaksana*) of fire; because it is not perceived anywhere else, because of its uniqueness, it is the characteristic of itself only, they explain. The illustrious one, having regard for the unenlightened, in the Abhidharma pronounced upon the essential nature (*svanipa*) of such things only in the everyday, veiled sense (*samvrta*). And such general characteristics as impermanence (fn 2 There are three universal characteristics of things: impermanence (*anitya*), imperfection (*duhkha*) and insubstantiality (*anatman*).) were defined as universal. When, however, the teaching was for the understanding of those with the clear eye of wisdom who are rid of the defect of primal ignorance, then, as explained long ago by the great ones, benevolent to others, there is no self-existent nature as imagined by the unenlightened, even as one cured of defective vision no longer sees hairs and such things which he perceived when diseased. For such there is no self-existent nature of things in this sense (fn 3 I.e., the particularity of identical things is not self-existent.).

As is said in the *Lankavatara Sutra*, 'As those of diseased vision deludedly grasp after false hairs, so the unenlightened deludedly imagine the notion of reality in things. There is no self-existence, no knowledge, no reality and no ground of consciousness: these are the imaginings of unenlightened, effete sophists.' And again, 'Knowing that self-existence does not arise in time, I have declared, o Mahamati, that all the elements of existence do not arise in time.'

The Madhyamika position

You may ask: If you say that the heat of fire and such things are without a self-existent nature because they issue from causes and are created, what then is the definition of a self- existent nature and what is such a nature? You should make this clear.

The reply is,

2cd *Self-existent nature is not created nor is it dependent on anything other than itself.*

Here the intended meaning is that a self-existent nature is one which exists of and for itself (*svabhava*); it is the unique, ownmost nature (*atmiya rupa*) of anything. What is unique and ownmost in anything? Whatever is not created in that thing; whereas what is created in something, like heat in water, is not unique and ownmost in that thing. Again, what is completely at the disposal of one, that too is ownmost, as one's servants or one's wealth. But what is available through someone else is not ownmost; something borrowed for limited time is not unconditionally one's own. Thus self-existence is not considered to be in what is created nor in what depends on something else. For this reason it makes sense to say that the heat of fire is not self-existent because it is dependent on causes and because it is created, being non-existent at one time and subsequently coming into existence. And this being the case it follows that the innate nature (*nija rupa*) of fire, which is unvarying throughout all time, must be uncreated, i.e. it cannot come into existence if at one time it did not exist (fn 4 A Parmenidian formulation). What is relative to certain conditions does not truly exist, like the heat of water, like 'this side' and 'other side' or like the long and the short. That is what is meant by self-existence. Is there, in this sense, an inherent nature in things like fire? The heat of fire neither exists nor does not exist as an inherent nature (fn 5 The initial Madhyamika formulation; the remainder of the chapter is a development of this puzzling statement.). Although this is so, nevertheless, in order to dispel the fears of people, we say 'Things do truly exist' by employing ordinary language and so constituting the everyday world (*samvrtya samaropya*) (fn 6 A view familiar to Westerners in the twentieth century!).

As the illustrious one said, 'How can the unutterable truth be taught or learned? The unutterable is taught and learned only by a special use of ordinary language (*samaropa*).''

Nagarjuna says elsewhere in this treatise (MMK XXII) 'The terms "devoid of being", "not-devoid of being", "both-devoid-and- not-devoid of being", "neither-devoid-nor-not-devoid of being" should not be asserted as predicates (*na vaktavya*); they are however employed for the purposes of practical teaching (*prajnaptyartha*).'

You may ask: Well, if one afraid says, 'Things do truly exist' only after projecting (*adhyaropa*) the notion of self- existence, what does self-existence itself mean?

(fn 7 The following three paragraphs constitute the strongest statement of Madhyamika up to this point.)

Whatever is the quintessential nature (*dharmata*) of the elements of existence, that and only that has a self nature (*svarupa*). And what is quintessential nature of the elements? Their self-existent nature (*svabhava*). And what is self-existent nature? Original, invariable nature (*prakrti*). What is original, invariable nature? Devoidness of being (*sunyata*). And what is devoidness of being? Not being of the nature of substantial thing (*naisvabhavya*). What is not being of the nature of substantial thing? The way things really are (*tathata*). What is the way things really are? Being as they are (*tathabhava*): invariableness, steadfastness throughout all time.

Whatever it is in fire and other things that does not come into existence at any point in time because it is not dependent on anything other than itself and because it is not created, that is said to be its self-existent nature.

In short: what, arising from the optical defect of primal ignorance is, in whatever way, taken to be the everyday world of things (*bhavajata*), becomes, in virtue of going beyond ways of taking things, the world of the wise (*aryanam visayatvam*) who are free of the optical defect of primal ignorance; that and nothing else has a nature of its own; the wise name it 'self-existence'. Remember that Nagarjuna defined it: 'What is self- existent is uncreated and is not dependent on anything other than itself.' Self-existence in this sense - by nature not arising in time - is non-self-existence in the ordinary sense because it is simply non-existent ontically through not having a specific nature. This being so, it should be clear that there is no self-existence of particular things (fn 8 I.e. only enlightenment *(nirvāṇa)* is self-existent.).

As the illustrious one said, 'The one who wisely understands that things are non-things is never obsessed with things. The one who is never obsessed with things attains peace of mind beyond all definition.'

Existence of otherness

You may interject that, although there is no self-existence in things, still there is at least the relative existence of otherness (*parabhava*) as this has not been refuted. And if there is existence of otherness there will be self-existence also, because existence of otherness cannot be established apart from self- existence.

Nagarjuna replies:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

An artificial substance (krtakah svabhavah) is not possible, for by definition a substance is eternal and therefore not subject to arising and ceasing. Anything chat is subject to arising and ceasing cannot be a substance and, hence, contrary to dependent arising. It is simply non-contingent (nirapeksah).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. In these first two verses, Nāgārjuna indicates the three cardinal characteristics of an essence: An essence (or an entity that exists in virtue of possessing an essence) is uncaused, independent of other phenomena, and not fabricated from other things. It is important to bear this in mind in any Madhyamika analysis of emptiness. For when Nāgārjuna argues that phenomena are all empty, it is *of* essence in this sense that they are empty. Hence, when Nāgārjuna argues that all phenomena originate in dependence upon conditions, that all phenomena are interdependent, and that all phenomena are, fabricated (both in virtue of being compounded from parts and in virtue of acquiring their identity as particulars through conceptual imputation), he is thereby arguing quite directly for their emptiness.

Kārikā XV.3

कुतः स्वभावस्याभावे परभावो भविष्यति।
स्वभावः परभावस्य परभावो हि कथ्यते॥३॥

法若無自性 云何有他性
自性於他性 亦名為他性

|རང་བཞིན་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན||གཞན་གྱི་དངོས་པོ་ག་ལ་ཡོད|
|གཞན་གྱི་དངོས་པོའི་རང་བཞིན་ནི||གཞན་གྱི་དངོས་པོ་ཡིན་ཞེས་བརྗོད||

kutaḥ svabhāvasyābhāve parabhāvo bhaviṣyati |
svabhāvaḥ parabhāvasya parabhāvo hi kathyate ||3||

fǎ ruò wú zì xìng yún hé yǒu tā xìng
zì xìng yū;yú;wū tā xìng yì míng wéi tā xìng

| raṅ bźin yod pa ma yin (6)na | | gźan gyi dṅos po ga la yod |
| gźan gyi dṅos po'i raṅ bźin ni | | gźan gyi dṅos po yin źes brjod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - Where self-nature is non-existent, how could there be an extended nature? For, indeed, a self-nature which has the nature of being extended will be called an extended nature.
- Note: Parabhava, in the sense of extended nature, means that an entity has the existential character of extending or reaching over into the nature of other entities. It also means other-nature in contrast to self-nature. However, the argument obtains regardless of the translation.

JONES (Skt):
[3] In the absence of self-existence. how can there be "other-existence"? For the self-existence of another entity is called "other-existence."

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
In the absence of self-nature, whence can there be other-nature? For, self-nature of other-nature is called other-nature.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
In a being having self-nature, where will other-nature be?
The self-nature of other-nature is called other-nature.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Why in the subjective existence anything does not exist?
And the objective existence will exist in future.
The subjective idea is included in the objective existence.
Because the objective existence transmits the informations.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 If there is no self-existence, how can there be existence of otherness? For it is the self-existence of the existence of otherness which is called 'existence of otherness'.

STRENG (Skt):
3. If there is an absence of a self-existent thing, how will an other-existent thing (parabhava) come into being ? Certainly the self-existence of an other-existent thing is called "other-existence."

ROBINSON (Skt):
When there is no own-being, whence might other-being be? For the own- being of other-being is called other-being.

BOCKING (Ch):
15v3 If a dharma has no self-nature
How can it have other-nature?
Self-nature, in relation to other-nature
Is also called other-nature.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If an essence does not exist, how can the thingness of the other exist? [For] the essence of the thingness of the other is said to be the thingness of the other.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If nature does not exist,
How could there be other-nature?
It is the nature of other-nature
That is identified as "other-nature." [XV.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. If there is no essence,
How can there be difference in entities?
The essence of difference in entities
Is what is called the entity of difference.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. Since there is no essence9
How can there be the nature of being other?
The essence of the nature of being other
Is what is called the nature of being other.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Without self-nature [identity], how can there be other-nature [difference]? The self-nature of other-nature is called other-nature.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/3 Since a dharma's nature is created by conditions and established by causal dependence, it is not self-nature. This being the case, other-nature, since it is self-nature in relation to an other-nature and is also produced interdependently from conditions, does not exist either. Since it does not exist, how can you say that dharmas are produced from an other-nature, since that other-nature is also a self-nature?

Question: What is wrong in saying that dharmas exist without either a self-nature or an other-nature?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In this way of thinking any self-existent whatsoever, in so far as it is related to another self-existent, is designated 'other' (*para*). If heat is the self-existent nature of fire, it is designated, with reference to fluidity, the self-existent nature of water, as 'other'. As nothing whatsoever is self-existent when examined by those on the way to liberation, how can there be otherness? As there is no existence of otherness, it is evident that there is no self-existence either.

You may argue that, even though there is neither self- existence nor other-existence, none the less there are existing things because this has not been ruled out. And such things will be either self-existent or will exist in otherness. It follows that there is both self-existence and existence in otherness.

Nagarjuna replies:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This represents a repetition of the argument used by Nagarjuna at I. 3 and XIV.4 to indicate the relativity of self-nature and other-nature. If one is not acceptable, the other too is not admissible.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. This is an echo of the argument about difference presented in Chapter I. Essential difference presupposes essences of individuals. So any argument against individual essence will count as an argument against essential difference.

Kārikā XV.4

स्वभावपरभावाभ्यामृते भावः कुतः पुनः।
स्वभावे परभावे वा सति भावो हि सिध्यति॥४॥

svabhāvaparabhāvābhyām ṛte bhāvaḥ kutaḥ punaḥ |
svabhāve parabhāve ca sati bhāvo hi sidhyati ||4||

離自性他性 何得更有法
若有自他性 諸法則得成

lí zì xìng tā xìng hé dé;děi;de gèng;gēng yǒu fǎ
ruò yǒu zì tā xìng zhū fǎ zé dé;děi;de chéng

|རང་བཞིན་དང་ནི་གཞན་དངོས་དག||མ་གཏོགས་དངོས་པོ་གང་ལ་ཡོད|
|རང་བཞིན་དག་ནི་གཞན་དངོས་དག||ཡོད་ན་དངོས་པོ་འགྲུབ་པར་འགྱུར||

| raṅ bźin daṅ ni gźan dṅos dag | ma gtogs dṅos po ga la yod |
| raṅ bźin daṅ ni dṅos po dag | yod na dṅos po 'grub par 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - Again, separated from self-nature and extended nature, how could existence be? For, indeed, existence establishes itself in virtue of either self-nature or extended nature.

JONES (Skt):
[4] Without self-existence and other-existence, how can there be an entity? When there is self-existence or other-existence, then an entity is established.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Without self-nature and other-nature, whence can there be an existent? For, the existent is established only when there is self-nature or other-nature.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, where is the being without self-nature or other-natures?
Indeed, it demonstrates that a being exists in self-nature or' in othernature.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. Relying upon both the subjective existence and the objective existence,
To what direction the existence moves again?
Both in the subjective existence and in the objective existence,
Because both the subjective existence and the objective existence are really accomplished 'auspicious' facts.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 How can there be an entity apart from self-existence and other-existence? If there is either self-existence or other- existence entities are already established.

STRENG (Skt):
4. Further, how can a thing exist without either self-existence or other-existence? If either self-existence or other existence exist, then an existing thing, indeed, would be proved.

BOCKING (Ch):
15v4 Without self-nature or other-nature
How could there be any dharmas at all?
If there is self or other-nature
Dharmas can be established.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Apart from an essence and the thingness of the other, what things are there? If essences and thingnesses of others existed, things would be established.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Apart from nature and other-nature,
What entity could there possibly be?
If there were nature and other-nature,
Entities would be established. [XV.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. Without having essence or otherness-essence,
How can there be entities?
If there are essences and entities
Entities are established.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. Without having either essence or the nature of being other,
How could things exist?
If essence or the nature of being other existed,
Entities would be established.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Without self-nature and other-nature, how can anything exist? Existence can only be established when either self- or other-nature are established.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/4 'Lou speak of dharmas existing without either self-nature or other-nature, but this is not correct. Without self-nature and other-nature there will be no dharmas, and why? It is through the existence of self-nature and other-nature that dharmas are established. For instance, where the substance of a pot is a self-nature, cloth is an other-nature.

Question: If you refute existence in terms of self-nature and other-nature, then there must be nonexistence.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If one thinks of an existent thing it must be either self- existent or existent-as-other. But, as explained previously, there is neither and because there is neither of these two it must be accepted that there can be no existent thing either.

Non-existence

You may say: Although you have ruled out the existence of things, none the less there is non-existence (*abhava*) because you have not refuted that. Therefore there must be existence of things because its opposite, non-existence, is fact. We reply that there would be existence if there were non-existence. But Nagarjuna says there is not:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This probably could serve as evidence against the belief that Nagarjuna recognized an ultimate reality beyond both self-nature and other-nature. In the case of the Vatsiputriyas, the "ultimately real" emerges on the basis of an assertion of both identity and difference, (see commentary on X. 1, "Fire cannot be designated as something different from the fuel, nor as something identical.") The Japanese Buddhist scholar Y. Ueda perceives a unique logical principle adopted in Madhyamika logic derived from the metaphor of "fire and fuel." According to him, "There are inherent conditions in each such that their ultimate relatonship into a whole or unity entails a mutual denial of each other,'' (see Inada, , emphasis added). However, Nagarjuna is here raising the question: "Distinct from self-nature and other-nature, whence can there be an existent?" Thus, the eight negations are not intended to prove or establish the nature of reality, as it is often and loudly asserted. They are primarily and solely intended to eliminate metaphysical notions, not to characterize either an ultimate reality or dependent arising. Dependent arising is a totally differnt way of expressing the truth or reality.

In the second statement above, Nagarjuna maintains that svabhava and parabhava are both dependent upon bhava. They represent a further bifurcation of bhava.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. The concept of an inherently existent entity is the concept of an entity with an essence. So without essence, there are no inherently existing entities.

Kārikā XV.5

भावस्य चेदप्रसिद्धिरभावो नैव सिध्यति।
भावस्य ह्यन्यथाभावमभावं ब्रुवते जनाः॥५॥

bhāvasya ced aprasiddhir abhāvo naiva sidhyati |
bhāvasya hy anyathābhāvam abhāvaṃ bruvate janāḥ ||5||

有若不成者 無云何可成
因有有法故 有壞名為無

yǒu ruò bù chéng zhě wú yún hé kě chéng
yīn yǒu yǒu fǎ gù yǒu huài míng wéi wú

|གལ་ཏེ་དངོས་པོ་མ་གྲུབ་ན||དངོས་མེད་གྲུབ་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ|
|དངོས་པོ་གཞན་དུ་འགྱུར་པ་ནི||དངོས་མེད་ཡིན་པར་སྐྱེ་བོ་སྨྲ||

| (7)gal te dṅos po ma grub na | | dṅos med ’grub par mi ’gyur ro |
| dṅos po gźan du gyur pa ni | | dṅos med yin par skye bo smra |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - If existence does not come to be (i.e., does not establish itself), then certainly non-existence does not also. For, indeed, people speak of existence in its varying nature as non-existence.

JONES (Skt):
[5] If an entity is not established, the absence of an entity (i.e.,a “non-entity”) is certainly not established, since it is an entity that has changed (i.e., “becoming otherwise”) that people call a “non-entity.”

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When the existent is not established, the non-existent is also not established. It is, indeed, the change of the existent that people generally call the non-existent.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The lack of explanation of being does not establish nonbeing.
The changing nature of being is indeed called nonbeing by people.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Being included in existence suggests that it hasn't been accomplished.
Being out of existence does never suggest accomplishment.
Because belonging to existence produces living in another world,
And so the many numbers of births suggest many numbers of strange contrivances.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 If existence is not accepted, non-existence cannot be established. Because people say that non-existence is being other than existence.

STRENG (Skt):
5. If there is no proof of an existent thing, then a non-existent thing cannot be proved. Since people call the other-existence of an existent thing a "non-existent thing."

ROBINSON (Skt):
If the existent is not established, then the inexistent is not established, either, since by the inexistent people mean the alter-existent of an existent.

BOCKING (Ch):
15v5 If existence is not established,
How can nonexistence be established?
It is because there are existent dharmas
That when existents are destroyed, they are called 'nonexistent'.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If things were not established, non-things would not be established. [When] a thing becomes something else, people say that it is a non-thing.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If entity is not established,
Then neither is nonentity.
It is the transformation of entity
That people call nonentity. [XV.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. If the entity is not established,
A nonentity is not established.
An entity that has become different
Is a nonentity, people say.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. Since entity does not exist,
Nonentity does not exist.
People say that an entity that transforms into another
Is a nonentity.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Where existence is not established, non-existence is also not established. To become other than what exists is what people think of as non-existence.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/5 If you have already accepted that existence is not established, then you should accept that nonexistence does not exist either, and why? When existent dharmas are destroyed they are called nonexistent. This nonexistence exists because of the destruction of existence.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

According to this reasoning, if there were anything existent there would be non-existence as its otherness (*anyatha*). Pots and such things are commonly said to be non-existent if they cease from their present state and enter another. But if pots and such things have not been established as existing, how can non-existing entities be other than them? It follows that there is no non-existence either. So, self-existence, other-existence and non-existence are all unintelligible, total misapprehensions of those whose spiritual vision is crippled by the defect of primal ignorance.

Evidence from the Buddhist tradition

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

While svabhava and parabhava represent a bifurcation of bhava, the latter is itself dependent upon abhava . Ordinarily people speak of abhava as change in bhava. The bhava - abhava, though more comprehensive than the svabhava-parabhava dichotomy, carries the same implications as the latter. Both involve the metaphysical notions of identity and difference.

Neither the Buddha's conceptions of "dependent arising" (paticcasamup-pada) and "non-substantiality" (anatta) nor Nagarjuna's views on dependence and emptiness (sunyata) should be understood as involving or creating the metaphysical notions of identity and difference. In fact, the interpretation of sunyata by some scholars as an "ultimate reality" has brought about an immediate response from others who characterize it as "nothingness." The dichotomy that ordinary people assume is immediately brought into play here. It was this incorrigibility (asadhya) that Nagarjuna was referring to at XIII.8. Hence, Nagarjuna's declaration that follows.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. By a nonentity, Nāgārjuna means something inherently different from some existing entity. A nontable in this sense would be inherently different from a table. But a nonexistent in general would be a Meinongian subsistent which is available as a basis of predication but is intrinsically different from what it is to be an existent - a real thing possessed of the property of being nonexistent. Just as a table must be established as a determinate entity in order to establish the nature of nontables, existence must be established as an inherently existent property in order to establish the parallel status of nonexistence. But neither tables nor existence can be so established. By the same token, then, there are no inherently established nontables, nor any inherently established nonexistents in their stead. So even though it might appear that .an analysis through emptiness would leave us only with nontables and nonexistent phenomena, it doesn’t even leave us with that (inherently), though it leaves us with plenty of tables, nontables, existents, and nonexistents (conventionally).

Kārikā XV.6

स्वभावं परभावं च भावं चाभावमेव च।
ये पश्यन्ति न पश्यन्ति ते तत्त्वं बुद्धशासने॥६॥

svabhāvaṃ parabhāvaṃ ca bhāvaṃ cābhāvam eva ca |
ye paśyanti na paśyanti te tattvaṃ buddhaśāsane ||6||

若人見有無 見自性他性
如是則不見 佛法真實義

ruò rén jiàn yǒu wú jiàn zì xìng tā xìng
rú shì zé bù jiàn fó fǎ zhēn shí yì

།གང་དག་རང་བཞིན་གཞན་དངོས་དང༌། །དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་ཉིད་ལྟ་བ། །དེ་དག་སངས་རྒྱས་བསྟན་པ་ལ། །དེ་ཉིད་མཐོང་བ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| gaṅ dag raṅ bźin gźan dṅos daṅ | | dṅos daṅ dṅos med ñid lta ba |
| de dag saṅs rgyas bstan pa la | | de ñid mthoṅ ba ma (9a1)yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - Those who see (i.e., try to understand) the concepts of self-nature, extended nature, existence, or non-existence do not perceive the real truth in the Buddha's teaching.

JONES (Skt):
[6] Those who perceive "self-existence," "other-existence," "an entity," and "a non-entity" do not perceive the truth in the Buddha's teaching.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Those who perceive self-nature as well as other-nature, existence as well as non-existence, they do not perceive the truth embodied in the Buddha's message.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Those who see self-nature and other-nature, being and nonbeing,
do not see the truth in the Buddha's teaching.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. Both the birth of subjective existence and objective existence,
Suggests the producing existence and the erasing existence in the perfect similarity.
They are looking at the facts superficially, but not actually looking at them at all.
Those were the Real Facts, which Gautama Buddha has punished severely.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 Those who think in terms of self-existence, other-existence, existence and non-existence do not grasp the truth of Buddha's teaching.

STRENG (Skt):
6. Those who perceive self-existence and other-existence, and an existent thing and a non-existent thing, Do not perceive the true nature of the Buddha's teaching.

BOCKING (Ch):
15v6 If a person sees existence and nonexistence,
And sees self-nature and other-nature,
(seeing) thus he does not see
The true meaning of the Buddha-dharma.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Those who view essence, thingness of the other, things and non-things do not see the suchness in the teaching of the awakened.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Those who believe in nature or other-nature,
In entity or nonentity,
Fail to see reality
Within the teachings of the Buddha. [XV.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. Those who see essence and essential difference
And entities and nonentities,
They do not see
The truth taught by the Buddha.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. Those who see essence, the nature of being other
And entities and nonentities:
They do not see the reality of
The Buddha's doctrine.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Those who think in terms of self-nature and other-nature, existence and non-existence, do not perceive Truth as indicated by the Buddha's teaching.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/6 If a person is deeply attached to dharmas, then he will inevitably pursue a view of existence. If you refute self-nature then he will see other-nature. If you refute other-nature he will see existence. If you refute existence, he will see nonexistence. If you refute nonexistence, he will become confused. But if he is clear-witted and his mental attachments are slight, and he knows the calm serenity of the cessation of all views, he will nevermore generate these four kinds of sophistries. Such a person sees the Buddha-dharma, and this is why the above verse says so. Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Such are those who delude themselves that they are faithfully expounding the teaching of the perfectly realized one when they explain the self-existent and essential nature of things, saying that solidity is the self-existent and essential nature of earth, that experience of the object is the self-existent and essential nature of feeling and that being reflected as an object is the self-existent and essential nature of consciousness. And they explain existence-as-otherness (*parabhava*) saying that consciousness is other than object and that feeling is other than both. They explain that consciousness and the other factors of personal existence, when in the present, exist, and when they are in the past do not exist. They do not explain the supremely profound truth of dependent origination. So self-existence and existence-as-other are, as we have shown, contrary to reason (*upapattiviruddha*). The self-existence of things as expounded by the perfectly realized ones, however, is not contrary to reason because of their autonomous, incorrigible, perfect enlightenment about the true nature of all things. Therefore the teaching of the revered Buddhas is valid knowledge (*pramana*), the wise say, because it is in accord with reason (*sopapattika*) and free from contradictions. And also because it derives from realized ones who are completely free of any. faults. It has authority because it yields the authentic truth of all things; and because it is an authentic guide for those on the way; and because the ordinary man attains *nirvāṇa* if he bases himself on it. Authority (*agamatva*) is defined as being the teachings only of the perfectly enlightened one. Doctrines differing from this, because they are not in accord with reason (*upapattiviyukta*), are declared not to be valid knowledge but spurious doctrine. Therefore these theories of self-existence, other-existence, existence and non-existence are destitute of intelligibility and are not the true ways of things.

So, for the guidance of those desiring liberation:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

It is not merely self-nature and other-nature that are rejected, but also existence and non-existence. The former pair covers a limited range of explanation, compared to the more comprehensive notions of existence and nonexistence.

An empirical definition of existence, as presented by the Buddha, would mean some thing, some event, some phenomenon available to the six senses (see S 4.15, Sabba-satta). Such a phenomenon is assumed to have come to be on the basis of conditions (paticcasamuppanna), to remain for a while showing signs, at the same time, of decay (thitassa aññathatta), and then cease to exist (nirodha, vyaya), once again depending upon conditions. So that even ordinary unenlightened people would say: "Change of what is existent is nonexistence" (bhavasya hy anyathabhavam abhavam bruvate janah, XV. 5).

However, the metaphysicians can take over from this ordinary man's language, especially with its use of the genetive or possessive case (bhavasya). He will assume that change is something possessed by the existent (bhava) which is always the same. Yet he cannot say the same about non-existence (abhava). The metaphysicians part company here, one dogmatically holding on to a theory of eternal existence (sasvata), the other advocating absolute nonexistence, which is annihilationism (uccheda). Another metaphysician who is interested in explaining the empirically felt "selfhood" and "others" will attempt to bifurcate existence (bhava) as self-nature (svabhava) and other-nature (parabhava). When applying this latter dichotomy to the explanation of causality, the metaphysician once again brings the duality of existence and non-existence into play.

Such metaphysics has no place whatsoever in the Buddha's explanation of existence and non-existence. Hence Nagarjuna's statement that those who adhere to these notions do not understand the truth or reality expressed in the Buddha's message.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. If the only way that one can think about phenomena is to think of them as things with inherent natures and to think of things without such natures as thereby nonexistent, none of the Buddhist doctrines of impermanence, emptiness, or liberation will make any sense.

Kārikā XV.7

कात्यायनाववादे चास्तीति नास्तीति चोभयम्।
प्रतिषिद्धं भगवता भावाभावविभाविना॥७॥

kātyāyanāvavāde cāstīti nāstīti cobhayam |
pratiṣiddhaṃ bhagavatā bhāvābhāvavibhāvinā ||7||

佛能滅有無 如化迦旃延
經中之所說 離有亦離無

fú;fó néng miè yǒu wú rú huà;huā jiā zhān yán
jīng zhōng zhī suǒ shuì lí yǒu yì lí wú

།བཅོམ་ལྡན་དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་པ། །མཁྱེན་པས་ཀ་ཏ་ཡ་ན་ཡི། །
།གདམས་ངག་ལས་ནི་ཡོད་པ་དང་། །མེད་པ་གཉིས་ཀའང་དགག་པ་མཛད། །

| bcom ldan dṅos daṅ dṅos med pa | | mkhyen pas ka ta ya na yi |
| gdam ṅag las ni yod pa daṅ | | med pa gñis ka'aṅ dgag pa mdzad |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - According to the Instructions to Katyayana, the two views of the world in terms of being and non-being were criticized by the Buddha for similarly admitting the bifurcation of entities into existence and non-existence. - Note: The Sanskrit, Katyayanavavada, either refers to the sutra or to the instruction given to Katyayama by the Buddha.

JONES (Skt):
[7] In his *Discourse* to *Katyayana.* both "is" and "is not" are denied by the blessed one who has made known both "being" and "non-being."

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
In the admonition to Katyāyāna, the two theories [implying] 'exists' and 'does not exist' have been refuted by the Blessed One who is adept in existence as well as in non-existence.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
In the instructions to Katyayana, both "it is" and "it is not" were demonstrated by the Buddha as causing the appearance of being and nonbeing.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Katyayana was not so affirmative,
To the two kinds of discussions whether something exists, or not.
The Saint Katyayana was not so affirmative,
Therefore the problem whether it is existent, or not, is not so clear.

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 In the *Katyayanavavada Sutra,* the illustrious one, who comprehends existence and non-existence, repudiated both thoughts: that something is and that something is not.

STRENG (Skt):
7. In "The Instruction of Katyayana" both "it is" and "it is not" are opposed By the Glorious One, who has ascertained the meaning of "existent" and non-existent."

BOCKING (Ch):
15v7 The Buddha is able to extinguish both existence and nonexistence
As it says in the sutra,
In the 'Instruction to Katyayana'
"Separate from existence and separate from nonexistence".

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Through knowing things and non-things, the Buddha negated both existence and non-existence in his Advice to Katyayana.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The Transcendent Conqueror,
With knowledge of both entities and nonentities,
Refuted, in his *Instructions to Katayana*,
Both existence and nonexistence. [XV.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. The Victorious One, through knowledge
Of reality and unreality,
In the Discourse to Katyayana,
Refuted both "it is" and "it is not."

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. The Transcendent Lord, through understanding
Entity and nonentity,
In the *Discourse to Katyayana*
Refuted both existence and nonexistence.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The Buddha, with knowledge of both existence and non-existence, refuted notions of both "is" and "is not" in his instructions to Katyayana.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
In his Pith Instructions to Katyayana,
The one who knows all things and all absences of things,
The Transcendent Conqueror,
Refuted both existence and nonexistence. (7)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/7 In the Samda-Katyayana sutra, the Buddha expounds the meaning of 'right view' as 'separate from existence and separate from nonexistence'. If there were the least fixed 'existence' in dharmas, the Buddha would not have refuted both existence and nonexistence. When existence is refuted, people - say that this constitutes nonexistence, but because the Buddha is thoroughly versed in the characteristics of dharmas, he explains that neither is the case. You should therefore relinquish views of existence and of nonexistence.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The illustrious one says in the *Katyayanavavada Sutra*, 'So much the more, Katyayana, the unenlightened man, clinging tenaciously to the belief that things are either in being (*astita*) or not in being (*nastita*), is not liberated in that way. He is not liberated from the distress of birth, old age, disease, death, grief, lamentation and sorrow. He is not liberated from the prison of unregenerate existence with its basis in personal existence. He is not liberated from the painful sorrow of a mother's death nor of a father's death.' (fn 9 Cf. Kindred Sayings, vol. 2, p. 12, Pali Text Society, Translation Series, Luzac, London, 1952.) And so on. This sutra is taught in all the Buddhist schools. So on this authority and from the arguments given, an intelligent man should not, in reason, be capable of holding to the theories of self-existence, other existence, existence and non-existence, which are completely opposed to the words of the perfectly realized one and which he rejected.

Of what nature is the illustrious one exactly? He comprehends existence and non-existence. One whose nature it is to comprehend existence and non-existence is a comprehender of existence and non-existence. From his ultimate grasp of self- existence in the true sense as related to existence and nonexistence, as we have explained it, only the illustrious one is said to be a comprehender of existence and non-existence. Therefore he rejects both views: that things are in being or that things are not in being. It follows that it does not make sense to insist that the true way of things can be seen in terms of existence or non-existence.

To quote: 'To say, Kasyapa, "Something is", is one extreme; to say "Something is not" is one extreme. What avoids these two extremes is said to be without a specific nature, beyond proof, not related, invisible, without an abode, not to be known conceptually. It is, Kasyapa, the middle way (*madhyama pratipad*); it is the right way of regarding the true nature of things.' (fn 10 From the *Ratnakuta Sutra*, one of the earliest Mahayana sutras.)

To quote: ' "It is", "It is not" are two dogmas; "purity", "impurity" are two dogmas; and so the wise man abandons both dogmas without taking up a position in the middle. "It is", "It is not" is mere disputation; "purity", "impurity" is mere disputation; afflicted existence is not terminated by engaging in disputation; afflicted existence is brought to an end by not engaging in disputation.' (*Samadhiraja Sutra*.)

The unintelligibility of change

You may interject: But if there is self-existence of fire and such things what objection would there be?

There would be the objection already given: 'A self-existent nature which arises from causes and conditions would be something created', and so on. Moreover, if there were this kind of self-existent nature in fire and such things, it, existing already in fact, could never change. Nagarjuna expounds:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This, as mentioned in the Introduction, is the single most important piece of evidence available in the work of Nagarjuna, which can relate him to the Buddha as presented in the Pali Nikayas and the Chinese Agamas. Inada's note on this verse is too brief and vague: "The Sanskrit Katyayanavavada, either refers to the sutra or the instructions given to Katyayama [sic.] by the Buddha," (). This statement of Nagarjuna deserves much more attention than has ever been accorded to it.

The main theme of the discourse is to expose the untenability of the two metaphysical views of existence (astitva) and non-existence (nastitva). This is done by appealing to the empirical notions of arising (utpada) and ceasing (nirodha). With the fifteen chapters (including the present), Nagarjuna has presented an outstanding explanation of how the empirical conceptions of arising and ceasing, of impermanence and change, can profitably be used to expose the futility of metaphysics. Hence, he is

satisfied with merely referring to that portion of the "Discourse to Katyayana" which deals with the rejection of the two metaphysical extremes. A discussion of the remaining ideas expressed by the Buddha in this discourse, especially the positive description of the human personality as well as its experiences, is reserved for a later occasion.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. In the *Discourse to Katyayana,* the Buddha argues that to assert that things exist inherently is to fall into the extreme of reification, to argue that things do not exist at all is to fall into the extreme of nihilism, and to follow the middle way is neither to assert in an unqualified way that things exist nor in an unqualified way that things do not exist. It represents one of the fundamental *suttas* of the Pali canon for Mahayana philosophy. In the *sutta,* the Buddha claims that reification derives from the failure to note impermanence and leads to grasping, craving, and the attendant suffering. Nihilism, he claims, is motivated by the failure to note the empirical reality of arising phenomena. It leads to suffering from failure to take life, others, and morality seriously enough. The middle path of conventional existence leads to engagement in the world without attachment. (fn 79. Kalupahana (1986) relies on this verse to argue that the entire *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā* is a "grand commentary on the *Discourse to Katytayana"* (pp. 81, 232). While this *sutta* is clearly important for Nāgārjuna, nothing in the text justifies this global interpretation. The range of topics Nāgārjuna considers far exceeds the scope of that *sutta,* and no other passage from that *sutta* is mentioned in the *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā.*)

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Kārikā XV.8

यद्यस्तित्वं प्रकृत्या स्यान्न भवेदस्य नास्तिता।
प्रकृतेरन्यथाभावो न हि जातूपपद्यते॥८॥

yady astitvaṃ prakṛtyā syān na bhaved asya nāstitā |
prakṛter anyathābhāvo na hi jātūpapadyate ||8||

若法實有性 後則不應異
性若有異相 是事終不然

ruò fǎ shí yǒu xìng hòu zé bù yīng yì
xìng ruò yǒu yì xiàng;xiāng shì shì zhōng bù rán

།གལ་ཏེ་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་ཡོད་ན།།དེ་ནི་མེད་ཉིད་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
།རང་བཞིན་གཞན་དུ་འགྱུར་བ་ནི།།ནམ་ཡང་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།།

| gal te raṅ bźin gyis yod na | | de ni med ñid mi 'gyur ro |
| raṅ bźin gźan du (2)'gyur ba ni | | nam yaṅ 'thad par mi 'gyur ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - If existence is in virtue of a primal nature, then its non-existence does not follow. For, indeed, a varying character of a primal nature is not possible at all.

JONES (Skt):
[8] If existence (i.e., "is-ness") existed by its own nature, there could be no nonexistence (i.e., "is-not- ness") of it, for the change in the nature of something self-existent never occurs.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If existence were to be in terms of primal nature, then there would not be its non-existence. A change of primal nature is certainly not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If existence would be unalterable, there would not be its nonexistence.
Indeed a changing nature of primordial substance never happens.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. If Reality is the original substance,
There might not be anything, which does not belong to this world, or not to be Reality.
And something original might be perfectly impossible to be a different existence,
Because what has been separated from the original Reality, might manifest itself At all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 If it is the nature of something to exist, it cannot cease to exist. Real change of the nature of something is not logically possible.

STRENG (Skt):
8. If there would be an existent thing by its own nature, there could not be "non-existence' of that thing. Certainly an existent thing different from its own nature would never obtain.

ROBINSON (Skt):
If existence [derives] from nature [prakrti], its non-existence will not occur; for the otherwise-being of a nature [prakrti] is never true to fact.

BOCKING (Ch):
15v8 If dharmas really have a nature
They cannot subsequently change.
For a nature to have varying characteristics
Would never be the case.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If [things] existed essentially, they would not come to non-existence. It is never the case that an essence could become something else.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If something is existent by nature,
It would never become nonexistent.
A nature that undergoes change
Would never make any sense. [XV.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. If existence were through essence,
Then there would be no nonexistence.
A change in essence
Could never be tenable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. If something existed essentially,
Then it could not become nonexistent.
Essence transforming into something other
Could never be tenable.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If a thing existed by means of self-nature, it would be impossible for such a thing to not exist. And a thing that differs from its own nature cannot be.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/8 If dharmas have a fixed existent nature this should under no circumstances change, and why? If it is a fixed, existent self-nature, then it should not have varying characteristics, just as in the 'true gold' example above (15/2). Now, since dharmas are manifestly seen to have varying characteristics, we must know that they do not have fixed characteristics.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

8ab *If it is the nature of something to exist, it cannot cease to exist.*

If it is the nature of fire and such things to be self-existent, then such a self-existent, whose nature it is to exist, could not change.

8cd *Real change of the nature of something is not logically possible.*

If the nature of fire and such things were as one supposes, it would be self-existent; and then, because of the unchangeableness of a true nature (*prakrti*), change (*anyathabhava*) would never be logically possible. For example, the infinity of space could never possibly change; similarly there could be no change in such things as fire because it is their nature to exist as such. But one perceives the disappearance of things, either in so far as they change or as there is a disruption of continuity. So, because their nature is to change, this cannot be the inherent self-existent nature of things; it is like the heat of water. This should be clear.

You may object: If change is impossible in something which exists by its very nature and yet one perceives change you say there can be no true nature of such things. But then, indeed:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This and the next three verses seem to constitute a digest of the detailed and meticulous analysis of the two extreme views presented by Nagarjuna so far. If existence is understood in the sense of primal nature (prakrti), in the way the Sankhya school did, for, in fact, the Sankhya used the term svabhava to refer to the primal nature, then there cannot be its non-existence. The reason is that change and primal nature or substance are incompatible.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. If for a thing to exist were for it to be a determinate entity with an essence, then no thing would ever cease to exist or change in any way. For an essential property is a necessary property, and it is incoherent to say that a thing loses a necessary property.

Kārikā XV.9

प्रकृतौ कस्य चासत्यामन्यथात्वं भविष्यति।
प्रकृतौ कस्य च सत्यामन्यथात्वं भविष्यति॥९॥

prakṛtau kasya vāsatyām anyathātvaṃ bhaviṣyati |
prakṛtau kasya vā satyām anyathātvaṃ bhaviṣyati ||9||

若法實有性 云何而可異
若法實無性 云何而可異

ruò fǎ shí yǒu xìng yún hé ér kě yì
ruò fǎ shí wú xìng yún hé ér kě yì

།རང་བཞིན་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།གཞན་དུ་འགྱུར་བ་གང་གི་ཡིན།
།རང་བཞིན་ཡོད་པ་ཡིན་ན་ཡང༌།།གཞན་དུ་འགྱུར་བ་གང་གི་ཡིན།།

| raṅ bźin yod pa mi yin na | | gźan du ’gyur pa gaṅ gi yin |
| raṅ bźin yod pa yin na yaṅ | | gźan du ’gyur ba ji ltar ruṅ |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - If primal nature does not exist, what will possess the varying character? If, on the other hand, primal nature does exist, what then will possess the varying character? - Note: The opponent raises the first question and Nagarjuna counters with the second. He follows up with an answer in the next two verses.

JONES (Skt):
[9] Since such a self-existent nature does not exist, of what can there be a change in natures (i.e., “becoming-otherwise-ness”)? But if such a nature existed, of what would there be such a change?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When primal nature is non-existent, whose change would there be? When primal nature is existent, whose change would there be?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where primordial substance does not exist, what will have changing nature?
Where primordial substance exists, what will have changing nature?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. In the case of relying upon the imitated substance,
How is it possible for the original situations to be manifested really?
In the case of relying upon the true substance,
How is it possible for the imitated situations to be manifested really?

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 If things have no inherent nature what is it that will change? If things have an inherent nature what is it that will change?

STRENG (Skt):
9. An opponent asks: If there is no basic self-nature (prakti), of what will there be "otherness"? Nargarjuna answers: If there is basic self-nature, of what will there be "otherness"?

ROBINSON (Skt):
If the nature is inexistent, to what will otherwiseness belong? If the nature is existent, to what will otherwiseness belong?

BOCKING (Ch):
15v9 If dharmas really had a nature
How could they vary?
If dharmas really had no nature
How could they vary?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If essences did not exist, what could become something else? Even if essences existed, what could become something else?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If no nature exists,
To what does change pertain?
Even if nature exists,
To what could change pertain? [XV.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. If there is no essence,
What could become other?
If there is essence,
What could become other?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. If there is no essence,
What could transform into something else?
If there is essence, on the other hand,
How could it be possible for something to transform into something else?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[The opponent speaks first:] If there is no self-nature, what could change? [Nagarjuna replies:] If there is self-nature, what could change?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/9 If dharmas had a fixed nature, how could they change? If they have no nature then they have no self-substance, so how could they change?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

9ab *If things have no inherent nature what is it that will change?* (fn 11 The opponent's argument.)

That is, how can there be change in something which, like the sky-lotus, does not exist by virtue of its inherent nature (*prakrtya svarupena*); one does not perceive change in something which by its nature does not exist; because one experiences change there must be inherent self-existent nature.

We reply. If, according to your thought, there is an inherent nature in things because there can be no change in something which has no essential nature and yet there is direct experience of change, even so

9cd *If things have an inherent nature what is it that will change?*

Taking your case, how will there be change in something which by its inherent nature exists in present fact (*vartamana eva*)? There can be no change in something which by its very nature exists. Thus change is impossible in every sense. It should be realized therefore that there is no inherent nature (*prakrti*) in things.

When we said earlier that there could be no inherent nature because we experience change, that was said with reference to the experience of change as understood by others. We have at no time agreed that there is change in anything at all. Rather it is that an inherent nature of things is totally (atyantatah) non-existent, that all the putative elements of existence are non-existent and without an inherent nature and that change in such things is non-existent. One who, however, believes in the existence and non-existence of things, for him, so believing, it follows inevitably.

The twin dogmas of eternalism and naturalism

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Not only the existence of primal nature, but also its non-existence is incompatible with change. Here primal nature is understood as the substance and change as the attribute. If the substance is not available, the attributes cannot be applied to it. If the substance is present, the attributes become superficial. In brief, the substantialist enterprise consists of reconciling substance and attribute after creating a sharp and irreconciliable distinction between them (see Chapter V).

The above explanation would eliminate the need for assuming that the first line of the verse represents a question raised by an opponent to which Nagarjuna gives his own reply in the second (see Inada , who follows Candrakīrti's interpretation of this verse.)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. In the first half of this verse, the opponent replies that since the argument in the previous verse presupposes the reality of change, it must presuppose the reality of the changer. If it presupposes the reality of change, it presupposes the reality of things that change and, hence, that persist through time. In order to remain the same, there must be some essence that accounts for this identity. Nāgārjuna replies, however, that if this persistence through time were determined by essence, the change it putatively explains would be impossible. Only conventional existence over time can explain change. Nāgārjuna summarizes, paraphrasing the *Discourse to Katyayana:*

Kārikā XV.10

अस्तीति शाश्वतग्राहो नास्तीत्युच्छेददर्शनम्।
तस्मादस्तित्वनास्तित्वे नाश्रीयेत विचक्षणः॥१०॥

astīti śāśvatagrāho nāstīty ucchedadarśanam |
tasmād astitvanāstitve nāśrīyeta vicakṣaṇaḥ ||10||

定有則著常 定無則著斷
是故有智者 不應著有無

dìng yǒu zé zhù;zhuó;zhāo cháng dìng wú zé zhù;zhuó;zhāo duàn
shì gù yǒu zhì zhě bù yīng zhù;zhuó;zhāo yǒu wú

།ཡོད་ཅེས་བྱ་བ་རྟག་པར་འཛིན། །མེད་ཅེས་བྱ་བ་ཆད་པར་ལྟ།
།དེ་ཕྱིར་ཡོད་དང་མེད་པ་ལ། །མཁས་པས་གནས་པར་མི་བྱའོ། །

| yod ces bya ba rtag par ’dzin | | med ces bya ba chad par lta |
| de phyir yod daṅ med (3)pa la | | mkhas pas gnas par mi bya’o |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - Existence is the grasping of permanency (i.e., permanent characteristics) and non-existence the perception of disruption. (As these functions are not strictly possible), the wise should not rely upon (the concepts of) existence and non-existence.

JONES (Skt):
[10] To say “It is” is to grasp for eternal permanence. To say “It is not” is to grasp for complete annihilation. Therefore, the clear-sighted should not adhere to either “It is” or “It is not.”

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
“Exists” implies grasping after eternalism. “Does not exist” implies the philosophy of annihilation. Therefore, a discerning person should not rely upon either existence or non-existence.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
“It is” is grasping for eternity. “It is not” is the view of nihilism.
Therefore, existence and nonexistence would not be resorted to by the wise.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. It is said that the Eternal Manifestation really exists,
And it is completely wrong that the continuous observation has been cut actually.
Therefore in the middle way between existence and non-existence,
It might be just the passing through all situations of having sharp corners.

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 To say ‘Things are in being’ is the eternalist view; to say ‘Things are not in being’ is the naturalist view. Therefore a thinking man should not resort to the twin beliefs in existence and non-existence.

STRENG (Skt):
10. "It is" is a notion of eternity. "It is not" is a nihilistic view. Therefore, one who is wise does not have recourse to "being" or "non-being."

BOCKING (Ch):
15v10 Fixed existence is attachment to permanence.
Fixed nonexistence is attachment to severance.
Therefore the wise man
Should not be attached to either existence or nonexistence.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
“Existence” is the grasping at permanence; “non-existence” is the view of annihilation. Therefore, the wise do not dwell, in existence or non-existence.

DOCTOR (Tb):
“Existence” is apprehension of permanence,
“Nonexistence” a view of annihilation.
The wise, therefore, ought not to adhere
To either existence or nonexistence. [XV.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. To say "it is" is to grasp for permanence.
To say "it is not" is to adopt the view of nihilism.
Therefore a wise person
Does not say "exists" or "does not exist."

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. To say “it exists” is to reify.
To say “it does not exist” is to adopt the view of nihilism.
Therefore a wise person
Does not subscribe to “it exists” or “it does not exist.”

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[axiomatic] “It is” implies grasping at eternalism. “It is not” implies holding to nihilism. Therefore, the wise do not rely on notions of existence or non-existence.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
“Existence” is the view of permanence,
”Nonexistence” is the view of extinction,
Therefore, the wise do not abide
Either in existence or in nonexistence. (10)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/10 If dharmas were fixed and existent, having the mark of existence, then they would never become nonexistent, with the mark of nonexistence, and this would be permanence. Why is this?. It is like saying, of the three periods of time, that the characteristics of a dharma exist in the future period, and that this dharma comes into present existence, and then in turn passes into the past, without abandoning its original characteristics. This would constitute permanence. It is also saying that an effect exists beforehand in the cause, which is also permanence.

(20b22) If you say that a fixed (entity) is nonexistent, then this nonexistent thing must have existed previously but does not exist now, and this constitutes severance. Severance means no continuity of characteristics. Through these two views, one strays very far from the Buddha's Dharma.

Question: Why does (a view of) existence produce the view that things are permanent, and a (view of) nonexistence produce the view that things are cut off?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

10ab *To say 'Things are in being' is the eternalist view; to say 'Things are not in being' is the naturalist view.*

It is implied here that these theories of eternalism (*sasvata*) and naturalism (*uccheda*) (fn 12 Usually translated 'nihilism'. In the discussion which follows 'naturalism' seems more appropriate.) are obstacles on the way to the final beatitude of heaven, and that they cause great ill.

10cd *Therefore a thinking man should not resort to the twin beliefs in existence and non-existence.*

Why, given the theories of real existence and real nonexistence do the dogmas of eternalism and naturalism follow? Because:

Kārikā XV.11

अस्ति यद्धि स्वभावेन न तन्नास्तीति शाश्वतम्।
नास्तीदानीमभूत्पूर्वमित्युच्छेदः प्रसज्यते॥११॥

asti yad dhi svabhāvena na tan nāstīti śāśvatam |
nāstīdānīm abhūt pūrvam ity ucchedaḥ prasajyate ||11||

若法有定性 非無則是常
先有而今無 是則為斷滅

ruò fǎ yǒu dìng xìng fēi wú zé shì cháng
xiān yǒu ér jīn wú shì zé wéi duàn miè

།གང་ཞིག་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་ཡོད་པ། །དེ་ནི་མེད་པ་མིན་པས་རྟག །
།སྔོན་བྱུང་ད་ལྟར་མེད་ཅེས་པ། །དེས་ན་ཆད་པར་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར། །

| gaṅ źig raṅ bźin gyis yod pa | | de ni med pa min pas rtag |
| sṅon byuṅ da ltar med ces pa | | des na chad par thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - It follows that permanency means that existence based on self-nature does not become a non-entity and disruption means that what formerly was existent is now non-existent.

JONES (Skt):
[11] For the claim “Whatever exists through self-existence does not *not* exist” entails the view of eternal permanence. The claim “It does not now exist, but *did* exist before” entails the view of complete annihilation.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
“Whatever that exists in terms of self-nature, that is not non-existent” implies eternalism. “It does not exist now, but existed before” implies annihilation.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
“Whatever exists by self-nature, that does not not exist” and so is permanent.
Annihilation follows from “it does not exist now but existed before.”

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. Relying upon thinking subjective existences, even though there is the concrete Universe,
The concrete Universe is not something, which really does not exist, or is not eternal.
In the time before this world hasn't existed,
What is called extinction does not appear yet.

SPRUNG (Skt):
11 What exists by its inherent nature can never not exist: this implies eternalism. What does now not exist but once did: this implies naturalism.

STRENG (Skt):
11. That which exists by its own nature is eternal since "it does not not-exist." If it is maintained: "That which existed before does not exist now," there annihilation would logically follow.

BOCKING (Ch):
15v11 If dharmas had fixed natures
They would not be nonexistent, and this would be permanence.
If they previously existed and now do not,
This would constitute severance.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
“Since that which exists by its essence is not non-existent,” is [the view of] permanence. “That which arose before is now non-existent,”leads to [the view of] annihilation.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which exists by nature
Is not nonexistent—this is permanence.
“It existed before, but now it does not”—
That implies annihilation. [XV.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. "Whatever exists through its essence
Cannot be nonexistent" is eternalism.
"It existed before but doesn't now"
Entails the error of nihilism.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. “Whatever exists essentially
Cannot be nonexistent” is reification.
“It existed before, but does not now”
Entails the error of nihilism.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The notion, “whatever exists in terms of self-nature is not non-existent,” implies eternalism. The notion, “it existed in the past but it no longer exists,” implies nihilism.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

15/11 If dharmas' nature were fixed and existent, they would have the characteristic of existence and not the characteristic of nonexistence, so they would in no way be nonexistent. If they were nonexistent, they would not exist, and consequently they would not be dharmas. Because of the errors previously discussed, one thus falls into a view of permanence.

(20c1) If a dharma which formerly existed is destroyed and becomes nonexistent, then this constitutes severance, and why? Because existence cannot be nonexistence, and because, as you say, existence and nonexistence each have fixed characteristics. If you have views of severance or permanence, sin and merit, etc. will not exist and you will negate all worldly processes. For this reason, you should relinquish them.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

What is said to exist by its inherent nature (*svabhdvena*) can at no time not exist because inherent nature is indefeasible (*anapayitva*). If, thus, one agrees that things are in being one espouses the eternalist view. Again, if one agrees that in a previous time something really existed of which, later, because it has been destroyed, one says 'it does not exist', one is caught up in the naturalist view. One for whom a self-existent nature of things is not intelligible, because a self-existent nature of things is never directly experienced (*anupalambha*), is not involved in the eternalist and naturalist views.

You may object that one who supposes there is no inherent nature in things, though he does not hold the eternalist view as he rejects the reality of things, is inevitably caught up in the naturalist view. We reply that the naturalist view does not arise in this way. One who supposes that at one time there is a self- existent nature of something and who perceives this at a later time to have disappeared, holds that things are not in being because he repudiates what he previously perceived to be self- existent. However, when one is rid of optical defect, not perceiving things as the one with an optical defect sees hairs, says, 'Things do not really exist' he is not saying 'Everything is illusory' because in that case there would be nothing to be negated. For the purpose of removing the persistent illusion of the deluded, we declare, like one freed from an optical defect, 'Things as such do not really exist'. In saying this we are not caught up in the naturalist theory: we are concerned to be of help to others.

As the sutra says, 'One who supposes the real existence of desire, aversion and illusion and later says they have ceased to exist, he indeed is the naturalist', and so on.

But, you may say, one who supposes that mind and its objects are real (*vastumatra*) only in reciprocal dependence (*paratrantra*) avoids the theory of eternalism because there is no inherent self-existence in dependence as he conceives it; and he avoids the theory of naturalism because dependent mental states, which are the cause of the removal of afflictions, really exist (fn 13 The position of the Vijnanavada school of Buddhism.).

How can such a one avoid the twin dogmas? What is projected by the mind is non-existent; what is dependent on mind is existent; so both the eternalist and the naturalist dogmas are operative. Further, his exposition does not make sense because it has been shown that the self-existence of what is dependent does not make sense. Thus the Madhyamika view alone is free of the twin dogmas of eternalism and naturalism, but not the views of the Vijnanavadin and others.

So it is said in the *Ratnavali*: 'Ask the Sarhkhyas, the Vaisesikas, the Jains, the personalists, and the naturalists if their doctrine teaches the transcendence of existence and nonexistence.' 'You should know the hidden depths of the immortal teaching uttered by the Buddhas, for its very essence is the transcending of existence and non-existence.'

Out of concern for the enlightenment of such people who need guidance, as a useful means to comprehending the ultimate truth, the illustrious one, in his limitless compassion, taught the doctrines of the Vijnanavadins and of the Sammitiyas, who believe in the person. But only for the sake of the uninitiated (*neyartha*), not for the initiated (*nitartha*).

As is said in the *Samadhiraja Sutra*: 'The one who can distinguish the higher truth in the sutras knows that the Buddha held to the absence of being in things. All mention of persons, beings, and souls, he knows, are only for the sake of the uninitiated.'

This point is found repeatedly in the teachings of the *Aksamati* and other texts. The cycle of death and rebirth endures as long as the entanglement in the twin dogmas that things are in being or that they are not endures. When those genuinely striving for liberation have realized this, being freed from the twin dogmas, they rightly embrace the middle way.

As the illustrious one said in the *Samadhiraja Sutra*: 'Let there be an end to the knowledge of existence and nonexistence; all is inaccessible to thought and all is unreal. Those who follow their inclination to intellection will suffer in countless rebirths. The one who wisely understands that things are non-things is never obsessed with things. The one who is never obsessed with things attains peace of mind beyond all definition.' 'When Buddha, the sage, the king of truth, the revealer of all truths appears, the refrain is sounded from grass and bush and tree and plants, from the rocks and the mountains: all elements of existence are without being.'

'Howsoever far mere words reach in the world realm, all are without being, none is real; and so far resounds the call of the realized one, the guide and teacher of all men.'

To say 'something is' is to say that it is in being. But eternal being as the self-existent nature of particular things is never a fact. All putative elements of existence are not real and devoid of being because as particulars they do not have self-existent natures. This is found in the *prajnaparamita* texts. The self- existence of particular things is contrary to thought. 'The refrain is sounded that all elements of existence are without being.'

The meaning of similar sutras is to be understood in this sense.

'Howsoever far mere words reach in the world realm, all are without being, none is real.'

In sum, the intention is to repudiate the reality of things (fn 14 Reading *bhava*; the text has *abhava* but this must be a mistake. It is true that Madhyamika repudiates both *bhava* and *abhava*, but the tactical thrust of this chapter, as of most others, is against uncritical realism (*bhava*).); to say things are not real is precisely the same as to say they have no self-existence.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

These theories of existence and non-existence are not simple and harmless ones. They contribute to unfortunate consequences. The theory of existence leads to the dogmatic grasping on to the belief in eternalism. The conception of nonexistence leads to an equally dangerous view of annihilation, both of which, as will be pointed out later, are damaging to the moral life. Hence, a wise man would not associate himself with such extreme views.

This seems to be a most appropriate conclusion to an analysis that was intended to establish the nonsubstantiality of all phenomena (dharma-nairatmya). Nagarjuna did not allow any room for the reification of any one single phenomenon that was referred to as being part of human experience.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. ("Entails the error of nihilism" fn 80. The verse ends .....*thal-bar 'gyur."* This form indicates that the nihilism is taken as the unacceptable consequence that would provide a reductio on the claim "it existed before but doesn't now.")

To say that if something exists, it does so in virtue of having an essence and hence cannot change or pass out of existence would entail the absurd position that everything is eternal. To say of something that it existed in this strong sense - with an essence - in the past, but does not do so now, is absurd. For if for something to exist is for it to do so inherently, and if it is not now existent, it could never have been. So since everything we observe is impermanent, if the only existence that there could be were inherent existence, nothing could exist at all. That would be nihilism. The upshot of this chapter is. that the very concept of an essence, and hence the very concept of an inherently existent entity at all, is incoherent. No coherent conception of the phenomenal world can be one in which things are posited other than conventionally. (fn 81. See Ng (1993), pp. 25-27, 34-36, for a nice discussion of the connection between this rejection of extremes and the emptiness of emptiness.)

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Chapter XVI

बन्धमोक्षपरीक्षा षोडशमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀縛解品第十六(十偈)

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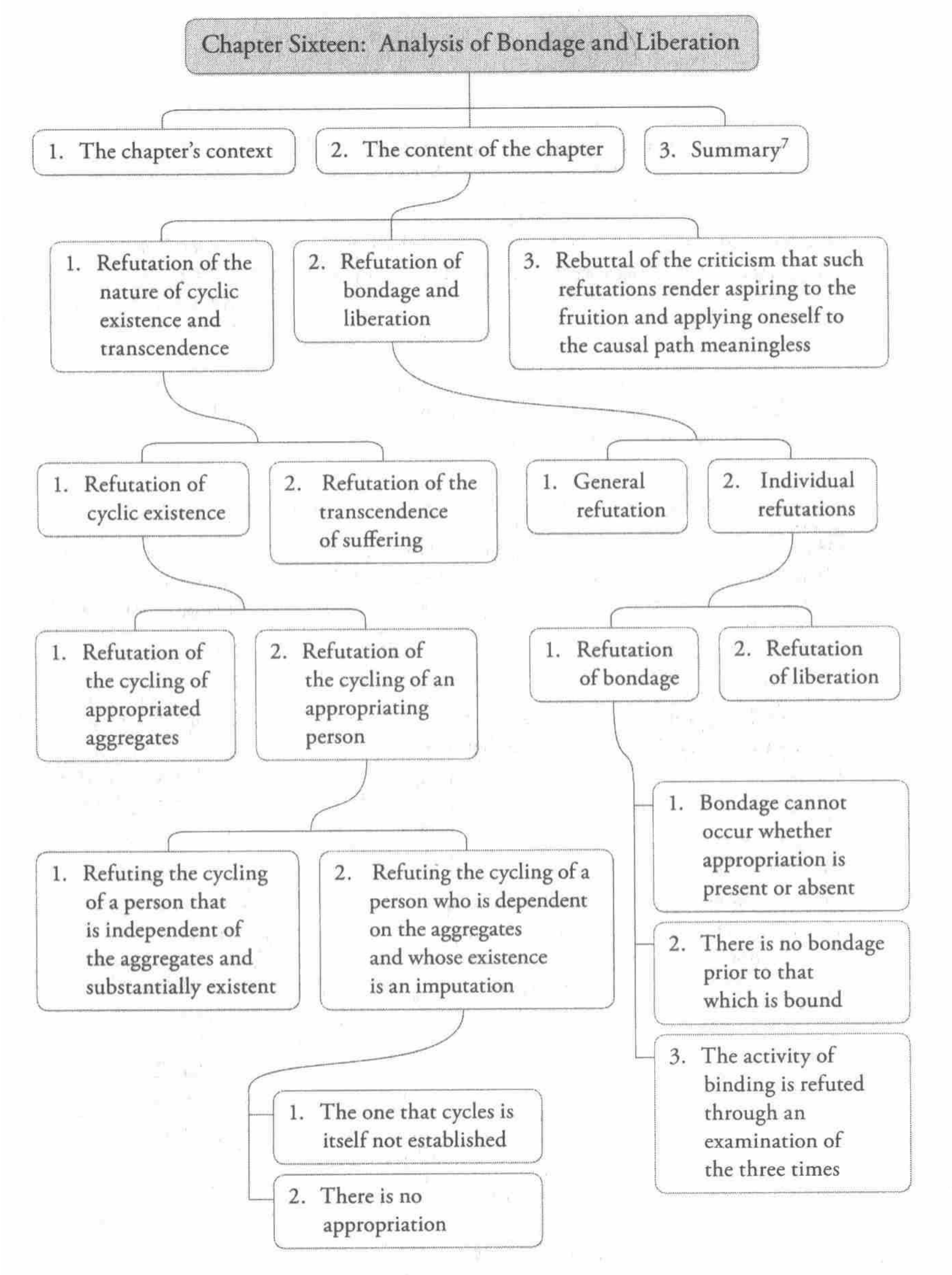
bandhanamokṣaparīkṣā nāma ṣoḍaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XVI: Examination of Bondage

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter XVI

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the second part of the section on the two selflessnesses, the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. We are still in the second of its two sections: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of things. We have completed the first two parts of the three parts of that section: the refutation of contact and the refutation of the essential existence of appropriation of causes and conditions. **[284:12]** The third part of this section, the refutation of the essential existence of bondage,

has two sections: the main point and the refutation of the argument. This chapter comprises the first part.

EXPLANATION:

This section has three parts: the refutation of the essential existence of samsara and nirvana, the refutation of the essential existence of bondage and liberation, and dispelling the apparent consequence that there is no point in making effort to achieve liberation.

SUMMARY:

Realizing that if cycling in cyclic existence, achieving nirvana, being bound by afflictions, and being freed by cutting those bonds existed inherently, none of them would be tenable and they make no sense in the context of inherent existence, one should ascertain the profound dependent origination—that they are all completely tenable when they are merely posited through the force of nominal conventions.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XVI - Examination of Bondage and Release

This is the first chapter to discuss nirvana and its implications A fuller treatment, of course, is reserved for Chapter XXV on the Examination of Nirvana but here the general trend of the treatment is hinted at. All living beings are bound by defilements, i.e., by being caught up in the basic life-death process of samsara. Is there a way out of all this bondage? To think in terms of a release or deliverance (moksa) from the bondage (bandhana) is not enough. Nagarjuna again brings in his logic of reductio ad absurdum to demonstrate that what is already bound cannot be unbound, that what is unbound need not be bound, and that there cannot be any movement from one thing to another in what we understand as samsara. As a consequence, there is nothing to be released or freed from a bound entity. Even conceptual knowledge works in a similar fashion for he says that those who believe in manipulating the concept of nirvana have the gravest of all attachments (Verse 9) and that nirvana and samsdra are beyond thought (Verse 10)

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

Part III (Pudgala-nairatmya)

16. *Bondage and release (Bandhana-moksa*). The recognition of a permanent and eternal self (*atman*), even though it raised epistemological difficulties, enabled the early Indian thinkers to explain many ideas like karma and survival, bondage and release, in a more comfortable way. The Buddha's denial of such a metaphysical entity gave rise to enormous philosophical problems. The question was often raised: "Which self will be touched (or affected) by actions performed by a non-self."93 So long as the doctrine of dependent arising was understood properly, the Buddhists could consistently descirbe the manner in which a person may be said to perform an action and reap its consequences. However, as emphasized earlier, the Buddhist metaphysicians created mote problems with their interpretations of dependence than they solved. These metaphysical views were foremost in Nagarjuna's mind when, after examining the problems renting to suffering, etc., he proceeded to analyse the problems of bondage and release (*bandhana-moksa*), action and consequence (*karma-phala*), and so on.

Bondage (*bandhana*) can be of several sorts. Human beings are lettered by the pleasant objects they perceive, the ideas they form, and finally the process of becoming (*bhava*) itself. Craving for becoming (*bhava-trsna*) is looked upon in Buddhism as one of the most troublesome bonds. This craving for becoming, while leading to suffering in the present life, keeps the individual wandering in samsaric existence, subjecting him to repeated births and deaths. Death, personified as Mara, carries with it a snare (*pasa*) which very few humans can escape. The present chapter, therefore, focusses its attention on this bondage to the life-process. While the discussion of the Sarvastivada conception of self-nature (*svabhava*) lingers along in the next few chapters, the Sautrantika theory of a transmigrating personality (*pudgala*) emerges into prominence in the present section. When it is said that "dispositions transmigrate" (*samskarah samsaranti*), what is assumed is that there is a subtle essence in the dispositions that enable them to be perpetuated. Nagarjuna's argument here is more dialectical. If dispositions are permanent, then there is no point in speaking of their transmigration. For, transmigration implies moving from one position to another, disappearing in one place and appearing in another. If something is permanent, it is always present and there is no question of its ceasing and arising. On the contrary, if things are impermanent, in the sense of being completely destroyed (*uccheda*), they will never transmigrate. Nagarjuna, therefore, maintains that if a human being is looked upon in the above manner, it is not possible to speak of his transmigration (XVI. 1).

The impression one gets from the available translations of XVI.2 is that Nagarjuna rejects the theories of

aggregates (*skandha*), faculties (*ayatana*), and elements (*dhatu*).94 Yet, what is clearly stated here is the early Buddhist position: "It may be assumed that a person transmigrates. Yet such a person, sought for in the fivefold way, in the aggregates, spheres and elements, does not exist. Who then will transmigrate?" Thus, the transmigration that is denied is that of a subtle personality. However, if transmigration is understood as the continuation of the factors of the human personality on the basis of causal dependence, Nagarjuna may not have any objection against it.

The notion of bondage that is criticized turns out to be the bondage of a substantial entity to such things as dispositions. It is similar to the notion one finds in the Indian tradition where the permanent "self" (*atman*) is said to be in bondage to the psychophysical personality which is impermanent. Hence Nagarjuna's argument that anything that is of the nature of arising and passing away (*utpada-vyaya-dharmin*) is neither bound nor released. What is being criticized here is not the simple notions of bondage and release but those that take into consideration a substantial subject and its attributes.

The concluding verse could easily lead to much misunderstanding if the significance of the relative terms "where/there" (*yatra/tatra*) are ignored. The context specified here with these relative terms is what came to be discussed before, namely, the assumption of a substantial subject and the attribution of various attributes to it. Thus, in a context *where* some substantial subject is attributed with something called freedom (*nirvana samaropa*) or is stripped of the life-process (*samsarapakarsana)*, *therein* there is no sense in making a discrimination (*vikalpa*) between freedom and bondage, for what is real, namely, the substantial subject, will remain the same. Or else, *where* nirvana is "reified" (*samaropa*) and the life-process is eliminated (*apakarsana)*, *therein* too there is no sense in making such discriminations. These being totally different from one another, the knowledge of one would have no relevance to the understanding of the other.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Life

Is life what drives me?
Whether constant or fleeting,
Drives are not alive like life.
How am I alive?

When I cannot be found
Inside this mind or body,
Who is there to be alive?
If I survived by clinging on
To thoughts and feelings,
How could I evolve?

Without clinging or evolving,
Who can be alive?
If I came and went,
How could I be freed?

If clinging binds,
I who cling would be unbound
Like those who do not cling.
How is it I am trapped?

Neither bound nor unbound are free –
Were the bound to be freed,
Freedom and bondage
Would be simultaneous.

"I am free! I cling no more!
Liberation is mine!" –
The greatest clinging
Is to cling like this.

What do you think
Of a freedom that never happens?
What do you make
Of a life that won't go away?

JONES (COMMENTARY)

16. Bondage and Liberation

Is there a reality that "transmigrates"? The argument here is that compounded entities cannot be reborn. Something compounded is not one, integrated entity but an assemblage of parts, and thus there is no unified entity to transmigrate or be liberated. So too, if what is compounded were one real entity it would be permanent and thus could not be reborn (since this involves a change). The same analysis applies to exiting the cycle of rebirths by becoming enlightened: no real entities can change their state, and so if liberation is possible, any sentient being cannot be a real entity that is either "bound" or "liberated" (vv. 4-5). Nor are nirvana or the cycle of rebirths real entities (v. 10): one could not exit the cycle of rebirths and attain nirvana if they were permanent and unchanging entities. All must be empty of self-existence for anything to work.

The problem of the "mover moving" is applied in verses 6-9.

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

16

An Examination of Bondage and Liberation

In the sutras, the Buddha taught:

Forms do not arise, and therefore they are neither bound nor liberated.

THE BUDDHA MADE SIMILAR STATEMENTS about sounds, smells, taste, bodily sensations, and so forth; and thus connecting this teaching with many other phenomena, he taught of the transcendence of bondage and liberation in a vast way.

That bondage and liberation appear to be real, that we think they are real, and that we seem to have further experiences that confirm our belief that they are real is still not enough to prove they are real, because all of this also happens in dreams. You may dream of being bound in iron chains and then being let out of them, or of being thrown into prison and then being set free. Your dream body was never born in the first place, however, and therefore there is nothing really there to be bound or liberated. Thus, dream bondage and liberation are mere appearances, not real in the slightest. The bondage and liberation that appear during the day are the same.

In Tibet, some Dharma practitioners were imprisoned for twenty years, but they say that it was a very good experience—that it helped their practice a lot. They were probably meditating on the transcendence of bondage and liberation!

In this chapter, Nagarjuna will prove the validity of this teaching with logical reasoning. The reason he composed this chapter was that there were people who thought, "Things do in fact have an inherent nature because we can perceive them to be bound in samsara or liberated in nirvana." They used the existence of bondage and liberation as their proof of the existence of things. Thus, in order to help them give up their mistaken belief in true existence, Nagarjuna had to demonstrate to them why bondage and liberation do not exist in the genuine nature of reality.

Mipham Rinpoche's commentary identifies two main sections in this chapter: first, a refutation of samsara and nirvana, and second, a refutation of bondage and liberation themselves. From the first section, the first verse of the entire chapter reads:

If one asks, "Do the aggregates wander?"
No, they do not, because permanent aggregates could not wander,
And impermanent aggregates could not wander either.
The same holds true for sentient beings.

This verse takes up the analysis in the following way: If samsara truly exists, there must be someone or something wandering around in it. If there is no one wandering in samsara, samsara cannot be real.

We can identify two possibilities for what the wanderer is: Either it is the set of five aggregates that constitutes the sentient being, or it is the sentient being who possesses these aggregates. Whichever of these two is wandering in samsara, it must be either permanent or impermanent if it truly exists. There is no other possibility.

First, let us examine the aggregates. It cannot be that permanent aggregates wander in samsara, because permanent aggregates would never change states or phases. They could not go from one life to another, even from one place to another, because they would be unchanging. Impermanent aggregates cannot wander in samsara either, because something that is impermanent ceases as soon as it arises—-that is the definition of impermanence. If it remained the same for any period of time, it would be permanent, not impermanent. Something that is impermanent, therefore, has no time to go anywhere, because as soon as it arises, it disappears. Therefore, impermanent aggregates would have no time to wander around in samsara, because they would cease immediately after arising. Thus, neither permanent nor impermanent aggregates can wander in samsara, and since there is no other alternative for how the aggregates could be, it is logically impossible that the aggregates wander in samsara.

The same is true for sentient beings. There could not be permanent sentient beings that wander in samsara because such beings would never change in any way; impermanent sentient beings could not wander in samsara either, because the first instant they would exist and the second instant they would be gone. They could not go from one place to another, let alone one life to another, because they would not have time to do so. Thus, sentient beings cannot logically be the wanderers in samsara either.

Since it is logically impossible for either permanent or impermanent aggregates or sentient beings to wander in samsara, and since there is no other possibility for how they could be, the only conclusion to draw is that no wanderer in samsara actually exists. Since no wanderer in samsara actually exists, samsara does not truly exist either. Samsara is not real; it is just a dependently arisen mere appearance.

The third verse presents another line of reasoning. It reads:

If the individual really wandered from one existence to the next,
Then in between existences, there would be no existence!
With no existence and no appropriated aggregates,
What individual could possibly be wandering?

If this life, the next life, and the transition in between the two truly existed, then there would be an individual sentient being who would appropriate one set of aggregates in this life, then leave them behind, then appropriate another set of aggregates at the start of the next life. In between the two, however, there would just be the individual, the appropriator, without any appropriated aggregates. The sentient being would not have any aggregates at all at that point. That would be illogical, however, because there would be nothing to call a sentient being if there were no aggregates to compose that sentient being—there would be no body and no mind. The sentient being is defined as the one who appropriates the aggregates, so how could that appropriator exist without any aggregates to appropriate?

Take, for example, the situation of being a human in this life and a god in the next life. In between dying as a human being and giving up that set of aggregates and then being born as a god with a new set, there would be an empty gap. Then the question is, during that empty gap, what is it that is going around in samsara? It would be illogical to posit anything, because there would be nothing there. The whole notion of samsara as an uninterrupted continuum of lifetimes would be inapplicable if things actually transpired in that way.

Someone might say, "In between the two existences there is the sentient being in the bardo, the intermediate state." It is fine to posit that, but the question would then be, what is there in between the time when one abandons the human aggregates and one appropriates the bardo aggregates? Sentient beings in the bardo still have aggregates, just of a more subtle variety than our own. So positing the existence of the bardo changes the form of the question but does not make it go away.

Let us look at the example of being a pig in the past life and a human being in this one. First you are a pig and then you are a person. So if you go from being a pig to being a human being, the question is, are the human being's aggregates the same as the pig's aggregates, or not? If they are the same, then that pig would be a permanent pig. If the aggregates were different, however, then you would first have the pig's aggregates, then you would have nothing at all, and then you would have the human being's aggregates. The human being's aggregates would have no cause, because they would have just emerged from that nothingness of the gap in between the two lives. Therefore, neither the possibility of permanence nor that of impermanence is feasible, and therefore samsara's existence is not feasible either. This becomes clear once we analyze with logical reasoning in this way.

Samsara is the beginningless cycle of existence in which sentient beings wander in the six realms from one lifetime to the next. We can see from this analysis, however, that samsara is just a dependently arisen mere appearance, like a dream. There is nothing real to it or in it. Since samsara is just a dependently arisen appearance, it is naturally open, spacious, and relaxed. Therefore, we do not have to cleanse ourselves of samsara, only of our thoughts that samsara truly exists.

In his Authentic Portrait of the Middle Way, Jetsun Milarepa sang, "So even the name 'samsara' does not exist." Not only the basis to which the name samsara is given does not exist, but even the name itself does not exist. After all, the name samsara is comprised of three syllables. When you say the first syllable, sam, then sara does not exist. When you say sa, however, sam and ra do not exist, and when you say ra, samsa does not exist. If the name really existed, all its parts would have to exist at the same time!

In fact, both the basis to which the name samsara is imputed as well as the name itself are appearance and emptiness undifferentiable. Milarepa described this when he sang in The Eight Kinds of Mastery:

Not separating appearance and emptiness
This is mastery of the view.

Thus, we can see that Milarepa's intention and Nagarjuna's intention are the same.

When someone argued, "Samsara truly exists because there is nirvana, the transcendence of samsara's suffering," Nagarjuna responded by analyzing nirvana in the fourth verse:

No matter how they might be,

It would be untenable for the aggregates to attain nirvana.
No matter how they might be,
It would be untenable for sentient beings to attain nirvana.

Nirvana does not truly exist because when we analyze, we cannot find anything or anyone that can actually attain it. For example, the aggregates cannot attain nirvana, because permanent aggregates could not change states—they could not go from the state of samsara to that of nirvana—and impermanent aggregates would arise and then immediately cease, so they would not have time to attain nirvana. Similarly, permanent sentient beings could not logically attain nirvana because they would be unchanging, and impermanent sentient beings could not attain nirvana because they would not have time to do so.

Another reason nirvana is not truly existent is that samsara and nirvana are dependently existent. There can only be samsara in dependence upon there being nirvana, and there can only be nirvana in dependence upon there being samsara. Since these two things exist only in mutual dependence, they do not inherently exist.

It is for these reasons that in An Authentic Portrait of the Middle Way, the Jetsun sang:

No meditator and no meditated,
No paths and levels traveled and no signs,
And no fruition bodies and no wisdoms,
And therefore there is no nirvana there,
Just designations using names and statements.

This whole passage is a logical reasoning that progresses in stages. First, Milarepa sang that there is no meditator. There is no meditator because there is no self. If there is no meditator, there cannot be any object of meditation, and if there is no object of meditation, there cannot be any path or any signs of progress on the path. If there is no path, there cannot be any fruition at the end of the path in the form of the fruition bodies and wisdoms (fn "Bodies" is a translation of the Sanskrit *kaya*; see footnotes below for a description of the three *kayas*.). If there are no fruition bodies or wisdoms, there is no such thing as nirvana. All of these terms then are just designations, mere names and imputations.

The Heart of Wisdom Sutra teaches that there is "no path, no wisdom, no attainment, and no nonattainment either." The teaching that is neither attainment nor any absence of attainment is a perspective that we have to apply to the other subjects mentioned as well. For example, there is neither a path nor any absence of a path, there is no wisdom nor any absence of wisdom, and so forth. The ultimate nature of reality transcends all concepts of what it might be.

The people who believed in the true existence of things next asserted that samsara and nirvana exist because bondage and liberation exist, so Nagarjuna responded by analyzing bondage and liberation themselves in the fifth verse:

The aggregates, characterized by birth and decay,
Are not bound and do not become free.
Similarly, sentient beings
Are not bound and do not become free.

It is very easy to see that permanent aggregates or sentient beings could not be bound and later liberated, so it was not necessary for Nagarjuna to explicitly mention that in this verse. What he does examine is the belief that impermanent aggregates could first be bound and then liberated. That is a mistaken notion, because impermanent aggregates would have the qualities of arising and ceasing moment by moment, and therefore they would not have time to be bound and then liberated. They would not have time to have these two different states because as soon as they arose they would immediately cease. Similarly, permanent sentient beings could not be bound or liberated, and impermanent sentient beings could not be bound and liberated either.

Sometimes it seems that we are terribly bound by the mental afflictions of desire, anger, jealousy, and so forth. However, Nagarjuna analyzes this in the sixth verse and demonstrates that the mental afflictions do not bind anyone at all:

Do the mental afflictions bind?
They do not bind one already afflicted,
And they do not bind one who is not afflicted,
So when do they have the opportunity to bind anyone?

If we think that the mental afflictions truly bind us, then the question is, in whom does their activity of binding begin? It cannot begin in those who are already afflicted—sentient beings—because once they are bound by the afflictions, it makes no sense that this bondage would have to begin anew. Furthermore, it cannot begin in those who are not bound by afflictions, like the buddhas, because the afflictions have no power to bind such realized beings. Thus, the afflictions cannot begin to bind anyone in the first place, so how could anyone actually be bound by them? In genuine reality, therefore, the mental afflictions do not bind anyone. The trouble they seem to cause is a mere appearance without the slightest reality to it, and since the afflictions do not bind anyone in the first place, there is actually no liberation from them either. Thus, genuine reality transcends the notions of bondage and liberation. Within it, nothing is ever bound and nothing ever set free.

Since it is the case that bondage and liberation are not real, then it is also the case that samsara and nirvana do not truly exist either. This is what Nagarjuna teaches in the tenth and final verse:

There is no nirvana to be produced

And no samsara to be cleared away.
In essential reality, what samsara is there?
What is there that can be called nirvana?

Since samsara and nirvana do not truly exist, there is no nirvana to be produced or attained and no samsara to be eliminated.

That there is no samsara to clear away and no nirvana to be produced is the result of phenomena lacking inherent existence. If things truly existed, there would in fact be a samsara to get rid of and a nirvana to attain. If things truly existed, it would be like that, but since they are in fact empty of their own essence, there is no samsara that we need to get rid of and no nirvana that we need to attain.

In a dream there can be appearances that we like, which we call "good," and other appearances that we do not like, which we call "bad." If things in a dream actually existed, the good appearances that we like and the bad appearances that we do not like would also truly exist. Since nothing in a dream has any true nature, however, then actually there is no good or bad. For this reason, bondage and liberation, samsara and nirvana, are taught to be equality.

Since the true nature of reality is the equality of being bound and being set free, it is called "originally free" or "primordially free," and the great siddhas have sung many songs of what the experience of realizing this original, primordial freedom is like. In fact, if you think, "Well, all of this intellectual analysis is just philosophy, just some type of intellectual exercise," that is incorrect, because the lord of yogis Milarepa sang about the exact same thing in An Authentic Portrait of the Middle Way, a song he sang out of the wisdom arising from his meditation.

Furthermore, when in the teachings of Mahamudra and Dzogchen it is said that neither samsara nor nirvana actually exists, those explanations rely on precisely these reasonings to establish their validity. Without these reasonings, we could never prove those teachings to be correct.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XVI

बन्धमोक्षपरीक्षा षोडशमं प्रकरणम्।

bandhanamokṣaparīkṣā nāma ṣoḍaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀縛解品第十六(十偈)

zhōng lùn guān fù jiě pǐn dì shí liù(shí jié;jì)

|བཅིངས་པ་དང་ཐར་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་དྲུག་པའོ||

| bciṅs pa daṅ thar pa brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa bcu drug pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XVI - Examination of Bondage and Release

JONES (Skt):
16. Bondage and Liberation

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Bondage and Release

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
16. Analysis of Bondage and Freedom

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[16] Examinationof the Fusion of restriction and Emancipation (10 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
[omitted]

STRENG (Skt):
Section 16 - An Analysis of Being Bound and Release (Bondage and Release) In 10 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
16. bondage and release.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 16 Contemplation of Bondage and Liberation 10 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Bondage and Freedom

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XVI - Analysis of Bondage and Liberation

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XVI: Examination of Bondage

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XVI - Examination of Bondage

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 16: AN EXAMINATION OF BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Sixteen - Examination of Bondage and Release

PINGALA COMMENTARY

16/0 Birth and death (samsara) is not entirely without foundation. Within it there are surely living beings transmigrating (Lit: going and coming), or predispositions transmigrating. What are your reasons for saying that living being and predispositions are absolutely empty, and that there is no transmigration?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter omitted by Sprung]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Sixteen Examination of Bondage and Release (Bandhana-moksa-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XVI Examination of Bondage

So there are no entities. But still, from a Buddhist perspective, we are bound: bound to our conceptions of entities and essence, bound to our selves, bound to objects, and principally, bound to cyclic existence itself. Surely, the opponent might ask, mustn't the bondage that accounts for the illusions so ruthlessly analyzed in the previous chapter be intrinsically real? If not, what is the causal basis for all of these illusions and all of this suffering? In a Buddhist framework, this bondage to cyclic existence is instantiated in endless transmigration in saṃsāra, and freedom from bondage would be liberation from cyclic existence into nirvāṇa. We will postpone a discussion of the precise nature of that liberation and of nirvāṇa until we reach the chapters where that topic is discussed, namely, XXII and XXV. Nāgārjuna begins with an examination of transmigration and the entity that transmigrates:

———

Kārikā XVI.1

संस्काराः संसरन्ति चेन्न नित्याः संसरन्ति ते।
संसरन्ति च नानित्याः सत्त्वेऽप्येष समः क्रमः॥१॥

諸行往來者 常不應往來
無常亦不應 眾生亦復然

།གལ་ཏེ་འདུ་བྱེད་འཁོར་ཞེ་ན།།དེ་དག་རྟག་ན་མི་འཁོར་ཏེ།
།མི་རྟག་ན་ཡང་འཁོར་མི་འགྱུར།།སེམས་ཅན་ལ་ཡང་རིམ་འདི་མཚུངས།།

LVP 280,9-10 - LVP 301,5-6
saṃskārāḥ saṃsaranti cen na nityāḥ saṃsaranti te |
saṃsaranti ca nānityāḥ sattve ’py eṣa samaḥ kramaḥ ||1||

T1564: vol 30, pg 20c5
zhū xíng;háng wǎng;wàng lái zhě cháng bù yīng wǎng lái
wú cháng yì bù yīng zhòng shēng yì fù rán

Tg tsa 9a3-4 - Tg tsa 9b2
|| gal te ’du byed ’khor (4)źe na | | de dag rtag na mi ’khor te |
| mi rtag na yaṅ ’khor mi ’gyur | | sems can la yaṅ rim ’di mtshuṅs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - If mental conformations are transmigratory (i.e., as cyclic nature), they, as permanent entities, do not transmigrate. In fact, as impermanent entities, they also do not transmigrate. The same (relationship) also holds true for a sentient being.

JONES (Skt):
[1] If compounded things transmigrate, they are not permanent: phenomena that are permanent entities do not transmigrate. Nor do impermanent entities transmigrate. The same analysis applies to sentient beings.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is assumed that dispositions transmigrate, they would not transmigrate as permanent entities. Neither do they transmigrate as imminent entities. This method (of analysis) is applicable even in the case of a sentient being.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If dispositions transmigrate, they transmigrate as not permanent and they transmigrate as not impermanent.
It is the same process in a sentient being.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. What have been accomplished, are wandering through in regulated situations,
And the regular situations, which do not wander, are this world.
Slow walking and not being eternal are the Real situations,
And actually this world is going on totally.

STRENG (Skt):
1. When conditioned elements (dispositions, conditioning?) continue to change (through rebirths?), they do not continue to change as eternal things (the same before and after). Likewise they do not continue to change as non-eternal things (different before and after). The arguments here is the same as for a living being.

BOCKING (Ch):
16v1 As for the predispositions transmigrating,
If they are permanent they should not transmigrate.
Nor should they if impermanent.
It is the same too, with living beings.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If it is said that impulses are “samsara”, if they were permanent, they would not move around. Even if impermanent, they would not move around. Sentient beings too are similar in this respect.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If it is claimed that formations cycle,
They cannot do so if permanent,
Nor can they if impermanent.
In the case of sentient beings, the steps are the same. [XVI.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. If compounded phenomena transmigrate,
They do not transmigrate as permanent.
If they are impermanent they do not transmigrate.
The same approach applies to sentient beings.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Suppose compounded phenomena cycle:
If they are permanent, they do not cycle.
Even if they are impermanent, they do not cycle.
The same approach applies to sentient beings.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
If one asks, “Do the aggregates wander?”
No, they do not, because permanent aggregates could not wander,
And impermanent aggregates could not wander either.
The same holds true for sentient beings. (1)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
16.1 If mental conformations transmigrate, they cannot do so as permanent entities. Likewise, if they are not permanent, they also cannot transmigrate. This same analysis applies to sentient beings.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

16/1 If predispositions transmigrate within the six paths of samsara, do they transmigrate with permanent characteristics, or do they transmigrate with impermanent characteristics? Both are wrong. If they transmigrate with permanent characteristics, then there will be no continuity of characteristics through births and deaths, because they will be fixed, and because their self-nature will persist. If they transmigrate with impermanent characteristics, then, too, there will be no continuity of characteristics through transmigration and birth and death, since they will not be fixed, and will have no self-nature. In the case of living beings transmigrating, the same errors will apply. Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Part Three, according to our analysis, consists of Chapter XVI-XXVI, and is different from Part Two in its treatment of the subject matter, even though the subject matter itself appears to be similar in them. While Part Two was concerned with the analysis of the elements of existence (dharma) showing how they are lacking in any substance (dharma-nairatmya) and how they are dependently arisen (parti tyasamutpanna), Part Three is concerned more with the explanation of the human personality (pudgala) without falling into metaphysical traps. The human personality, both in bondage and in freedom, is analysed here. The problems of "self' (atman), questions regarding moral responsibility and its associated concepts of time and fruitioning, are discussed first. Moving therefrom, Nagarjuna takes up the problem of the person who has attained freedom, the question of truths, of freedom itself, trying to deal once again with the metaphysical interpretations, until he reaches Chapter XXVI when he presents the most positive explanation of that human personality. The present chapter beings with one of the most popularly held misconceptions about the Buddha's teachings pertaining to rebirth (punabbhava). Even during the Buddha's day, when he spoke about rebirth being causally conditioned or "dependently arisen" (paticcasamuppanna, and enumerated several conditions that would contribute to it (M 1.265), one of his disciples picked out one among these conditions, namely, consciousness (vinnana), maintaining that it is "This very same consciousness that transmigrates, not another" (idam eva vinnanam sandhavati samsarati anannam, M 1.256; Chung 54.2 [Taisho 1.766c]). There certainly were many others, including some of his disciples, who continued to uphold such views throughout the centuries. The widespread prevalence of this view seems to indicate the adamant way in which people believed that for survival to take place there must be a permanent and eternal substance.

The Buddha's answer to these believers in a permanent and eternal self or entity is that any factor that contributes to human survival, whether it is consciousness (vinnana) or disposition (sankhara), or action (kamma) or even grasping (upadana), all these are dependently arisen. For the Buddha, continuity can be explained in a more empirical way by following the principle of dependence of impermanent factors of existence, where on leaves an impression on another, thus eliminating the need for assuming a permanent entity.

Nagarjuna is here referring to two extremes, i.e., permanence (nitya) and impermanence (anitya), this latter being the momentary destruction (ksana-bhanga) advocated by the Buddhist metaphysicians. The former represents the Sarvastivada point of view; the latter, the Sautrantika.

If the dispositions (samskara) are presented as being either permanent or impermanent when they transmigrate, and if there is no mention of causal conditioning of these dispositions as well as the other factors, then the theories of eternalism and annihilationism are inevitable. Furthermore, such extreme conclusions are especially unavoidable when one factor or entity is singled out and shown to be the factor involved in transmigration.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. (If compounded phenomena transmigrate" fn 82. The Tibetan term translated as "transmigrate" *('khar,* Skt: *sarrzsar)* is a cognate of the term *"saṃsāra,"* or cyclic existence. It literally means go around and could > also be translated with justice as "flow." But the root idea here is that of cycling or circulating or participating in a phenomenal reality conceived as multicyclic. In this chapter, as in Chapter XIII, I opt to translate" *'du byed"* as "compounded phenomena," rather than, as Kalupahana.(1986) does. "dispositions." This follows the Tibetan commentarial tradition and makes better sense of the argument.)

Nāgārjuna sets up a by now familiar destructive dilemma: Either compounded phenomena - of which sentient beings, the beings who are bound are instances - are permanent or impermanent. Let us just consider the compounded phenomena who are sentient and hence who transmigrate: If they are thought of as permanent, they cannot transmigrate because transmigration involves, by definition, change. And what is permanent, as we have seen, cannot change. But if they are impermanent, then they do not endure through time and, hence, cannot transmigrate. So no sentient being considered as an inherent entity can be conceived of as a transmigrator in cyclic existence.

Kārikā XVI.2

पुद्गलः संसरति चेत्स्कन्धायतनधातुषु।
पञ्चधा मृग्यमाणोऽसौ नास्ति कः संसरिष्यति॥२॥

pudgalaḥ saṃsarati cet skandhāyatanadhātuṣu |
pañcadhā mṛgyamāṇo 'sau nāsti kaḥ saṃsariṣyati ||2||

若眾生往來 陰界諸入中
五種求盡無 誰有往來者

ruò zhòng shēng wǎng;wàng lái yīn jiè zhū rù zhōng
wǔ zhǒng qiú jìn wú shuí yǒu wǎng;wàng lái zhě

།གལ་ཏེ་གང་ཟག་འཁོར་ཞེ་ན། །ཕུང་པོ་སྐྱེ་མཆེད་ཁམས་རྣམས་ལ།
།དེ་ནི་རྣམ་པ་ལྔས་བཙལ་ན། །མེད་ན་གང་ཞིག་འཁོར་བར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te gaṅ zag 'khor źe na | | phuṅ po skye mched khams rnams la |
| de ni rnam pa lṅas btsal na | | med na gaṅ źig 'khor bar 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - If man's individuality is transmigratory with respect to the five-fold realms of skandhas, ayatanas and dhatus, then it is non-existent. What then does transmigrate? - Note: Reference is made to the five-fold function in man's action involving all the 5 skandhas, 12 ayatanas, and 18 dhatus. These activities are samsaric or migratory in nature.

JONES (Skt):
[2] If we search for a person who transmigrates in the fivefold way (I.e., the analysis of Chapter 22, verses 1-7) in the aggregates, the fields of the senses, and the elements, no one is there - what then transmigrates?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
It may be assumed that a person transmigrates. Yet, such a person, sought for in the fivefold way in the aggregates, spheres (of sense) and elements, does not exist. Who then will transmigrate?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If a person transmigrates fivefold in the elements, sense spheres and personality skeins
pursuing what does not exist, who will transmigrate?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. When a personal substance is wandering,
The five kinds of aggregates, that is, matter, perception, recognition, action, and consideration, are relying upon material element as the place of taking a rest.
Those five kinds of necessary material elements can never become the cause of wandering through.
How shall we stop such kind of wandering through at all?

STRENG (Skt):
2. If the personality would change when it is sought five ways in the "groups" (skandha), "bases of sense perception" (ayatana), and the "irreducible elements" (dhatu), Then it does not exist. Who is it who will change (i.e. transmigrate)?

BOCKING (Ch):
16v2 If living beings transmigrate
Within the skandhas, the realms and the avenues,
Seek them five ways; they are utterly nonexistent.
Who is it that transmigrates?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If it is said that persons "move around," if they are non-existent when searched for in five aspects among the aggregates, sense fields and elements, what would move around?

DOCTOR (Tb):
It might be said that the person cycles,
But when we search the aggregates, elements, and sense sources,
Using the five steps and there is nothing,
What is it, then, that cycles? [XVI.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. If someone transmigrates,
Then if, when sought in the fivefold way
In the aggregates and in the sense spheres and in the elements,
He is not there, what transmigrates?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. Suppose the person cycles:
Since when sought in the fivefold way
In the aggregates, in the sense spheres, and in the elements,
It is not there, what cycles?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
16.2 It is commonly assumed that people transmigrate. Yet no one is ever evident when sought in the aggregates, the sense spheres, or the elements. Who, then, transmigrates?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

16/2 Birth and death, the skandhas, realms and entrances all mean the same thing. If it is living beings who transmigrate within these skandhas, realms and avenues, we have searched in the chapter on fire and fuel213 for such living beings in five ways and they are unattainable. Who is it that transmigrates in the skandhas, the realms and the avenues?

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

It is interesting to note that in the previous statement Nagarjuna rejects only the view that dispositions transmigrate. He did not deny the dispositions themselves. However, in the present verse Nagarjuna maintains that if a transmigrating "person" (pudgala) is sought for (mrgyamano) in the ag- gregates, faculties, and elements (as Nagarjuna tried m do in the last fifteen chapters) one does not discover him. The "person" referred to here is no ordinary person. This person should possess the same characteristic which, according to the previous verse, made it impossible for the "dispositions" to transmigrate, namely, permanence. Inada seems to miss the meaning of the term mrgyamana in his translation of this verse.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. Given that no inherently existent person can be found upon analysis as the bearer of the aggregates, as identical to the aggregates, as different from the aggregates, as the collection of the aggregates, or as the arrangement of the aggregates, and mutatis mutandis for other possible modes of analysis in terms of domains of knowledge or experience and in terms of basic elements, it follows that there is no inherently existent subject of transmigration. If the transmigrator cannot be identified on analysis, though, neither can the transmigration itself. It will follow that there is no inherently existent transmigration and, hence, no inherently existent bondage to cyclic existence.

Kārikā XVI.3

उपादानादुपादानं संसरन् विभवो भवेत्।
विभवश्चानुपादानः कः स किं संसरिष्यति॥३॥

upādānād upādānaṃ saṃsaran vibhavo bhavet |
vibhavaś cānupādānaḥ kaḥ sa kiṃ saṃsariṣyati ||3||

若從身至身 往來即無身
若其無有身 則無有往來

ruò cóng shēn zhì shēn wǎng;wàng lái jí wú shēn
ruò qí wú yǒu shēn zé wú yǒu wǎng;wàng lái

།ཉེ་བར་ལེན་ནས་ཉེར་ལེན་པར། །འཁོར་ན་སྲིད་པ་མེད་པར་འགྱུར།
།སྲིད་མེད་ཉེ་བར་ལེན་མེད་ན། །དེ་གང་ཅི་ཞིག་འཁོར་བར་འགྱུར།།

| ñe bar len nas ñer (5)len par | | ’khor na srid pa med par ’gyur |
| srid med ñe bar len med na | | de gaṅ ci źig ’khor bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - Anything moving from one (sensual) grasping to another will be without a body or form. How does a bodiless or non-grasping thing ever transmigrate?

JONES (Skt):
[3] Transmigrating from acquiring one rebirth to acquiring another leads only to destruction. Who could transmigrate with destruction or acquisition?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Moving from one form of grasping to another, there would be other-becoming. Who is this person who has ceased to be and is [therefore] non-grasping? Wherein does he transmigrate?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Migrating from grasping to grasping would be annihilation.
Who is destroyed and [thus] not grasping? Who is he who will transmigrate?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Avoiding action, which we want to do, but at the same time we would do what we want to do.
There might be favorite job, which can exist everywhere.
At the same time there are many jobs, which we do not like to do.
What is just the job, which we like to do?

STRENG (Skt):
3. Moving from "acquisition" (upadana) to "acquisition" would be "that which is without existence" (vibhava). Who is he who is without existence and without acquisition? To what will he change (i.e. transmigrate)?

BOCKING (Ch):
16v3 If something transmigrates from a body to a body,
It will be bodiless.
If it has no body,
Then there will be no transmigration.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If one moves around in having clung [to something] and then clinging [to something else], there would be no becoming. If there were no clinging and no becoming, who would move around?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there is cycling from appropriation to appropriation,
Then there cannot be any becoming.
Without becoming there can be no appropriation,
So what kind of cycling is this? [XVI.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. If one transmigrates from grasping to grasping, then
One would be nonexistent.
Neither existent nor grasping,
Who could this transmigrator be?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. If one transmigrated from
Appropriation to appropriation, there would be no life.
If there were neither life nor appropriator,
What would transmigrate?

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
If the individual really wandered from one existence to the next,
Then in between existences, there would be no existence!
With no existence and no appropriated aggregates,
What individual could possibly be wandering? (3)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
16.3 To move from grasping to grasping, is to become other. But who, in ceasing to be and without grasping, transmigrates?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

16/3 If living beings transmigrate, do they transmigrate with a body, or do they transmigrate without a body? Neither is correct, and why? If there is transmigration with a body, then (the living being) will go from one body to another body, and if so, the transmigrator will not have a body. Moreover, if the body already existed, (the living being) would not have any further need to pass from body to body, but if no body existed beforehand, he would not exist, and being non-existent, how could he transmigrate, be born, or die?

Question: The sutras say that there is nirvana, and the extinction of all suffering. Surely this extinction must be the extinction of the predispositions, or215 the extinction of living beings?

Reply: Both are incorrect, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Understanding the causal process in a linear way one runs into difficulties in explaining "grasping" (upadana) as a reason, not only for transmigration but also for conceptualizing a person. While grasping was considered an important cause for the unhappiness and suffering (dukkha), as also the rebirth of a human being, "nongrasping" (anupadana) was a condition for happiness (sukha) in this life and for not being reborn in a future life. In addition, even the very notion of a substantial "self' (atta) is supposed to be the result of grasping on to the five aggregates (upadanakkhanaha).

However, if grasping is singled out and explained in a linear way, then moving from one moment of grasping to another, one will be faced with other-becoming (vibhava). To explain this broken or interrupted series of graspings, one needs to assume that there is something to be grasped so that grasping can continue. The aggregates do not continuously provide a foundation for grasping. They arise and cease. With such arising and ceasing, grasping itself would be interrupted. This means that grasping that has come to be non-existent (vibhava) would also be non-grasping (anupadana). If so, where is this so-called permanent entity and where does he transmigrate?

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. ("grasping" fn 83. This term *(nye-bar-len-pa)* is used in a quite general sense: To grasp could be to cling to a possession, to regard attributes or experiences as part of oneself, or to grasp an object in consciousness.)

"Grasping" here refers primarily to grasping the aggregates as one's self. Transmigration - or for that matter continuation within one life, which from the Madhyamika perspective is exactly the same kind of process - involves moving from grasping one set of phenomena as one's self to grasping another in the same way. That is one of the most fundamental delusions from a Buddhist standpoint. But grasping can also be the grasping of an object as an object, or the clinging to possessions. Life in saṃsāra, Nāgārjuna would insist, can equally well be characterized in any of these ways. But if in order to exist as an individual one would have to retain one's identity over time since on this view it is of the very nature of cyclic existence that one constantly changes from one moment to another, then it would follow that no subject exists. But if there is no subject of grasping, there can be no grasping. So, on the supposition that to exist and to transmigrate is to exist as a continuing entity, there is no way to make sense of the phenomenal world. So an inherently existent grasper, posited in order to guarantee the reality of cyclic existence, in fact makes the reality of cyclic existence incoherent.

Kārikā XVI.4

संस्काराणां न निर्वाणं कथंचिदुपपद्यते।
सत्त्वस्यापि न निर्वाणं कथंचिदुपपद्यते॥४॥

saṃskārāṇāṃ na nirvāṇaṃ kathaṃ cid upapadyate |
sattvasyāpi na nirvāṇaṃ kathaṃ cid upapadyate ||4||

諸行若滅者 是事終不然
眾生若滅者 是事亦不然

zhū xíng;háng;xìng ruò miè zhě shì shì zhōng bù rán
zhòng shēng ruò miè zhě shì shì yì bù rán

།འདུ་བྱེད་མྱ་ངན་འདའ་བར་ནི།།ཇི་ལྟར་བུར་ཡང་མི་འཐད་དོ།
།སེམས་ཅན་མྱ་ངན་འདའ་བར་ཡང་།།ཇི་ལྟར་བུར་ཡང་འཐད་མི་འགྱུར།།

| ’du byed mya ṅan ’da’ bar ni | | ji lta bur yaṅ mi ’thad do |
| sems can mya ṅan ’da’ bar yaṅ | | ji lta bur yaṅ ’thad mi ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - Why is it that nirvana (or quiescence) is not possible with mental conformations? Also, why is it that even a sentient being is not possible of nirvana?

JONES (Skt):
[4] Nirvana does not occur in any way for the compounded, nor does nirvana occur in any way for a sentient being.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The cessation of dispositions is somehow not appropriate. The cessation even of a sentient being is also not appropriate in any way.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How does the liberation from dispositions even happen?
How does the liberation of a sentient being also happen?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. The balanced state of the autonomic nervous system does not belong perfection.
How is it possible for such a situation to occur actually?
The balanced state of the autonomic nervous system does never belong to Reality itself.
How is it possible for Reality to manifest itself newly?

STRENG (Skt):
4. The final cessation (nirvana) of the conditioned elements certainly is not possible at all. Nor is the final cessation of even a living being possible at all.

ROBINSON (Skt):
In no way is nirvana of the samskaras a fact; in no way is nirvana of a living being a fact.

BOCKING (Ch):
16v4 The predispositions becoming extinct?
Such would never be the case.
Living beings becoming extinct?
This too could not be right.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is in no way feasible that impulses go beyond misery. And it is in no way feasible that living beings go beyond misery.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Formations that transcend suffering
Do not make sense in any way.
Sentient beings that transcend suffering
Do not make sense in any way either. [XVI.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. How could compounded phenomena pass into nirvana?
That would not be tenable.
How could a sentient being pass into nirvana?
That would not be tenable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. It is not tenable in any way
For compounded phenomena to pass into nirvana.
It is not tenable in any way
For a sentient being to pass into nirvana.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
No matter how they might be,
It would be untenable for the aggregates to attain nirvana.
No matter how they might be,
It would be untenable for sentient beings to attain nirvana. (4)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
16.4 The cessation (release) of dispositions is not intelligible. The cessation of a sentient being is also not intelligible.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

16/4 You say that either the predispositions cease or the living being ceases, but we have already answered these assertions. Predispositions have no nature. Living beings too, you can search for in various ways in samsara and transmigration but you will not be able to find them. Therefore, predispositions do not cease, nor do living beings cease.

Question: If this is true, then there is no bondage, and no liberation, since no foundation can be found for them.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Buddha left unanswered the question regarding the nature of a "freed person" (tathagata) after death (parammarana). Nagarjuna will return to this question in his final chapter, "The Examination of Views" (Drsti-pariksa). In the present context, Nagarjuna is concerned mostly with the living person. The previous verses referred to the metaphysical views regarding a living person in bondage. The present verse is, therefore, devoted to an examination of the metaphysical view pertaining to a living person who has attained freedom. Speaking of that freedom, Nagarjuna does not want to assume that it is the cessation of dispositions, or of a "person." He was probably aware that the Buddha spoke of the pacification of dispositions (sankharaupasama) in relation to a living person who has attained freedom. He was also aware that the Buddha did not advocate the annihilation of a sentient being (sattva, see commentary of XIII. 1). Hence his present statement.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. If compounded phenomena are permanent, grasping is permanent. And if grasping is permanent, saṃsāra is permanent. And if saṃsāra is permanent, then nirvāṇa is impossible. But the philosopher who is positing inherently existent bondage is doing so in order to defend a Buddhist perspective on cyclic existence and nirvāṇa. This is precisely the motivation for the reification - the worry that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are, if not inherently existent, nonexistent. So this conclusion is inadmissible for such an opponent.

Kārikā XVI.5

न बध्यन्ते न मुच्यन्त उदयव्ययधर्मिणः।
संस्काराः पूर्ववत्सत्त्वो बध्यते न न मुच्यते॥५॥

na badhyante na mucyanta udayavyayadharmiṇaḥ |
saṃskārāḥ pūrvavat sattvo badhyate na na mucyate ||5||

諸行生滅相 不縛亦不解
眾生如先說 不縛亦不解

zhū xíng;háng;xìng shēng miè xiàng;xiāng bù fù yì bù jiě
zhòng shēng rú xiān shuì bù fù yì bù jiě

།སྐྱེ་འཇིག་ཆོས་ཅན་འདུ་བྱེད་རྣམས། །མི་འཆིང་གྲོལ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ། །སྔ་མ་བཞིན་དུ་སེམས་ཅན་ཡང་། །མི་འཆིང་གྲོལ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།

| skye ’jig chos can (6)’du byed rnams | | mi ’chiṅ grol bar mi ’gyur te |
| sṅa ma bźin du sems can yaṅ | | mi ’chiṅ grol bar mi ’gyur ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - The mental conformations are endowed with the characteristics of production and extinction, and thus cannot be bound or attain release. Similarly, a sentient being cannot be bound or attain release.

JONES (Skt):
[5] What is compounded is subject to arising and passing away and thus neither becomes bound nor released. So too, a sentient being is subject to arising and passing away and thus neither becomes bound nor released.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Dispositions that are of the nature of uprising and ceasing are neither bound nor released. A sentient being, like the foregoing, is neither bound nor released.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Rising and ceasing events are neither bound nor free.
Dispositions are neither bound by nor released by the previously mentioned sentient being.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Not destroying life, but not to be free,
Appearance, passing through, and Universal morals.
The accomplishment as before is Reality.
Not to destroy, but not to make free.

STRENG (Skt):
5. The conditioned elements, whose nature (dharma) is arising and destruction, neither are bound nor released. Likewise a living being neither is bound nor released.

BOCKING (Ch):
16v5 Predispositions have the characteristics of arising and ceasing,
Not bound, and not liberated.
Living beings too, as formerly explained,
Are not bound and not liberated.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Impulses that have the properties of being born and dying are not bound and will not be freed. In the same way as above living beings too are not bound and will not be freed.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Formations that are subject to arising and ceasing
Are not bound and will not be freed.
As before, sentient beings as well
Are not bound and will not be freed. [XVI.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. All compounded phenomena, as arising and ceasing things,
Are not bound and not released.
For this reason a sentient being
Is not bound, not released.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. Compounded phenomena that arise and cease
Are neither bound nor liberated.
And in the same way, sentient beings
Are neither bound nor liberated.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
The aggregates, characterized by birth and decay,
Are not bound and do not become free.
Similarly, sentient beings
Are not bound and do not become free. (5)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
16.5 Dispositions, having the nature of coming and going, are neither bound nor released. Like so, a sentient being is neither bound nor released.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

16/5 You say that predispositions and living beings have bondage and liberation, but this is not the case. Since predispositions arise and cease instant by instant, they cannot be bound or liberated. It has already been explained that you can search for living beings in five ways but you will not find them. How can they have bondage or liberation?

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

According to the substantialist way of thinking, an eternal self or soul (atman) is in bondage because it is bound to various ephimeral factors such as the psycho-physical personality (see. Bhagavadgita, Chapter XIII). Such a self has to break away from its bondage in order to be free. Having rejected a permanent entity like the self, if the Buddhists were to consider the dispositions as the condition for bondage, such dispositions, being of the nature of arising and ceasing, could neither be bound nor freed. In other words, one cannot look at the dispositions through the eyes of the substantialist. The same can be said of a sentient being (sattva).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. Neither bondage nor release can be seen as inherently existent, nor as inherent properties of sentient beings. This is the conclusion of the argument that follows. Nāgārjuna first considers bondage as an inherent property, and then liberation:

Kārikā XVI.6

बन्धनं चेदुपादानं सोपादानो न बध्यते।
बध्यते नानुपादानः किमवस्थोऽथ बध्यते॥६॥

bandhanaṃ ced upādānaṃ sopādāno na badhyate |
badhyate nānupādānaḥ kim avastho ’tha badhyate ||6||

若身名為縛 有身則不縛
無身亦不縛 於何而有縛

ruò shēn míng wéi fù yǒu shēn zé bù fù
wú shēn yì bù fù yū;yú;wū hé ér yǒu fù

།གལ་ཏེ་ཉེ་བར་ལེན་འཆིང་ན།།ཉེ་བར་ལེན་བཅས་འཆིང་མི་འགྱུར།
།ཉེ་བར་ལེན་མེད་མི་འཆིང་སྟེ།།གནས་སྐབས་གང་ཞིག་འཆིང་བར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te ñe bar len ’chiṅ na | | ñe bar len bcas ’chiṅ mi ’gyur |
| ñe bar len med mi ’chiṅ ste | | gnas skabs gaṅ źig ’chiṅ bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - If (sensual) grasping per se is bound or restricted, then the grasping entity will be free from bonds. A non-grasping entity will also be free from bonds. Then, in what abiding condition is (one) bound?

JONES (Skt):
[6] If the acquisition of a new rebirth is the bondage of the cycling of rebirths, then what possesses the acquisition does not become bound and what is without the acquisition does not become bound - in what state then is one bound?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If grasping were to be considered a bondage, one who is with grasping is not being bound. Neither is one without grasping being bound. A person in which state is then bound?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If grasping is bondage, he [who is grasping] is not bound by grasping
nor is he bound by not grasping. But who remains bound by grasping?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. Restrictions seem to be just our perceptions.
But the Real perceptions can never be Restriction.
Just never other than perception does restrict,
And what kind of constancy would be destroyed at that time?

STRENG (Skt):
6. If the acquisition (upadana) were the "binding," that one having the acquisition is not bound; Nor is that one not having the acquisition bound. Then in what condition is he bound?

ROBINSON (Skt):
If appropriation is bondage, then one who has appropriation is not bound; one without appropriation is not bound; then how is any state bound?

BOCKING (Ch):
16v6 If bondage means the body,
Then having a body is not bondage.
Not having a body also is not bondage,
How then can there be bondage?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If clinging binds, the one who has clinging would not be bound. And there would be no bondage without clinging. In what situation would there be bondage?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If bondage is due to appropriation,
Since nothing is bound in the presence of appropriation,
And there is no bondage in the absence of appropriation,
When, then, is it that bondage occurs? [XVI.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If grasping were bondage,
Then the one who is grasping would not be bound.
But one who is not grasping is not bound.
In what circumstances will one be bound?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If appropriation were bondage,
Then the appropriator would not be bound.
But without appropriation, there is no bondage.
So, in what circumstances would one be bound?

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Do the mental afflictions bind?
They do not bind one already afflicted,
And they do not bind one who is not afflicted,
So when do they have the opportunity to bind anyone? (6)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
16.6 If grasping were bondage, then the one who is grasping is not bound. Neither is the one who is not grasping bound. In which state, then, is a person bound?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

16/6 If you say that bondage means (to have) the body of the five skandhas, then if a living being already has the five skandhas, he cannot be bound, and why? Because this would be one person having two bodies. Having no body he cannot be bound either, and why? If he has no body, then he has no five skandhas, and having no five skandhas is emptiness, so how could there be bondage? There is no further third (entity) which could be bound.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The substance/attribute distinction that emerges from the statement such as "one who is with grasping" (saupadano) militates against saying that he is being bound (badhyate). In this sense, the attribute is already implicit in the substance and there is no point in piling up another identical attribute on it. If the substance is without attribute (as in the case of an-upadana), then there seems to be no way in which one can attribute an attribute to it. They could always remain independent. These difficulties relating to identity and difference give rise to the question regarding the status of the person who is being bound.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. If grasping is identified with the property of bondage, then the continuity of bondage across transmigration is inexplicable: The problem is that grasping is not only the cause, but is also the effect of bondage. Delusion by which we are bound, from a Buddhist perspective, leads us to grasp at things; that grasping perpetuates delusion and bondage. To the extent that we grasp onto external phenomena or onto the self as inherently existent, we are bound to the delusions that constitute' and ground saṃsāra. To the extent that we are bound in delusion, we continue to grasp. The bondage is hence not only conditioned by, but overarches, particular instances of grasping. But we don't want to infer from the fact that grasping and bondage are not identical that the relinquishing of all grasping would not free one. The task is then to figure out the nature of bondage, which must be conceived as relational.

Kārikā XVI.7

बध्नीयाद्बन्धनं कामं बन्ध्यात्पूर्वं भवेद्यदि।
न चास्ति तत् शेषमुक्तं गम्यमानगतागतैः॥७॥

badhnīyād bandhanaṃ kāmaṃ bandhyāt pūrvaṃ bhaved yadi |
na cāsti tac cheṣam uktaṃ gamyamānagatāgataiḥ ||7||

若可縛先縛 則應縛可縛
而先實無縛 餘如去來答

ruò kě fù xiān fù zé yīng fù kě fù
ér xiān shí wú fù yú rú qù lái dā

།གལ་ཏེ་བཅིང་བྱའི་སྔ་རོལ་ན།།འཆིང་བ་ཡོད་ན་འཆིང་ལ་རག།
།དེ་ཡང་མེད་དེ་ལྷག་མ་ནི།།སོང་དང་མ་སོང་བགོམ་པས་བསྟན།།

| (7)gal te bciṅ bya'i sṅa rol na | | 'chiṅ ba yod na 'chiṅ la rag |
| de yaṅ med de lhag ma ni | | soṅ daṅ ma soṅ bgom pas bstan |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - If bonds exist prior to the bondage, they could bind freely or at will. But this is not so. The other matters have already been discussed with respect to gamyamana, gata and agata. - Note: The last remark refers to Chapter II where the problems on the three aspects are minutely discussed.

JONES (Skt):
[7] If we assume that bondage binds, then bondage does not exist before the binding of what is to be bound. The rest has been explained in the analysis of motion, the unmoved, and the mover in Chapter 2.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is assumed that bondage exists prior to the binding of that which is to be bound, that does not exist. The rest has been explained by [the analysis of] present moving, the moved and the not moved.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If bondage would be prior to what is bound, freely it would bind what
does not exist. The rest is discussed by going, gone, and not gone.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. When slaughter has been done as far as being desired,
Then just before, an arrest would be done at that time.
And such kind of verbal talks does never exist,
As if the same talk as "going," "have gone," and "will go," in the Chapter 2.

STRENG (Skt):
7. Certainly if the "binding" would exist before "that which is bound," then it must bind; But that does not exist. The remaining analysis is stated in the analysis of "the present going to," "that which has already gone to" and "that which has not yet gone to."

ROBINSON (Skt):
If bondage existed before the bound, then it might bind; but that is not so. The rest is stated according to the case of the being-gone, the gone, and the ungone.

BOCKING (Ch):
16v7 If bondage preceded the one who is bound,
Then it would bind the one who is bound.
But in reality no pre-existent bondage exists
The other (aspects) may be answered as in 'going and coming' .

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If binding existed prior to one who is bound, [that unbound person] would depend on binding. That too cannot be. The rest has been explained by the gone, the not-gone and the going.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the bond existed prior to the bound,
There could be bondage, yet it does not.
The rest has already been explained
By what was, will be, and is being traversed. [XVI.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. If prior to binding
There is a bound one,
There would be bondage, but there isn't.
The rest has been explained by the gone, the not-gone, and the goer.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. If bondage existed at all prior to that which is to be bound,
It would have to bind the bound,
But it could not. The rest has been explained
By where one has gone, where one has not yet gone, and where one goes.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
16.7 If bondage occurred before that which is bound, there would be bondage. But this cannot occur. The rest has been discussed in the analysis of movement, the moved, and the not moved.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

16/7 If, as you assert, bondage exists prior to the one who is bound, then it ought to bind the one who is bound, but in reality no prior bondage exists, separate from the one who is bound. Therefore, you cannot say that the living being is in bondage, nor can you say that the living being is the one who is bound and that the five skandhas are the bondage. Nor can you say that, within the five skandhas, the afflictions are the bondage and the remainder, the five skandhas, are what is bound. None of these is correct, and why? If the living being existed separately, prior to the five skandhas, then the living being would be bound by the five skandhas, but in reality there is no separate being apart from the five skandhas. If the afflictions existed separately, apart from the five skandhas, then the five skandhas would be bound by the afflictions, but in reality there are no separate afflictions apart from the five skandhas.

(21b2) Moreover, as is explained in the chapter on going and coming, a past going does not go, a future going does not go, and a moment of going does not go. In the same way a future bondage does not bind, a past bondage does not bind, and a moment of bondage does not bind. There is, moreover, no liberation either, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If, in answer to the question raised in the previous verse, it is said that bondage exists prior to someone being bound, such bondage, according to Nagarjuna, does not exist. The analysis in Chapter II as well as in Chapter X can be utilized here to refute the implications of a substantialist view of bondage.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. The only way that bondage itself could be an inherently existent phenomenon would be if it could exist prior to and independently of a bound sentient being. But then the case would be strictly analogous to motion (as well as to several other analysands we have considered so far). That is, just as there is no motion apart from the mover, there is no bondage apart from the bound. The argument can be applied in a strictly parallel way.

Kārikā XVI.8

बद्धो न मुच्यते तावदबद्धो नैव मुच्यते।
स्यातां बद्धे मुच्यमाने युगपद्बन्धमोक्षणे॥८॥

baddho na mucyate tāvad abaddho naiva mucyate |
syātāṃ baddhe mucyamāne yugapad bandhamokṣaṇe ||8||

縛者無有解 無縛亦無解
縛時有解者 縛解則一時

fù zhě wú yǒu jiě wú fù yì wú jiě
fù shí yǒu jiě zhě fù jiě zé yī shí

|རེ་ཞིག་བཅིངས་པ་མི་འགྲོལ་ཏེ། །མ་བཅིངས་པ་ཡང་གྲོལ་མི་འགྱུར། |བཅིང་པ་གྲོལ་བཞིན་ཡིན་འགྱུར་ན། །བཅིང་དང་གྲོལ་བ་དུས་གཅིག་འགྱུར།།

| re źig bciṅs pa mi grol te | | ma bciṅs pa yaṅ grol mi 'gyur |
| bciṅs pa grol bźin yin 'gyur na | | bciṅs daṅ grol ba dus gcig (9b1)'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - In truth, then, a bound entity cannot be released and it is so also with an unbound entity. If by chance a bound entity is in the process of being released, then bondage and release will be simultaneous phenomena.

JONES (Skt):
[8] The bound does not become released from the cycling of rebirths and likewise the unbounded does not become released. If the bound were being released, bondage to the cycling of rebirth and the liberation from it would occur simultaneously. .

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
One who is bound is not released, nor is one who is not bound freed. When there is releasing of one who is bound, then there would be simultaneous occurrence of bondage and release.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Therefore, the bound is not freed by the unbound, nor is the unbound freed by the bound.
In presently freeing the bound, bondage and freedom would be simultaneous.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. As far as Gautama Buddha does not permitted,
The states without arrest have never been permitted.
Aha! So, in the case of Gautama Buddha, the abbreviation might be permitted.
And so the bondage might be in liberation.

STRENG (Skt):
8. Therefore, "that which is bound" is not released and "that which is not bound" is likewise not released. If "that which is bound" were released, "being bound" and "release" would exist simultaneously.

ROBINSON (Skt):
The bound one is not released and the unbound one is not released, either; if the bound one were being released, bondage and release would be simultaneous.

BOCKING (Ch):
16v8 One who is bound does not have liberation
One who is unbound also does not have liberation
If there were liberation in the moment of binding,
Bondage and release would be simultaneous.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Those who are bound will not be free. And those who are not bound will not be free. If those who are bound become free, bondage and freedom would be simultaneous.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which is bound is not freed,
Yet the unbound is not freed either.
If the bound were being liberated,
Bondage and liberation would be simultaneous. [XVI.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. Whoever is bound is not released.
Whoever is not bound does not get released.
If a bound one were being released,
Bondage and release would occur simultaneously.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Whoever is bound would not get liberated.
Whoever is not bound would not get liberated.
If a bound one were being liberated,
Bondage and liberation would occur simultaneously.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
16.8 Thus, neither a bound person nor a released person can be released. The releasing of one who is bound would be the simultaneous occurrence of bondage and release.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

16/8 One who is bound does not have liberation, and why? Because he is already bound. One who is not bound does not have liberation either, and why? Because he is not bound. And if you say that there is liberation in the moment of. bondage, then bondage and liberation would be simultaneous, and this is not right, since bondage and liberation are mutually opposed. '

Question: There are people who, cultivating the Way, manifestly enter nirvana and achieve liberation. How can you say that they do not exist?

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

One who is substantially bound (baddha), i.e., one who has the self-nature (svabhava) of bondage, cannot be freed. Similarly, it is meaningless to speak of someone who is absolutely free (a-baddha), i.e., whose selfnature is freedom, as one being freed. If one were to speak of someone who is already bound and is being freed, then bondage and freedom would be simultaneous.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. Nāgārjuna then recalls another argument from Chapter II, the argument against the possibility of the beginning of motion. There, Nāgārjuna argued that motion could not begin in a stationary object since it is not moving, nor in a moving object since it is already in motion. And there can be no moment when a thing is both moving and stationary, nor any moment when an entity is neither. Similarly, nirvāṇa cannot arise in one in saṃsāra, nor in one already in nirvāṇa. One cannot be simultaneously in saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Nor is there any third option.

Kārikā XVI.9

निर्वास्याम्यनुपादानो निर्वाणं मे भविष्यति।
इति येषां ग्रहस्तेषामुपादानमहाग्रहः॥९॥

nirvāsyāmy anupādāno nirvāṇaṃ me bhaviṣyati |
iti yeṣāṃ grahas teṣām upādānamahāgrahaḥ ||9||

若不受諸法 我當得涅槃
若人如是者 還為受所縛

ruò bù shòu zhū fǎ wǒ dāng dé;děi;de niè pán
ruò rén rú shì zhě huán wéi shòu suǒ fù

|བདག་ནི་ལེན་མེད་མྱ་ངན་འདའ||མྱང་འདས་བདག་གིར་འགྱུར་རོ་ཞེས|
|དེ་ལྟར་གང་དག་འཛིན་དེ་ཡིས||ཉེར་ལེན་འཛིན་པ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡིན||

| bdag ni len med mya ṅan ’da’ | | myaṅ ’das bdag gir ’gyur ro źes |
| de ltar gaṅ dag ’dzin de yi | | ñer len ’dzin pa chen po yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - Those who delight in maintaining, "Without the grasping, I will realize nirvana; Nirvana is in me;" are the very ones with the greatest grasping.

JONES (Skt):
[9] “Free of acquiring a new rebirth, I shall attain nirvana - nirvana will become mine!” - for those who cling like this, there is a great clinging and acquisition.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
"Non-grasping, I shall be free. Freedom will then be mine." For whomsoever there is grasping in this manner, that will be a gigantic grasping.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
[For] those who say, *“Nirvāṇa* will be mine,” their grasping of
the nongrasping of freedom is a gigantic grasping.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. In the case that I will not live in this World,
Suggests that the balance of the autonomic nervous system might be possible to exist in me in future.
From such situations the present maintenance like that might be Real,
And the appearance of the real facts are the very Great Facts.

STRENG (Skt):
9. "I will be released without any acquisition." "Nirvana will be mine." Those who understand thus hold too much to "a holding on" i.e., both to the acquisition of karma, and to a viewpoint.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Those who grasp the notion, “I will enter nirvana when free from appropriation, nirvana will be mine,” have a great grasp on appropriation.

BOCKING (Ch):
16v9 "If we do not receive dharmas
We will attain nirvana".
Such persons as these
Are themselves the ones in bondage to receiving.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
“I, without clinging, am beyond misery. Nirvana is mine.” Those who grasp in that way have great grasping and clinging.

DOCTOR (Tb):
“Without appropriation, I shall transcend suffering;
The transcendence of suffering, that shall be mine!”
Those who grasp in this way
Are engaged in severe appropriation. [XVI.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. "I, without grasping, will pass beyond sorrow,
And I will attain nirvana," one says.
Whoever grasps like this
Has a great grasping.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. “I, without appropriation, will attain nirvana,
And nirvana will be mine,” one says.
Whoever grasps like this
Grasps mightily to appropriation.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
16.9 "When I gain enlightenment, I’ll be free of sorrow, I'll attain Nirvana." Those who think in this way, grasp with the greatest grasping,

PINGALA COMMENTARY

16/9 If a person produces this thought - "I shall free myself from receiving and attain nirvana", this person is the very one who is in bondage to receiving.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna is here presenting a fundamental idea expressed in the early discourses (see M 1.145-151, Rathavinita-sutta) as well as in the Prajnaparamita literature, especially the Vajracchedika. It is the idea that one cannot be freed and still cling to freedom, let along bragging about it. However, one need not construe the Buddha's statement at M 1.171 (Ariyapariyesana-sutta) as an instance of such bragging. That statement was made by the Buddha in response to a question raised by Upaka at a time when the only freed one in the world was the Buddha himself. He was simply describing to Upaka the absence of any one who had attained freedom, in the sense in which the Buddha understood the conception of freedom. Whether the Buddha would make such a statement subsequent to the preaching of the first sermon and the attainment of enlightenment and freedom by his first five disciples is extremely doubtful.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. There is a stylistic feature in this verse that deserves note: The pronoun "I" *(bdag)* is uncharacteristically fronted in the sentence and is emphasized with the focus particle *(ni)*. Nāgārjuna is hence drawing attention to the fact that the individual in whose mouth this verse is put is grasping to his own identity as an agent and as a continuing subject both through saṃsāra and into nirvāṇa. This grasping onto self, he suggests, precludes the nirvāṇa the speaker craves. But Nāgārjuna presents another argument as well: It is also possible to grasp after nirvāṇa - to reify it as a state and to crave it as a phenomenon inherently different from saṃsāra and as highly desirable since it is indeed characterized as liberation from suffering. But this grasping onto the end of grasping is itself a grasping and so precludes the attainment of nirvāṇa. Nirvāṇa requires, according to Nāgārjuna, a complete cessation of grasping, including that onto nirvāṇa itself. While that might seem paradoxical, it is not: To grasp onto something in this sense requires, inter alia, that one reify it. By refusing to reify liberation, in virtue of seeing it as the corelative of bondage, which itself is not inherently existent, it is possible to pursue the path to liberation without creating at the same time a huge obstacle on that path - the root delusion with regard to nirvāṇa itself. Possible, that is, but perhaps not that easy. (fn 84. In *Yuktisastikā* 11, Nāgārjuna asserts "This is nirvāṇa in this very life!" He emphatically rejects the positing of nirvāṇa as a distinct entity divorced from saṃsāra. This will emerge much more explicitly in the discussion of nirvāṇa in XXV below.)

(fn 85. It is also important to note that this indicates a difference in kind between grasping for nirvāṇa and an aspiration to attain buddhahood. For it is central to Mahayana Buddhist practice to develop the altruistic aspiration to attain buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings - to enhance one's knowledge, skill, and compassion so as to maximally benefit others. But this aspiration can be cultivated without reification of self, of the goal, or of the objects of compassion or action and, hence, without grasping of the kind at issue.)

Kārikā XVI.10

न निर्वाणसमारोपो न संसारापकर्षणम्।
यत्र कस्तत्र संसारो निर्वाणं किं विकल्प्यते॥१०॥

na nirvāṇasamāropo na saṃsārāpakarṣaṇam |
yatra kas tatra saṃsāro nirvāṇaṃ kiṃ vikalpyate ||10||

不離於生死 而別有涅槃
實相義如是 云何有分別

bù lí yū;yú;wū shēng sǐ ér bié yǒu niè pán
shí xiàng;xiāng yì rú shì yún hé yǒu fēn bié

།གང་ལ་མྱ་ངན་འདས་བསྐྱེད་མེད།།འཁོར་བ་བསལ་བའང་ཡོད་མིན་པ།
།དེ་ལ་འཁོར་བ་ཅི་ཞིག་ཡིན།།མྱ་ངན་འདས་པའང་ཅི་ཞིག་བརྟག།།

| gaṅ la mya ṅan ’das bskyed med | | ’khor ba bsal ba’aṅ yod min pa |
| de la ’khor ba ci źig yin | | mya ṅan ’das (2)pa’aṅ ci źig brtag |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - Where nirvana is not (subject to) establishment and samsara not (subject to) disengagement, how will there be any conception of nirvana and samsara.

JONES (Skt):
[10] Where there is neither the transfer to "nirvana" nor the elimination of "transmigration," what entity "nirvana" and what entity transmigration is there being fabricated?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Wherein there is neither the attribution of freedom nor the elimination of the life-process, what is it that is being discriminated as life-process or as freedom?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Neither is *nirvāṇa* only *saṃsāra* nor is *saṃsāra* removed away.
Where there is *nirvāṇa*, there is *saṃsāra.* Which is falsely discriminated from which?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. The balanced state of the autonomic nervous system, is not the place, where we should enter,
But the place for wandering is not the place, where we should get out from it.
There something, which is not clear, and here the wandering without any stability.
And in the balanced autonomic nervous system, there is something, which is not decisive.

STRENG (Skt):
10. Where there is a super-imposing of nirvana on something else, nor a removal of existence-in-flux, What is the existence-in-flux there? What nirvana is imagined?

ROBINSON (Skt):
Where there is no Imposition of nirvana and no repudiation of samsara, what samsara and what nirvana are conceived?

BOCKING (Ch):
16v10 Nirvana is not something special,
Separate from birth and death.
The meaning of thusness being thus,
How can there be any distinctions?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When nirvana is not born and samsara not eliminated, then what is samsara? And what is considered as nirvana?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Where the transcendence of suffering is not produced
And cyclic existence is not dispelled,
How to conceive of cyclic existence,
And how of the transcendence of suffering? [XVI.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. When you can't bring about nirvana,
Nor the purification of cyclic existence,
What is cyclic existence,
And what is the nirvana you examine?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. When one can bring about neither nirvana,
Nor the elimination of cyclic existence,
What are the cyclic existence
And the nirvana one imagines?

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
There is no nirvana to be produced
And no samsara to be cleared away.
In essential reality, what samsara is there?
What is there that can be called nirvana? (10)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
16.10 When Nirvana cannot be established and samsara cannot be eliminated, what is referred to as Nirvana and samsara?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

16/10 In the highest sense of the real character of all dharmas, we do not speak of a special nirvana which exists apart from birth and death. As the sutras say; "nirvana is samsara, samsara is nirvana". Within this true character of all dharmas how can you say 'This is samsara, this is nirvana'?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This concluding verse provides a beautiful summary of the metaphysical views relating to a life of bondage (samsara) and freedom (nirvana) and can serve as a key to unlocking the mysteries surrounding the chapters to come. The constant debates among modern scholars as to the implications of Nagarjuna's famous chapter on Nirvana (XXV) can easily be eliminated if we are to keep in mind the nature of the theories pertaining to bondage and freedom that Nagarjuna had to deal with.

Presented in the substantialist mould, freedom becomes an attribution (samaropa), while the life-process with its suffering requires elimination (apakarsana). No such freedom or life process is accepted by Nagarjuna. Such a description was too metaphysical for him.

Attribution and elimination imply the existence of a neutral substance to which freedom can be attributed or strung on to, while bondage in the form of life-process can be wrestled away from. If no neutral substance is recognized, there could be two other ways of explaining freedom and bondage. First, it is possible to say that the substance is inherently free and that it is held in bondage by adventitious elements. Thus, the Upanisadic or the Brahmanical notion of "self' which is pure and luminous is understood as something kept in bondage to the psychophysical personality, like a sword kept in its sheath. The originally pure mind (prakrti-prabhasvaracitta) of the Buddhist metaphysician (see Lankavatara, ed. Nanjio, 1956,) resembles the Upanisadic and Brahmanical views of the "self." Secondly, if such an originally pure entity is not acceptable, then it is possible to argue that what is called the life-process (samsara) is completely annihilated and a completely new process of freedom is initiated. The former has nothing to do with the latter. Indeed, one cannot ignore the solutions offered by the Buddhist metaphysicians when they came to analyse the personal stream of becoming (bhava-sota) into discrete entities. The concepts of "attainment" (prapti) and "non-attainment" (a-prapti) provided a solution that is almost identical with those mentioned above. Nirvana thus becomes a prapti that fall into the stream (sva-samtana-patita) and at that point samsara becomes an a-pripti.

As pointed out in the Introduction, the Buddha's conceptions of bondage and freedom (and this would also apply to Nagarjuna's views) have nothing to do with any one of the alternative explanations mentioned above.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. Anyone who is subject to either of these pathologies - grasping to one's self or grasping for nirvāṇa - is incapable of attaining that peace. So, Nāgārjuna urges, in order to make such progress possible, one should reexamine one's conception of the nature of phenomena in cyclic existence (both oneself and external phenomena) and nirvāṇa itself. By coming to see their ultimate emptiness, he suggests, one can relinquish that grasping and attain that liberation. Neither nirvāṇa nor saṃsāra are inherently existent. Ultimately both are nonexistent. So, what, Nāgārjuna asks rhetorically, are they? The answer is that they are conventionally real, dependently arisen phenomena that are empty of inherent existence. In virtue of that fact, it is possible to escape the former and to attain the latter. But that escape would be impossible were they inherently existent and is impossible for anyone who takes them to be so,

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Chapter XVII

कर्मफलपरीक्षा सप्तदशमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀業品第十七(三十三偈)

།ལས་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་བདུན་པའོ།།

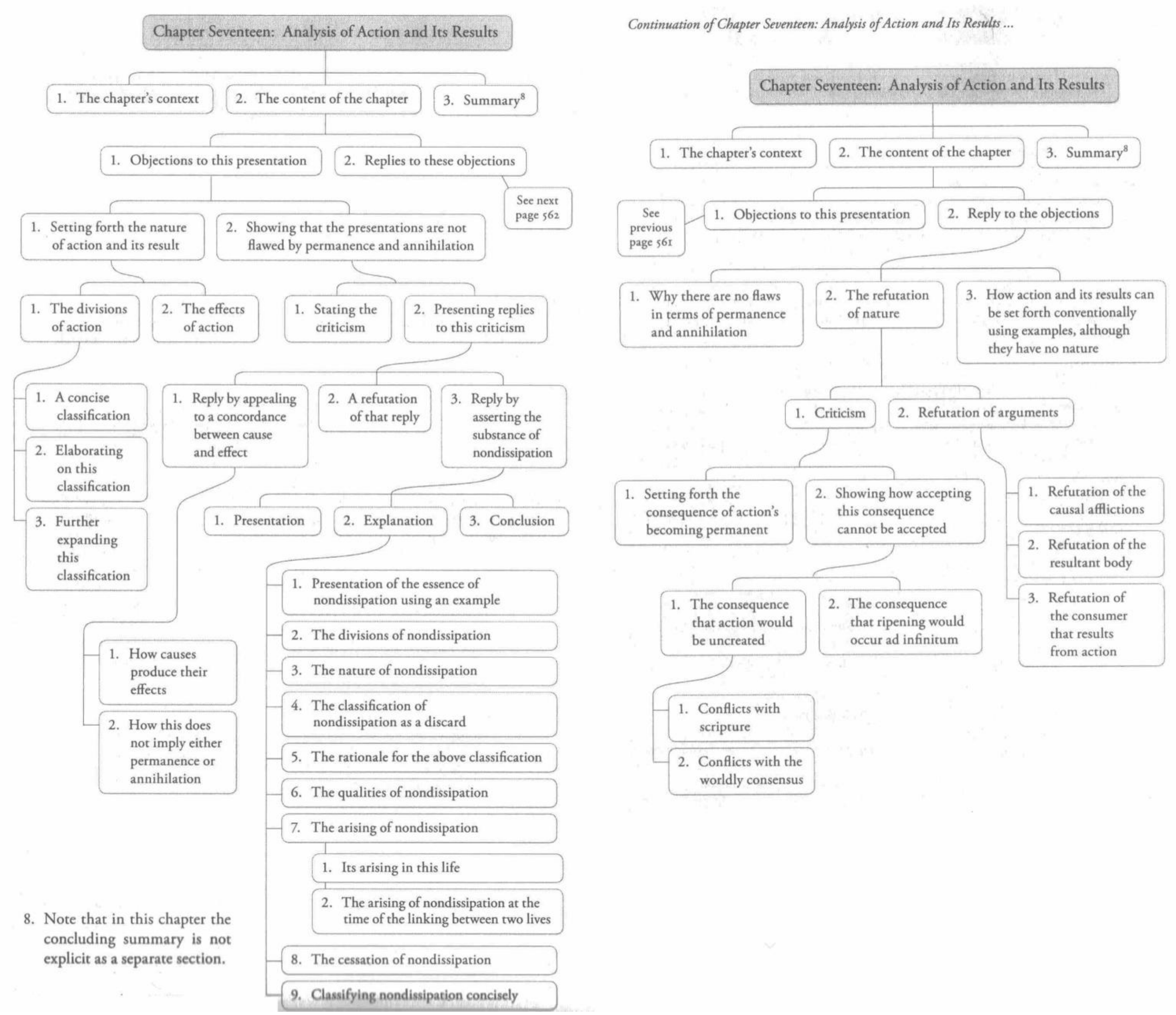
karma[phala]parīkṣā nāma saptadaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XVII: Examination of Actions and Their Fruits

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter XVII

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the second part of the section on the two selflessnesses, the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. We are still in the second of its two sections: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of things. We have completed the first two parts of the three parts of that section: the refutation of contact and the refutation of the appropriation of causes and conditions as essentially existent. We are still in the third part of this section, the refutation of the essential existence of bondage. We have completed the first of its two sections: the main point. **[297:14]** This chapter comprises the second part: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of liberation and bondage.

EXPLANATION:

This section has two parts: the argument and the reply.

SUMMARY:

These arguments refute the essential existence of agent, action, afflictions, their effects, and the experiencing of those effects, etc. They should be understood as showing that it is not at all tenable to posit them in the context of inherent existence. So such things as agents are tenable only in the following sense: Although they are empty of existence through their own characteristics, they appear to exist in this way: just like dreams, illusions, emanations, and cities of gandharvas.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XVII - **Examination of Action and Its Effect**

The Tibetan version agrees with the Sanskrit in its title but in the Chinese version the title is simply the Examination of karma or Action, This is one of the more interesting chapters since it deals with the popular Buddhist concept of man's action. Man is always interested in the question of what past, present and future deeds or actions are and to what extent they are significant to present lives or to what extent they are controllable.

In this chapter Nagarjuna first explains the types of karma in order to introduce and clarify the Buddha's teachings. He says that the Buddha spoke of two types of karma, i.e., one which is in the realm of thought (cetana) and the other concerning thought in action (cetayitva). The following diagram will illustrate the point:

cetana-manasa-karma (thought) cetayitva-kayika-karma (bodily) vacika-karma (verbal)

He then brings in the ideas of permanency or constancy and interruption or disruption relating these with the concept of karma and its effect. Employing the same type of logic (prasanga) as seen in previous chapters, he destroys any notion the opponent may have that a movement of anything from one place of action (e.g., karma) to another (e.g., phala or effect) is possible. With equal force he condemns any idea of an indestructible continuing action (avipranasa) which gives the sense of continuity or transition in man's everyday life deeds. In Verse 20 he finally enunciates the true position of the Buddha who said that Sunyata is not disruption (uccheda) and that samsara is not permanency (sasvata). Nothing is interrupted, fixed, gained, lost, or passed over to another. As a consequence, it is of no use speaking of karma and its effect, of klesas, of bodily entities, etc., for they are all false peregrinations of the mind. Incidentally, verses 1-19 contain the popular views on karma.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

17. *Action and consequence (karma-phala)*. Buddhism, in contrast to the theistic religions of India, advocated human responsibility in the case of bondage as well as release. Chapter XVII that follows therefore deals with the notions of human action (*karma*) and its consequences or fruits (*phala*).

Inada’s analysis of this very lengthy chapter is very confusing. He assumes that verses 1-19 contain the popular views on karma, while in verse 20 Nagarjuna finally explains the true position of the Buddha who spoke of “emptiness” (*sunyata*).95 Yet, verses 2 and 13 unequivocally attribute certain views to the Buddha, as well as the Pratyeka-buddhas and the Sravakas. The contents of this chapter therefore deserve careful scrutiny. The doctrine of karma is clearly stated in XVII. 1: “Self-restraint as well as benefitting othersthis is the friendly way and it constitutes the seed that bears fruit, here as well as in the next life.”

If Nagarjuna was a Mahayanist, as many have portrayed him to be, then he certainly could not deny this “friendly way” (*maitram dharmam*), for otherwise he could not qualify as a *bodhisattva*. Restraining oneself and benefitting others are actions that need to be recognized by a *bodhisattva*. These are here described as bearing fruit (*phala*) in this world as well as in the next. Nagarjuna was not unaware of the fact that according to the Buddha, actions are to be defined in terms of volition (*cetana*). While volition itself could be considered an action, anything that is volitional also falls under the category of action. This is the implication oft he Buddha’s statement in *Anguttara-nikaya* 96 and Nagarjuna is seen to elaborate on this statement at XVII.2. Nagarjuna asserts that according to the Buddha there are two main types of karma: volition and volitional. These are further analysed into a variety of karmas that were also recognized in the early Buddhist tradition. He gives no indication that all these karmas are not real in the sense that they do not produce fruits or consequences. However, in XVII.6 he raises a question which clearly embodies the particular form of inquiry carried out by the Buddhist metaphysicians with which he disagrees. The inquiry is as follows: “Does karma remain even at the time it has not attained maturity? *(Tisthati apakakalat ?)*.

There can be little doubt as to who would raise such a question. While a pragmatic Buddhist may say that karma

is what it is because it produces consequences or fruits (*phala*), a substantialist could not resist asking the question: "Yet, does not the effect (*phala*) pre-exist, before karma reaches its maturity?"

Such metaphysical inquiries, as pointed out earlier, led to the belief in an underlying substance (*svabhava*), which was criticized and rejected by Nagarjuna in Chapter I. And here Nagarjuna is once again asserting the view that such inquiries lead to the belief in permanence (*nityata*). If one were to reject such a notion of permanence, then karma and effect are separated in such a way that once the karma ceases, it will not produce any consequences (*niruddham sat kim phalam janayisyati*). Thus we are back again in the permanenceannihilation (s*asvata-uccheda*) syndrome.

Verse 7 introduces the notion of a series (*samtana*) upheld by the atomistic Sautrantikas, and the difficulties this generates are then examined in the few verses that follow.

It is rather unfortunate that this new situation arising from the metaphysically oriented question raised in verse 6 came to be ignored by those who dealt with verse 12. The term *esa* (this, such) in XVII.12 refers specifically to the sort of thinking (*kalpana*) involved in XVII.6 and Nagarjuna maintains that such thoughts engender a multitude of insuperable difficulties (*bahavas ca mahatas ca dosah*). It is this particular way of thinking that is considered to be inappropriate (*nopapadyate*).

Indeed, at XVII.13, Nagarjuna suggests another way of thinking (*kalpana*) which is more appropriate and which was extolled by the Buddhas, the Pratyeka-buddhas and the Sravakas : Like an imperishable promissory note, so is debt as well as action. It is fourfold in terms of realms and indeterminate in terms of primal nature." According to this, karma is imperishable like a promissory note. One's debt (*rna*) remains effective at least as long as the promissory note lasts. Even though there is no continuity of karma (and, it in this case, borrowing), that is, it does not continue in any subtle or substantial way, the responsibility for that karma cannot be denied once that karma is performed. The Buddha, the early Buddhists, and Nagarjuna were not prepared to say that the promissory note one signs is unreal and therefore to be ignored. The responsibility and commitment remains long after the document is signed (maybe even if the document were to be lost or destroyed).

The idea that one is responsible for one's own actions has been emphasized by the Buddha. A statement in the *Dhammapada* reads: "Neither in the sky nor in the middle of the ocean nor having entered into a cleft of the mountains is there a place on earth seen remaining where a person would be released from his evil actions."97 The existence and the popularity of a similar statement among the Buddhists who preserved their literature in Sanskrit has already been referred to. There is little doubt that Nagarjuna was aware of this statement. This conception of the imperishable nature of karma thus turns out to be an important conception in Nagarjuna, primarily because he was not prepared to accept the notion of substance (*svabhava*) or self (*atman*) to explain this process nor was he willing to deny the effectiveness of karma with the denial of substance or self. As such Inada's statement that Nagarjuna "with equal force condemns any idea of an indestructible continuing action (*avipranasa*)" is surprising.98 Neither the Buddha nor Nagarjuna nor even Vasubandu (who compiled the *Karrmasiddhiprakrana*) were saying that karma *itself* remains indestructible. *Avipranasa-karma* or the imperishable action refers to the responsibility a person has for any karma that he performs and how that karma will, depending upon circumstances, bear fruit (*phala*). The simple notion of human responsibility is what is upheld here, not the metaphysical notion of the fruit or result that lies hidden and gradually attains maturity, as was implied in the question raised by the Buddhist metaphysician.

Therefore, without any hesitation Nagarjuna attributes the conception of the imperishable (*avipranasa*) karma to the Buddha himself: "Emptiness, however, is not annihilation; lire-process is also not permanence; imperishability is of actionsuch is the doctrine taught by the Buddha." (XVII.34) The most significant assertion here is that the rejection of permanence and annihilation and the acceptance of emptiness and *samsara* (or the life-process) do not imply the rejection of the relationship between action (*karma*) and consequence (*phala*). The imperishable nature (*avipranasa-dharma*) of action merely implies the possibility of action giving rise to consequences, and this need not involve the notion of an underlying permanent substance in action.

The three verses that follow are critical of the conception of karma that is based on the recognition of selfnature. Such a conception, as explained at XVII.24, conflicts with all the accepted conventions (*vyavahara*) and would imply the denial of merit and demerit (*punya-papa*) and such other distinctions (*pravibhaga).* Action (*karma*), looked upon as something substantial (*svabhavika*), not only implies the production of a result (*vipaka*), which is already existing in mature form *(vipakva*)(XVII.25), but also goes against the admitted purity or impurity of action. If action has its own nature, then defilement (*klesa*) also will have its own nature and how thesetwo natures could come together will never be satisfactorily explained (XVII.26-27). Moving on to XVII.29 without keeping the above definition

of action (*karma*) in mind, it is easy to assume that Nagarjuna rejects action as something dependently arisen and, therefore, there is neither action nor agent. On the contrary, verse 29 simply rejects the possibility of an action being dependently arisen, if that action were to be substantial (*svabhavika*).

Thus the denial of action (*karma*), agent (*kartr*), and consequence (*phala*), as well as of one who experiences the consequences (*bhoktr*), comparing them to created forms (*nivmiakakara*) or to mirages and imaginary entities, needs to be understood *only as referring to the substantial conceptions* of these phenomena and does not represent an unqualified denial of such phenomena (*dharma*).

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Acts

1.
Buddha taught that acts
Are motives of the mind
And words and gestures
You are moved to express.

Restraining yourself
And loving others
Are seeds that bear fruit
In this life and beyond.

2.
If they lasted 'til they ripened,
Acts would be static.
If acts stopped,
How would they bear fruit?

Seeds turn into plants that bear fruit.
Motives turn into minds that bear fruit.
Seeds are neither severed from
Nor forever fused with fruits of plants,
Motives neither severed from
Nor forever fused with fruits of minds.

No killing and no stealing,
No abusing and no lying,
No slandering, swearing, gossiping,
No coveting, resenting or fixating:

These pristine acts
Are ways to practice
That ripen as beauty and pleasure
Here and elsewhere.

3.
Acts, like contracts,
Are as irrevocable as debts –
Their irrevocability
Ensures fruition.

Only patient cultivation
Frees you from their grip –
Insight by itself is insufficient.
Were acts transcended
By understanding –
Insight would destroy them.

Irrevocability alone survives
The vexed transition
From one life to the next –
Emptiness does not negate it;
Life does not set it in stone.

4.
My acts are irrevocable
Because they have no essence.
If they had an essence,
They would be permanent.
No one could have performed them.
I would fear the consequence
Of things I did not do.
I would not lead a noble life.

Descriptions would conflict
With one another.
I would be incapable
Of telling good and bad apart.
Having already ripened,
Acts would ripen again.

If acts are compulsive
And compulsions unreal,
How can acts be real?
Acts and compulsions form me.
What could empty acts
And compulsions form?

Blocked by confusion
Consumers consume the fruits of acts,
Which neither they
Nor anyone else committed.

Where are the doers of deeds

Absent among their conditions?
Where are the fruits of doers and deeds
That cannot be found?
Where are the consumers
Of fruits that are not there?

Imagine a magician
Who creates a creature
Who creates other creatures.
Acts I perform are creatures
Who create others.

Deeds, compulsions, bodies,
Doers, fruits are like
Invisible cities, mirages, dreams.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

17. Action and its Fruit

The chapter begins with a straight exposition of Buddhism on action. (This leads some scholars to doubt that this part of the chapter was part of the text written by Nagarjuna.) A key to Buddhist ethics is that karmic action is equated with *intention* and not merely the *act* itself - thus, the same act would have different karmic repercussions depending on the actor's intent. This is so in the Pali canon *(Anguttara Nikaya* 111.207, IVA15) and here (v. 2). (See Jones 2004: 152-53.)

In verse 6, the objector raises a persistent problem for Buddhism: how can an act done today have karmic consequences that occur only years from now, or indeed in another life *if everything* is *momentary?* How it is possible that the effects may occur much later (and thus the causes seem dormant) when even the *dharmas* last only momentarily? Mustn't there be some persisting reality to connect the two events? This problem .was discus.sed by Abhidharmists and Mahayanist theorists. Nagarjuna replies (v. 7) with the idea of a series of connected but impermanent events - here, a seed becoming a plant producing fruit. There are no boundaries in reality corresponding to our conceptual boundaries between seed, sprout, and full sized plant. It is a continuum of conditioned realities, not a collection of discrete, self-existent entities. With regard to karmic actions: somehow the "seeds" of the future fruit are passed on a connected series of impermanent events. A seed is neither *terminated* nor *eternal* because of the continuing series of effects.

The ten pure paths of verse 11 are from the Buddhist codes of conduct – i.e., abstaining from directly or indirectly taking the life of any sentient being, and so forth.

Verse 21 repeats part of the Dedication: what is without self-existence is unarisen and unperishing. If actions were self-existent entities, then they would be permanent and eternal (v. 22) - they would never end and so their "fruit" would never arise. Verses 23-24 connects the point to the Buddhist religious program.

In verse 30, the objector again brings up the idea that there must be a real actor, real action, and real fruit. Nagarjuna responds that one illusion can produce another illusion (vv. 31-32) - the phenomena are causally real but not real in terms of substances.

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

17

An Examination of Karmic Actions and Results

In the sutras, the Buddha taught:

For those belonging to the family of the noble ones, karmic actions do not exist and results of karmic actions do not exist, either.

THE NOBLE BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS realize the emptiness of all phenomena, and therefore they realize that karmic actions and their results do not truly exist. As a result of their realization, they pass beyond the karmic actions and results that cause ordinary sentient beings to wander in samsara. In this chapter, Nagarjuna will use logical reasoning to prove the validity of the teaching that karmic actions and their results are not truly existent.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in order to counter the argument that samsara exists because the karmic actions and their results that compose samsara exist. For if people believe this, then until one proves to them that there really are no such things as karmic actions and results, they will not be able to gain certainty in the fact that samsara itself has no inherent reality. It is true that if karmic actions and their results really did exist, then samsara would as well, but if karmic actions and their results do not genuinely exist, then samsara must necessarily not truly exist either.

We can formulate the following logical reasoning: Karmic actions and results are mere appearances devoid of true existence, because no self, no actor, exists to perform them. This is a valid way to put things because if the self of the individual does not exist, there cannot be any action, and therefore there cannot be any result of any action either.

We can also examine the relationship between the actors and the actions themselves by asking, "Which one comes first?" It could not be that the actor exists first, because then there would be an actor who was not performing any action.

It also would be impossible for there to be any action before the actor who performed it, because if there were, there would be an action that existed even though no one was performing it. Neither could actor and action exist simultaneously, because if they did, each with its own inherent nature, then each would be independent of the other and thus they would have no connection between them. If that were the case here, there would be two separate entities, actor and action, existing simultaneously with no connection between them, which would be illogical. So actor and action cannot exist sequentially and they cannot exist simultaneously, and therefore they cannot genuinely exist.

If karmic actions and actors did truly exist, what would be the quality of that existence? If the actor really existed, he would have to have his own independent nature, which would mean that the actor would always exist, whether there was an action or not. Similarly, if the action really existed, it would have to have its own independent nature, meaning that it would not exist in dependence upon the actor at all—it would exist by itself. Obviously, though, that is not the case, because we can say that there is an actor only if there is an action, and we can say that there is an action only if there is an actor. Since these two exist only in mutual dependence, they therefore have no independent nature; they are not real.

Someone might ask, "Isn't it nihilistic to think that karmic actions and their results do not exist?" In fact, this is not a nihilistic view because there exists no self to have any nihilistic view. There can be a nihilistic view only if there is someone to hold it, but since there is no one to have any view, then there can be no nihilism. Furthermore, since the thought of nihilism neither arises nor abides nor ceases, there can be no nihilism in genuine reality. Genuine reality transcends the conceptual fabrications of realism and nihilism. It transcends karmic actions and results, and the absence of karmic actions and results as well.

If karmic actions and their results do not exist in the abiding nature of reality, then what is the quality of their appearance? Nagarjuna describes this in the chapter's thirty-third verse:

Mental afflictions, actions, and bodies,
As well as actors and results,
Are like cities of gandharvas,
Like mirages, and like dreams.

This verse teaches us that karmic actions and their results do not genuinely exist; they are mere conventions, mere superficial appearances, like cities of gandharvas, mirages, and dreams. Thus, even though actors and actions do not genuinely exist, in apparent reality they do exist as dependently arisen mere appearances. So you do not need to worry or be afraid of reality being nothingness. Reality is appearance and emptiness undifferentiable, and this appearance- emptiness is open, spacious, and relaxed.

The Heart of Wisdom Sutra teaches:

There is no ignorance nor any ending of ignorance, no aging and death nor any ending of aging and death.

The sutra here explicitly mentions the first and the last of the twelve links of dependent arising; we must ourselves apply this to the ten middle links as well (fn For a brief description of the twelve links of dependent arising, see chapter 26, "An
Examination of the Twelve Links of Existence.").

If ignorance inherently existed, its ending would also inherently exist. Since ignorance does not inherently exist, however, there is no ending of it either. If aging and death inherently existed, there would be some end to them as well, but since they have no nature of their own, there can be no true cessation of them either. So what are they? They are like dreams, illusions, and water-moons. Confusion, liberation, stains, and the freedom from stains are all dependently arisen mere appearances whose true nature is equality.

When we dream of first being filthy and then getting clean, when we do not know we are dreaming, both the filth and the cleanliness seem to truly exist. When we know we are dreaming, the filth is mere appearance and the cleanliness is mere appearance. In the true nature of the dream, there is neither filth nor cleanliness. That is easy to understand—please do not forget it.

In his Authentic Portrait of the Middle Way, Milarepa sang:

All animate, inanimate—the three realms
Unborn and nonexistent from the outset,
No base to rest on, do not coemerge,
There is no karmic act, no maturation,
So even the name "samsara" does not exist.

We need to remember this again and again. If in our studies we connect the teachings of the great scholar Nagarjuna with those of the great yogi Milarepa, then our understanding will become very profound.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XVII

कर्मफलपरीक्षा सप्तदशमं प्रकरणम्।	karma[phala]parīkṣā nāma saptadaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ‖
中論觀業品第十七(三十三偈)	**zhōng lùn guān yè pǐn dì shí qī (sān shí sān jié;jì)**
།ལས་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་བདུན་པའོ།།	| las brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa bcu bdun pa'o ‖

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XVII - **Examination of Action and Its Effect**

JONES (Skt):
17. Action and its Fruit

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of the Fruit of Action

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
17. Analysis of Action and Effect

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[17] Examination of the Fusion between Action and Result (33 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
[omitted]

STRENG (Skt):
Section 17 - An Analysis of Action (karma) and Its Product (action and its results) In 33 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
17. deed and result.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 17 Contemplation of Karma 33 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Actions and Fruits

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XVII - Analysis of Action and Its Results

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XVII: Examination of Actions and Their Fruits

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XVII - Examination of Action

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of the Fruit of Action

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 17: AN EXAMINATION OF KARMIC ACTIONS AND RESULTS

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/0 Question: Although you refute dharmas in various ways, karma does have a fixed existence, since it is able to cause living beings to receive the fruits and rewards (of their actions, As the sutra says, 'all living beings take birth according to their karma'. An evil person goes into the hells, one who cultivates merit is reborn in heaven, and one who traverses the path attains nirvana. Therefore, these dharmas are not empty. It is said of karma that:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter omitted by Sprung]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Seventeen Examination of the Fruit of Action (Karma-phala-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XVII Examination of Actions and Their Fruits

Arguing for the emptiness of bondage and liberation, however, raises a further question that demands an answer: If there is no real bondage and no real release, what are the effects of our actions? For it would appear, at least given standard Buddhist moral theory and the doctrine of karma on which it is grounded,(fn 86. That is, broadly speaking, that our actions, words, and intentions have consequences that determine the future course of our lives. Karma from the Buddhist standpoint is a straightforwardly deterministic process and not a matter of accounts being kept by a cosmic accountant. The doctrine can be applied both within a single life or across rebirths and with respect both to individuals and to groups of individuals.) that meritorious actions conduce to liberation and that morally wrong actions increase bondage. Given the emptiness of these latter, an analysis of the consequences of action is in order. Nāgārjuna begins with Buddhist moral truisms, accepted by the Madhyamika as well as by members of other Buddhist schools. It is important to note that the first nineteen verses of this chapter represent the views of four distinct opponents in order of increasing similitude to the Madhyamika understanding. Despite the fact that Nāgārjuna sets these views up as targets, however, some of the views the opponents put on the table are, suitably interpreted, shared by Nāgārjuna. Each can be seen as, despite being inadmissible as a characterization of a nonconventional basis for the relation between action and its effects, a reasonable empirical assessment of at least part of the conventional reality in this domain.

Kārikā XVII.1

आत्मसंयमकं चेतः परानुग्राहकं च यत्।
मैत्रं स धर्मस्तद्बीजं फलस्य प्रेत्य चेह च॥१॥

LVP 303,4-5 - LVP 339,3-4
ātmasaṃyamakaṃ cetaḥ parānugrāhakaṃ ca yat |
maitraṃ sa dharamas tad bījaṃ phalasya pretya ceha ca ||1||

人能降伏心 利益於眾生
是名為慈善 二世果報種

T1564: vol 30, pg 21b20
rén néng xiáng fú xīn lì yì yū;yú;wū zhòng shēng
shì míng wéi cí shàn èr shì guǒ bào zhǒng

།བདག་ཉིད་ལེགས་པར་སྡོམ་པ་དང་། །གཞན་ལ་ཕན་འདོགས་བྱམས་སེམས་གང་།
།དེ་ཆོས་དེ་ནི་འདི་གཞན་དུ། །འབྲས་བུ་དག་གི་ས་བོན་ཡིན། །

Tg tsa 9b2 - Tg tsa 10b5
| bdag ñid legs par sdom pa daṅ | | gźan la phan ’dogs byams sems gaṅ |
| de chos de ni ’di gźan du | | ’bras bu dag gi sa bon yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - Self-restraint, kindness towards others, and benevolence are the ways of the dharma (i.e., the truth of the nature of things). They are the seeds which bear fruit in this as well as the next realm of life.

JONES (Skt):
[1] The thought that controls oneself and benefits others - this friendly manner is the doctrine. It is the seed for fruit after death as well as in this life.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Self-restraint as well as benefiting others—this is the friendly way and it constitutes the seed that bears fruit here as well as in the next life.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Thinking [i.e., willing] self-restraint, kindness toward others, and friendliness is the teaching.
It is that seed of the fruit now and after death.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. The negative attitudes to the existence of Soul is an excellent decision,
The attitude to keep a distance from the Soul is that.
The friendship to others is just the real fact, and the Rule of the Universe is just the fact.
And the seeds as results are just the next world of this world.

STRENG (Skt):
1. The state of mind, which is self-disciplined, being favorably disposed toward others, And friendship: that is the dharma; that is the seed for the fruit now and after death.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v1 A person can subdue his mind
And benefit living beings.
This is called compassion
The seed and the fruit of the two worlds.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Restraining oneself well and loving thoughts that benefit others are the Dharma which is the seed of fruits here and elsewhere.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Restraining oneself properly,
Helping others, and a loving mind—
These are Dharma, seeds that bear fruit
Both here and hereafter. [XVII.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Self-restraint and benefiting others
With a compassionate mind is the Dharma.
This is the seed for
Fruits in this and future lives.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Self-restraint and benefitting others
With lovingkindness is the Dharma.
This is the seed for
Fruits in this and future lives.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[opponent #1 begins:] Self-restraint and benefiting others with a compassionate heart, this is the seed that bears fruit in this and future lives.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/1 The three poisons in a person cause distress to others and give rise to actions, so the good person first of all destroys his own evil. This is why it is said that subduing his own mind benefits others. 'Benefiting others' means almsgiving, holding to the precepts, humility, etc. and not harming others. This is what is meant by 'benefiting others'. It is also known as 'compassionate goodness and blessed virtue' and as 'the seeds and joyful fruit of this world and the next'.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The present chapter, unlike Chapter VIII, deals with the problem of moral responsibility. It is an attempt to explain the "fruits" (phala) reaped as a result of one's actions (karma). The doctrine of the fruits of action or moral responsibility is pivotal to any explanation of human life, whether it is in bondage or in freedom. However, in the present chapter, the idea of the accumulation of merit and demerit (punya-papa) (for future benefit) is examined at length, primarily because this particular idea is mostly associated with the life-process (samsara) in bondage. The Buddha insisted that such accumulation of merit and demerit is abandoned (prahina) by a person who is enjoying freedom (nirvana), even though he does not transcend morals or is not unconcerned with questions relating to moral responsibility.

Inada assumes that verses 1-19 represent the popular explanation of karma. This is questionable. In fact, the popular, and therefore, a mistaken view of karma is presented only in verses 6-12. Verse 13, as will be pointed out, refers to a more sophisticated theory of moral responsibility held by the Buddha and his disciples. The present verse deals with two important virtues-serf-restraint and benevolenceand these constitute the friendly way (maitram dharmah) which serves as the seed that fruitions here as well as in the future. Inada reads three virtuesserf-restraint, kindness towards others and benevolence. On the contrary, maitram seems to qualify dharma, and Kumarajiva understood it in this latter sense.

Kārikā XVII.2

चेतना चेतयित्वा च कर्मोक्तं परममर्षिणा।
तस्यानेकविधो भेदः कर्मणः परिकीर्तितः॥२॥

cetanā cetayitvā ca karmoktaṃ paramarṣiṇā |
tasyānekavidho bhedaḥ karmaṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ ||2||

大聖說二業 思與從思生
是業別相中 種種分別說

dà shèng shuì èr yè sī yǔ cóng sī shēng
shì yè bié xiāng zhòng zhǒng zhǒng fēn bié shuì

།དྲང་སྲོང་མཆོག་གི་ལས་རྣམས་ནི།།སེམས་པ་དང་ནི་བསམས་པར་གསུངས།
།ལས་དེ་དག་གི་བྱེ་བྲག་ནི།།རྣམ་པ་དུ་མར་ཡོངས་སུ་བསྒྲགས།།

| draṅ sroṅ mchog gis las (3)rnams ni | | sems pa daṅ ni bsam par gsuṅs |
| las de bdag gi bye brag ni | | rnams pa du mar yoṅs su bsgrags |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - The Great Sage has said that karma is (in the nature of) thought as well as thought in action, and that there are many distinct varieties of karma.

JONES (Skt):
[2] Intention and what is intended were called "action" by the great seer, the Buddha. Multiple varieties of that action have been shown.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The Supreme Ascetic has said that action is volition as well as volitional. Many distinct varieties of that action have also been expounded.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The Great Sage said *karman* is volition and will in action.
Actions of many distinct kinds have been expounded.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. They are both perception and the contents, which have been perceived,
And they are talked on Action, and they are very necessary to endure them.
In them there are so many articles, and they are divided into so many divisions,
And they are belonging to matter, which are so related with the states of Actions, and some official proclamations.

STRENG (Skt):
2. The most perceptive seer Buddha has said that there is action (karma) as volition and as a result of having willed. The variety of acts of that action has been explained in many ways.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v2 The great sage expounds two kinds of karma;
The thought, and that which thought produces.
Within these different characteristics of karma
Various distinctions are explained.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The great sage has taught all actions to be intention and what is intended. The specifics of those actions are well known to be of many kinds.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The Supreme Sage has taught
That action is volition and the willed.
The subdivisions of these actions
Are set forth in great detail. [XVII.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. The Unsurpassed Sage has said
That actions are either intention or intentional.
The varieties of these actions
Have been announced in many ways.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. The Unsurpassed Sage has said
That actions are either intention or intentional.
The varieties of these actions
Have been delineated in many ways.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The Great Sage has said that karma is intent as well as intentional action, and that there are many distinct forms of karma.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/2 The great sage teaches that karmas are of two kinds. One is thought, the other is that which thought produces. These two kinds of karma are explained in detail in the Abhidharma.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

At A 3.415 (Chung 27.5 [Taisho 1.600a]), the Buddha identified karma with "volition" and maintained that karma, whether it be bodily, verbal, or mental, is to be recognized as karma if it is volitional (Cetana 'ham bhikkhave kammam vadami Cetayitvakammam karoti kayena vacaya manasaca). The emphasis on volition was intended to eliminate the wrong belief that a person is responsible for any and every action he performs, a view that was advocated by the Jaina thinkers of pre-Buddhist India (see Kalupahana, Causality, p). The distinct varieties of karma referred to here are the one's presented in the canonical Adhidharma, and these are based upon the discussions available in the early discourses.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. The classification to which Nāgārjuna refers is a partition of actions into mental and physical. Mental actions are mere intentions on this view; physical actions and speech (generally distinguished in Buddhist psychology and action theory) are properly intentional. That is, the latter two involve a mental and a nonmental component; the mental actions only involve a mental component. Verse 3 clarifies this:

Kārikā XVII.3

तत्र यच्चेतनेत्युक्तं कर्म तन्मानसं स्मृतम्।
चेतयित्वा च यत्तूक्तं तत्तु कायिकवाचिकम्॥३॥

tatra yac cetanety uktaṃ karma tan mānasaṃ smṛtam |
cetayitvā ca yat tūktaṃ tat tu kāyikavācikam ||3||

佛所說思者 所謂意業是
所從思生者 即是身口業

fú;fó suǒ shuì sī zhě suǒ wèi yì yè shì
suǒ cóng sī shēng zhě jí shì shēn kǒu yè

|དེ་ལ་ལས་གང་སེམས་པ་ཞེས||གསུངས་པ་དེ་ནི་ཡིད་ཀྱིར་འདོད|
|བསམས་པ་ཞེས་ནི་གང་གསུངས་པ||དེ་ནི་ལུས་དང་ངག་གིར་འདོད||

| de la las gaṅ sems pa źes | | gsuṅs pa de ni yi kyir ’dod |
| bsams pa źes ni gaṅ gsuṅs pa | | de ni lus daṅ ṅag gir yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - The karma which has been described as thought (cetana) indicates the mental and volitional aspects and that which has been described as thought in action (cetayitva) refers to the bodily and verbal aspects.

JONES (Skt):
[3] In this regard, the action that is said to be mental is called "intention," and the verbal and bodily actions are called "what follows intention."

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Herein, what is called volition is reminisced as mental action. Whatever is called volitional consists of the bodily and verbal.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Karman, which is here called "volition," is mindfulness of what is present in the mind.
Further, that called will in action, that is bodily and verbal.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. In such situations, that kind of visibility is talked,
And a concrete fact, Action, is the mental teachings.
The individual soul is just what has been spoken there,
And concrete facts there, which are included by physical Action and verbal expressions.

STRENG (Skt):
3. Thus, that action which is called "volition": that is considered by tradition as mental; But that action which is a result of having willed: that is considered by tradition as physical or verbal.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v3 The thought of which the Buddha speaks
May be termed 'mental karma'.
That which arises from the thought
Is speech and body karma.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
In this respect action spoken of as "intention" is regarded as being that of mind. That spoken of as "what is intended" is regarded as being that of body and speech.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which is taught as "actions of volition"
Is asserted to be mental,
While the so-called "intended actions"
Are physical and verbal. [XVII.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. Of these, what is called "intention"
Is mental desire.
What is called "intentional"
Comprises the physical and verbal.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. Of these, what is called "intention"
Is maintained to be mental.
What is called "intentional"
Comprises the physical and the verbal.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Thus, what is called "intention" refers to what is purely mental. What is called "intentional" refers to what is physical or verbal.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/3 Conception is one of the dharmas of mental configurations. Amongst the mental configurations, it has the capacity to initiate that which is done, and this is why it is called karma. External actions of body and speech arise on account of conception. Although there are things which are done through the other configurations of the mind, it is conception which is the basis of action, and this is why conception is said to be karma. The characteristics of karma will now be explained:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

A difference is noticeable between the Buddha's own explanation of karma in the statement from Anguttara quoted at XVII.2 and the present description of Nagarjuna. While cetana or volition is definitely mental, the Buddha seems to assume that not all mental actions are volitional. Hence his statement that all three forms of karma, bodily, verbal and mental, can be determined by volition. However, in the present statement, volition seems to have been identified with mental action, the volitional being confined strictly to bodily and verbal. This latter view may be a reflexion of the Buddha's own statement at M 2.25 (Chung 47.2 [Taisho 1.720]), wherein both bodily and verbal actions are considered to have mind as a basis.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. In the next verse, an opponent uses these truisms as a platform for the defense of the view that actions themselves must remain in existence until their consequences are observed. Actions that derive from renouncing the world are different from those that derive from worldly concerns. This difference in nature.., he argues, must explain the difference in their consequences:

Kārikā XVII.4

वाग्विष्पन्दोऽविरतयो याश्चाविज्ञप्तिसंज्ञिताः।
अविज्ञप्तय एवान्याः स्मृता विरतयस्तथा॥४॥

vāgviṣpando ’viratayo yāś cāvijñaptisaṃjñitāḥ |
avijñaptaya evānyāḥ smṛtā viratayas tathā ||4||

身業及口業 作與無作業
如是四事中 亦善亦不善

shēn yè jí kǒu yè zuò yǔ wú zuò yè
rú shì sì shì zhōng yì shàn yì bù shàn

།ངག་དང་བསྐྱོད་དང་མི་སྤོང་བའི།།རྣམ་རིག་བྱེད་མིན་ཞེས་བྱ་གང་།
།སྤོང་བའི་རྣམ་རིག་བྱེད་མིན་པ།།གཞན་དག་ཀྱང་ནི་དེ་བཞིན་འདོད།།

| (4)ṅag daṅ bskyod daṅ mi spoṅ ba’i | | rnam rig byed min źes bya gaṅ |
| spoṅ ba’i rnam rig byed min pa | | gźan dag kyaṅ ni de bźin ’dod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - Words, actions, the indescribable non-abandonment as well as what is asserted to be another form of the indescribable abandonment, (This verse continues on to the next.)

JONES (Skt):
[4-5] Speech, gesture, persisting states designated “unreported,” ceased unreported states, the merit produced by enjoyment, the demerit produced by enjoyment, and intention - these seven phenomena are said to manifest action.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever words and deeds that are associated with delight and designated as non-intimation, and also those others reminisced as non-intimation, but are associated with non-delight; similarly, merit as well as demerit consequent upon enjoyment, and finally, volition—these are reminisced as the seven things that are productive of action.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Uninterrupted words and deeds, which are false ideas that do not inform,
are called opposite to cessations by means of mindfulness.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. Endless talks like dram without stop are the situations,
And those situations are just reporting the news without any information.
Those situations of lacking information might be very irregular states,
And memories might be stopped Actually.

STRENG (Skt):
4. Sound (1), gesture (2) and that which does not rest which is considered as unknown (3), Also the other unknown which is considered to be at rest (4);

BOCKING (Ch):
17v4 The karma of body and the karma of speech,
Performed and non-performed karma.
Within these four things
Is both goodness and non-goodness.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Whatever (1) speech and (2) movements and (3) “unconscious not-letting-go,” (4) other kinds of unconscious letting-go are also regarded like that.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Speech and movement;
Imperceptible nonabstinence
And imperceptible abstinence—
These are similarly asserted. [XVII.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. Speech and action and all
Kinds of unabandoned and abandoned actions,
And resolve
As well as...

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. Speech and physical action:
Unobservable unrejected actions, and
Unobservable rejected actions;
As well as . . .

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Words and deeds—whether committed with full awareness or not, whether enjoyable or not, and whether meritorious or not (depending upon enjoyment)—and volition, these are the seven elements that give rise to karma

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. (“And resolve” fn 87. *rnam rig byed min pa* (Skt: *avijnaptaya).* A technical term that can refer to such things as a monk’s vows or a resolution to perform some action.)

Kārikā XVII.5

परिभोगान्वयं पुण्यमपुण्यं च तथाविधम्।
चेतना चेति सप्तैते धर्माः कर्माञ्जनाः स्मृताः॥५॥

paribhogānvayaṃ puṇyam apuṇyaṃ ca tathāvidham |
cetanā ceti saptaite dharmāḥ karmāñjanāḥ smṛtāḥ ||5||

從用生福德 罪生亦如是
及思為七法 能了諸業相

cóng yòng shēng fú dé zuì shēng yì rú shì
jí sī wéi qī fǎ néng le;liǎo;liào zhū yè xiàng;xiāng

།ལོངས་སྤྱོད་ལས་བྱུང་བསོད་ནམས་དང་།།བསོད་ནམས་མ་ཡིན་ཚུལ་དེ་བཞིན།
།སེམས་པ་དང་ནི་ཆོས་དེ་བདུན།།ལས་སུ་མངོན་པར་འདོད་པ་ཡིན།།

| loṅs spyod las byuṅ bsod nams daṅ | | bsod nams ma yin tshul de bźin |
| sems pa daṅ ni chos de bdun | | las su (5)mṅon par ’dod pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - ....virtuous and non-virtuous elements associated with enjoyment of being , and thought itself, these are the seven dharmas which give rise to karma.

JONES (Skt):
[5] [see above]

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
(included above)

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Enjoyment and energy, merit and demerit, thought and memories,
and volition, according to the precepts, are the seven events that give rise to *karman.*

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Continuity of pursuing pleasures might be comfortable,
But unfortunately something impure usually exists only in such a kind of materialistic place . What are clearly seen in such situations are the universal rules of the seven factors of wisdom, that is, consciousness, investigation of the law, exertion, rapture, repose, the balanced states, and serenity.
And so all things and phenomena are proclaiming that they are not ideas of existence.

STRENG (Skt):
5. That which is pure as a result of enjoyment (5), that which is impure as a result of enjoyment (6), And volition (7): these seven basic elements (dharma) are considered by the tradition as the modes of action.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v5 From their effect arises blessed virtue
And evil arises in the same way.
These seven dharmas, including conception,
Comprise the characteristics of karma.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
(5) Goodness that arises from enjoyment/use and in the same manner (6) what is not goodness,[and] (7) intention. These seven dharmas are clearly regarded as action.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The merit that arises from enjoyment
And the demerit, in a similar manner,
Along with volition—
These seven principles are held to be action. [XVII.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. Virtuous and nonvirtuous actions
Derived from pleasure,
As well as intention and morality:
These seven are the kinds of action.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. Virtuous and nonvirtuous actions
Derived from enjoyment;
As well as intention: All are maintained to be similar.
These seven phenomena are the kinds of action.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
(included above)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/5 Speech karma: There are four kinds of speech karma. Bodily karma: There are three kinds of bodily karma. These seven kinds of karma are subdivided into two types, 'active' and 'non-active'. When you act, this is called 'active' karma, but once you have acted the successive subsequent products are termed 'non-active' karmas. both 'good' and 'not good'. These two types of karma may be 'Not good' means that they do not stop evil. Good means that they stop evil.

(21c20) Furthermore, blessed virtue arises from their enjoyment, as when a benefactor gives something to a recipient. If the recipient receives and enjoys it, the benefactor acquires two kinds of merit, one arising from the giving and the other arising from the enjoyment.

(21c22) It is like a man shooting at another man with an arrow. If the arrow kills the man, there are two kinds of sin involved. One is the sin of shooting at him, the other is the sin arising from the murder. If the shot had not killed him, the one who shot would only have the sin of shooting, and there would be no sin of murder. This is why it says in the verse that sin and merit are produced from the effect.

(22a2) These are what is meant by the six kinds of karma, and the seventh is called conception. These seven kinds of karma are subdivisions of the characteristics of karma, and karma has effects and rewards in this world and subsequent worlds. Therefore there are fixed, real (karmic) actions and their results. Hence, dharmas cannot be empty.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Some of the terms used here to define the various forms of karma appear for the first time in the Abhidharma (see Akb iv.l-2; Akb p; Adv p). They are absent in the early discourses. However, taken in themselves, they do not seem to create any philopsophical problems. The philosophical problems arose because of the manner in which these actions were interpreted. These interpretations are then taken up for examination by Nagarjuna in the following verses.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. ("These seven" fn 88. The arithmetic here is none too clear. Tsong Khapa has it like this: (1) good and bad speech; (2) good and bad physical action; (3) abandoned and unabandoned actions; (4) meritorious actions; (5) nonmeritorious actions; (6) the intention to do good actions; (7) the intention to do bad actions. Just what the principle of partition is here is not obvious. Clearly the categories overlap (pp. 300-301).)

The kinds of actions to which Nāgārjuna's imaginary opponent refers are simply the various kinds of virtuous and nonvirtuous actions. In general, morally good actions are done for the sake of pleasure for others; morally bad actions sacrifice others' good for one's own pleasure. The opponent, however, goes further, pointing out that these actions have diverse long-term consequences that must be explained:

Kārikā XVII.6

तिष्ठत्या पाककालाच्चेत्कर्म तन्नित्यतामियात्।
निरुद्धं चेन्निरूद्धं सत्किं फलं जनयिष्यति॥६॥

tiṣṭhaty ā pākakālāc cet karma tan nityatām iyāt |
niruddhaṃ cen niruddhaṃ sat kiṃ phalaṃ janayiṣyati ||6||

業住至受報 是業即為常
若滅即無業 云何生果報

yè zhù zhì shòu bào shì yè jí wéi cháng
ruò miè jí wú yè yún hé shēng guǒ bào

།གལ་ཏེ་སྨིན་པའི་དུས་བར་དུ། །གནས་ན་ལས་དེ་རྟག་པར་འགྱུར།
།གལ་ཏེ་འགགས་ན་འགགས་གྱུར་པས། །ཇི་ལྟར་འབྲས་བུ་སྐྱེད་པར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te smin pa'i dus bar du | | gnas na las de rtag par 'gyur |
| gal te 'gags na 'gags gyur pa | | ji ltar 'bras bu skye par 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - If karma endures at any time in the maturing process, then it will be of the nature of permanent endurance. But if it ceases to be, how could anything ceased (or spent) give rise to an effect?

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection:*6] If an action endures until the ripening of the fruit of action, then it will go on permanently. But if the action has ceased before the ripening, how, having ceased, will it produce any fruit?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is assumed that action remains during the time it is maturing, then it will approach permanence. If it is assumed to have ceased, then having ceased, how can it produce a fruit?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Since from thinking there is continuity and from continuity. the origin of the thought,
thought is prior to thinking. Therefore, there is neither disruption nor pennanence.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. Aha, my childhood, when I have established myself at that time,
My Action itself has become as big as my age,
And the self-regulations are sufficient as my self-regulations.
And so something real will be born as results in future.

STRENG (Skt):
6. If an action exists by enduring to the time of its fulfillment, that action would be eternal. If an action were stopped—being stopped, what will it produce?

BOCKING (Ch):
17v6 If the action continues up to its reception of reward,
Then such an action is permanent.
If it ceases, how can a nonexistent action
Give rise to a reward?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the action remained until the time of ripening, it would become permanent. If it stopped, by having stopped, how could a fruit be born?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If an action would remain until ripening,
Then it would be permanent.
If it ceases, then having ceased,
How could it produce an effect? [XVII.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If until the time of ripening
Action had to remain in place, it would have to be permanent.
If it has ceased, then having ceased,
How will a fruit arise?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If until the time of ripening
Action had to endure, it would be permanent.
If it has ceased, then having ceased,
How will a fruit arise?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[opponent #2 chimes in:] If actions endure until they mature, they are of a permanent nature. If they do not endure, then having ceased, how can they give rise to an effect?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/6 If an action continued right up to the reception of its reward, then it would be permanent, but this is not correct, and why? Actions have the characteristics of arising and ceasing. They do not abide even for an instant, so how much less can they persist right up to their reward? But it you say that an action ceases, then, being ceased, it does not exist, so how can it produce its reward? Question:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is actually the point at which Nagarjuna begins his analysis of the metaphysical assumptions. Here he immediately turns on to the theories of identity and difference. The assumption taken up for criticism in the first line needs to be examined carefully. Undoubtedly, it is the problem of potential existence. Such existence may be understood in various ways. Potentiality may be taken as the existence of conditions that would eventually give rise to some particular event. Nagarjuna , as may be seen in a moment, does not seem to object to such an explanation. On the contrary, if potentiality is understood in the sense of substantial existence of the particular event (in this case, karma), even when it has not matured or come to fruition, then that assumption leads to eternalism. This latter view is certainly not acceptable to Nagarjuna. It also leads to the contrary view, that is, if the event is completely absent (and this absence pertains to the very conditions that will eventually give rise to' the event), then there will be doubts about the occurrence of the event at all. This is annihilationism. Thus, Nagarjuna is not denying the fruit of action but only the manner in which it is explained.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. The problem is this: Given that the consequence of an action may be far in the future, something must persist to connect the action to the result. This is a kind of karmic analog of doubts about action at a distance. It is the same kind of move that lies behind trace theories of memory in recent philosophy of mind. So this first position is that there must be some permanent entity that remains in existence until the consequences of an action occur. A second possibility is that some third thing mediates the relation between action and consequence - a kind of karmic link that is generated by the action and remains in the psychophysical continuum until the consequence is produced. The interlocutor then offers an analogy popular in Buddhist philosophy:

Kārikā XVII.7

योऽङ्कुरप्रभृतिर्बीजात्संतानोऽभिप्रवर्तते।
ततः फलमृते बीजात्स च नाभिप्रवर्तते॥७॥

yo 'ṅkuraprabhṛtir bījāt saṃtāno 'bhipravartate |
tataḥ phalam ṛte bījāt sa ca nābhipravartate ||7||

如芽等相續 皆從種子生
從是而生果 離種無相續

rú yá děng xiàng;xiāng xù jiē cóng zhǒng zǐ shēng
cóng shì ér shēng guǒ lí zhǒng wú xiàng;xiāng xù

།མྱུ་གུ་ལ་སོགས་རྒྱུན་གང་ནི། །ས་བོན་ལས་ནི་མངོན་པར་འབྱུང་།
།དེ་ལས་འབྲས་བུ་ས་བོན་ནི། །མེད་ན་དེ་ཡང་འབྱུང་མི་འགྱུར། །

| myu gu la sogs rgyun gaṅ ni | | sa bon las ni mṅon par 'byuṅ |
| de las 'bras bu sa bon ni | | (6)med na de yaṅ 'byuṅ mi 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - A continuity which begins in a sprout, etc., comes forth from a seed and thereby takes on the nature of an effect, but separated from the seed the continuity could never arise.

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply:*7] The *series* that has a sprout as its beginning develops from a seed and then produces the fruit. Without the seed, however, the series does not develop.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever series that begins with a sprout proceeds from a seed, and then produces a fruit. However, without a seed, such [a series] would not proceed.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *karman* endures throughout the time of maturation, it would go on in perpetuity.
If it has ceased, then having ceased, what existing fruit will arise?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. And those young buds have separated from seeds,
And because of continuity in succession, the streams follow behind them.
Then as such continuity, fruits have begun to move separating from seeds.
Such a kind of work can never be expansion of any kind of work.

STRENG (Skt):
7. There is fruit (phala) when a process, a sprout, etc., starts from a seed; But without a seed that process does not proceed.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v7 It is like the sprout, etc., where a succession of characteristics
Arises from the seed,
And from that is produced the fruit.
Without the seed, there would be no succession.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The continuum of sprouts and so on clearly emerges from seeds, and from that fruits. If there were no seeds, they too would not emerge.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The continuum of the sprout and so forth
Manifests from the seed,
Due to which the fruit comes about;
Without the seed, it would not arise. [XVII.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. As for a continuum, such as the sprout,
It comes from a seed.
From that arises the fruit. Without a seed,
It would not come into being.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. Any continuum, such as that of a sprout,
Comes from a seed.
From that arises the fruit. Without a seed,
It would not come into being either.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Any process, such as a sprout, begins as a seed and continues until it bears fruit. Without a seed such a process would not proceed.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The metaphysical assumptions of the Sautrantika doctrine of karma are under review here. The atomistic view of the life-process accepted by the Sautrantikas compelled them to analyse an event into a series (samtana) of moments. Their major difficulty lay in explaining how one series (e.g., a sprout-series) comes to be tied up with another preceding series (e.g., a seed-series), since they are different. If they are radically different, then the sprout-series can occur even in the absence of the seed-series. Nagarjuna maintains that this does not happen. In other words, he is insisting that philosophers like the Sautrantikas will have to accept the view that no event can come into being unless there were conditions that give rise to it; in this case it is the seed-series.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. That is, just as every actual fruit requires an actual seed as its predecessor and a sprout to mediate between them, the opponent reasons, every consequence of action requires an actual action and an actual karmic link between the action and the consequence. The next three verses extend this analogy:

Kārikā XVII.8

बीजाच्च यस्मात्संतानः संतानाच्च फलोद्भवः।
बीजपूर्वं फलं तस्मान्नोच्छिन्नं नापि शाश्वतम्॥८॥

bījāc ca yasmāt saṃtānaḥ saṃtānāc ca phalodbhavaḥ |
bījapūrvaṃ phalaṃ tasmān nocchinnaṃ nāpi śāśvatam ||8||

從種有相續 從相續有果
先種後有果 不斷亦不常

cóng zhǒng yǒu xiàng;xiāng xù cóng xiàng;xiāng xù yǒu guǒ
xiān zhǒng hòu yǒu guǒ bù duàn yì bù cháng

།གང་ཕྱིར་ས་བོན་ལས་རྒྱུན་དང་།།རྒྱུན་ལས་འབྲས་བུ་འབྱུང་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།
།ས་བོན་འབྲས་བུའི་སྔོན་འགྲོ་བ།།དེ་ཕྱིར་ཆད་མིན་རྟག་མ་ཡིན།།

| gaṅ phyir sa bon las rgyun daṅ | | rgyun las ’bras bu ’byuṅ ’gyur źiṅ |
| las ni ’bras bu’i sṅon ’gro ba | | de phyir chad min rtag ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - Since continuity comes forth from seed and effect from continuity, there is always a seed prior to the effect. Therefore, there is no interruption and also no constancy.

JONES (Skt):
[8] Since the series arises from the seed and the arising of the fruit is because of the series, the fruit is preceded by the seed. Therefore, the seed is neither terminated nor eternal.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Since a series arises from a seed and a fruit arises from a series, a fruit that is preceded by a seed is, therefore, neither interrupted nor eternal.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
A continuity advances by a sprout which is brought forward from a seed.
And therefore, the fruit does not come forward without a seed.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Just because of leaving seeds, the succession without break can continue.
And after breaking from the succession of continuity, then the harvest of fruits follows.
Before the seeds, there are fruits before them,
And there is no extinction, further more no eternity.

STRENG (Skt):
8. Inasmuch as the process is dependent on a seed and the fruit is produced from the process, The fruit, presupposing the seed, neither comes to an end nor is eternal.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v8 There is a succession from the seed,
And from this succession comes the fruit.
The seed comes first, and afterwards the fruit.
With no severance, and no permanence.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Because continuums are from seedsand fruits emerge from continuums and seeds precede fruits, therefore, there is no annihilation and no permanence.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The continuum arises from the seed,
And from the continuum comes the fruit.
Therefore, the seed precedes the fruit.
Hence, there is no annihilation or permanence. [XVII.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. Since from the seed comes the continuum,
And from the continuum comes the fruit,
The seed precedes the fruit.
Therefore there is neither nonexistence nor permanence.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Since from the seed comes the continuum,
And from the continuum comes the fruit,
The seed precedes the fruit.
Therefore there is neither nonexistence nor permanence.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Since the sprout depends on the seed and the fruit depends on the sprout, the fruit, presupposing the seed, neither perishes nor endures.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

In answer to the question raised by Nagarjuna , a Sautrantika can respond thus: Instead of conceiving of these as two different series, let us say that a series is produced from a seed. This series then gives rise to the effect (which is the sprout). In that sense, a fruit is preceded by a seed (bija-purvam phalam). Understood in this way, one does not fall into either the eternalistic or the an-nihilationist view.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. That is, this interlocutor points out, the position developed in XVII: 5-6 requires that actions either be permanent or nonexistent. His own view, on the other hand, allows actions to exist as impermanent and is, hence, more plausible:

Kārikā XVII.9

यस्तस्माच्चित्तसंतानश्चेतसोऽभिप्रवर्तते।
ततः फलमृते चित्तात्स च नाभिप्रवर्तते॥९॥

yas tasmāc cittasaṃtānaś cetaso ’bhipravartate |
tataḥ phalam ṛte cittāt sa ca nābhipravartate ||9||

如是從初心 心法相續生
從是而有果 離心無相續

rú shì cóng chū xīn xīn fǎ xiàng;xiāng xù shēng
cóng shì ér yǒu guǒ lí xīn wú xiàng;xiāng xù

།སེམས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུན་ནི་གང་ཡིན་པ།།སེམས་ལས་མངོན་པར་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར།
།དེ་ལས་འབྲས་བུ་སེམས་ལྟ་ཞིག།མེད་ན་དེ་ཡང་འབྱུང་མི་འགྱུར།།

| sems kyi rgyun ni gaṅ yin pa | | sems las mṅon par ’byuṅ bar ’gyur |
| de las ’bras bu (7)sems lta źig | med na de yaṅ ’byuṅ mi ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - Thereupon, thought continuity comes forth from the existence of mind and in consequence the effect. Without the mind, continuity cannot arise.

JONES (Skt):
[9] So too, what is a “series of thoughts” develops from a thought, and from the series develops the fruit. Therefore, without the seed of that thought, the fruit does not develop.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Therefore, whatever thought-series there is, that proceeds from a thought and from that fruit. That thought series would not proceed without a thought.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Therefore, that continuity of thought advances by thinking.
And thus thought [the fruit] does not come forward without thinking.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. Therefore the task is continuity of consciousness,
And the mental power is always going on.
The developing power of result moves leaving mind,
And the real situations have arrived at the limitation of the expansion.

STRENG (Skt):
9. There is a product (phala) when a mental process starts from a thoughts; But without a thought that process does not proceed.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v9 And in the same way, from the initial mind
The dharmas of mind have arisen in succession.
And from this mind there are effects
Without that mind, there would be no succession.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The continuum of mind clearly emerges from mind, and from that fruits. If there were no mind, they too would not emerge.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which is the continuum of mind
Manifests from the mind,
And from that emerges the effect.
Without this mind, it would not occur. [XVII.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. So, in a mental continuum,
From a preceding intention
A consequent mental state arises.
Without this, it would not arise.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. So a mental continuum arises
From a preceding intention.
From this a consequent mental state arises.
Without that, it would not arise.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Thus, thought processes proceed from intention and consequently bear fruit. Without intention, such process would not arise.

[No Commentaries on this verse]

Kārikā XVII.10

चित्ताच्च यस्मात्संतानः संतानाच्च फलोद्भवः।
कर्मपूर्वं फलं तस्मान्नोच्छिन्नं नापि शाश्वतम्॥१०॥

cittāc ca yasmāt saṃtānaḥ saṃtānāc ca phalodbhavaḥ |
karmapūrvaṃ phalaṃ tasmān nocchinnaṃ nāpi śāśvatam ||10||

從心有相續 從相續有果
先業後有果 不斷亦不常

cóng xīn yǒu xiàng;xiāng xù cóng xiàng;xiāng xù yǒu guǒ
xiān yè hòu yǒu guǒ bù duàn yì bù cháng

།གང་ཕྱིར་སེམས་ལས་རྒྱུན་དང་ནི།།རྒྱུན་ལས་འབྲས་བུ་འབྱུང་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།
།ལས་ནི་འབྲས་བུའི་སྔོན་འགྲོ་བ།།དེ་ཕྱིར་ཆད་མིན་རྟག་མ་ཡིན།།

| gaṅ phyir sems las rgyun daṅ ni | | rgyun las ’bras bu ’byuṅ ’gyur źiṅ |
| las ni ’bras bu’i sṅon ’gro ba | | de phyir chad min rtag ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - Since continuity conies forth from the mind and the effect from continuity, there is karma (of the mind) prior to the effect. Therefore, there is no interruption and also no constancy.

JONES (Skt):
[10] Since the series arises from the thought and the fruit arises from the series, the fruit of action is preceded by action. Therefore, the action is neither terminated nor eternal.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Since a continuous series arises from thought and from the continuous series the uprising of a fruit, the fruit that is preceded by action is neither interrupted nor eternal.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Since from the seed there is continuity and from continuity, the origin of the fruit,
the seed is prior to the fruit. Therefore there is neither disruption nor permanence.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. Leaving from the mind, then there is the continuous succession,
And then leaving from the continuous succession, there is some kind of effects, which has come from the succession.
Action is before, and then result.
There is never any kind of extinction, and there is never any kind of eternity.

STRENG (Skt):
10. Inasmuch as the process is dependent on a thought and the product (phala) is produced from the process, The product, presupposing the thought, neither comes to an end nor is eternal.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XVII.10 Whatever comes into being dependent on some object is not identical with that object, nor is it different from that object.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v10 From mind, there is a succession
From this succession comes the effect.
The act comes first, and afterwards the result.
With no severance, and no permanence.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Because continuums are from minds and fruits emerge from continuums and actions precede fruits, therefore, there is no annihilation and no permanence.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The continuum arises from the mind,
And from the continuum comes the effect.
Therefore, the action precedes the effect
And there is no annihilation or permanence. [XVII.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. Since from the intention comes the continuum,
And from the continuum the fruit arises,
Action precedes the fruit.
Therefore there is neither nonexistence nor permanence.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. Since from the intention comes the continuum,
And from that continuum the fruit arises,
Action precedes the fruit.
Therefore there is neither termination nor permanence.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Since thought processes proceed from intention and fruit follow such thought processes, the fruit, presupposing the thought process, neither perishes nor endures.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/10 It is like the sprout coming from the corn-seed and from the sprout a succession of stalk, leaf, etc., from which succession the fruit is produced. without the seed there is no successive arising; therefore succession takes place because of and from the corn-seed. From the succession comes the fruit. Since formerly there was the seed, and subsequently there is the fruit, there is neither severance nor permanence. Just as in the example of the corn seed, so it is with action and its effect. The initial thought which gives rise to sin or merit is like the seed of corn. As a result of this thought, the other dharmas of thoughts and mental configurations are produced in succession, up to the reward. Because the action comes first and the effect afterwards, there is no severance and no permanence involved. If there were rewards separate from actions, this would involve severance or permanence. As for the rewards and causes of good actions, it is said:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Sautrantika continues: Similarly, a though series (citta-samtana) emerges from a thought (cetasah). From that series arises the fruit. Thus, without a thought, the fruit does not come to be. The thought followed by a thought-series thus gives rise to the fruit. The fruit is thus preceded by a thought which is its cause. As such, it is neither permanent nor interrupted. The causal connection envisaged by the Sautrantikas above is simple antecedence

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. In the next verse, another opponent offers an orthodox formulation from a substantialist Buddhist school, arguing that particular kinds of action are described as the methods of attaining realization and that particular rewards for the practitioner are mentioned as consequences of realization. The implication is that, since these are specified in *sutras* as real, they must be inherently existent:

Kārikā XVII.11

धर्मस्य साधनोपायाः शुक्लाः कर्मपथा दश।
फलं कामगुणाः पञ्च धर्मस्य प्रेत्य चेह च॥११॥

dharmasya sādhanopāyāḥ śuklāḥ karmapathā daśa |
phalaṃ kāmaguṇāḥ pañca dharmasya pretya ceha ca ||11||

能成福德者 是十白業道
二世五欲樂 即是白業報

néng chéng fú dé zhě shì shí bái yè dào
èr shì wǔ yù lè jí shì bái yè bào

།དཀར་པོའི་ལས་ཀྱི་ལམ་བཅུ་པོ།།ཆོས་སྒྲུབ་པ་ཡི་ཐབས་ཡིན་ཏེ།
།ཆོས་ཀྱི་འབྲས་བུ་འདི་གཞན་དུ།།འདོད་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་རྣམ་ལྔ་པོ།།

| dkar po’i las kyi lam bcu po | | chos sgrub pa yi thabs yin te |
| (10a1)chos kyi ’bras bu ’di gźan du | | ’dod pa’i yon tan rnam lṅa’o |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - The ten paths of pure action are the means of realizing the dharma. The effects (i.e., fruits) of the dharma of this as well as the next realm of life are the five sensual enjoyments. - Note: The ten pure actions refer to carrying out the following: non-killing, non-stealing, non-adultery, non-lying, non-duplicity, non-evil talk, non-odd talk, non-greed, non-hatred, and non-false view.

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection*:11] The ten pure paths of action are the means for realizing the Buddha’s teaching. The five pleasures associated with the senses are the fruit of the teaching after death as well as here.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The ten pure paths of action are the means of achieving good. The five strands of sense pleasure represent the fruit of good, here as well as in the next life.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The ten pure action paths are the means leading straight to the goal of the teaching.
The five objects of the senses [bear] fruit, according to the teaching, both now and after death.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. The direct and straight approach belongs to the Rules of the Universe,
And they are the Ten Kinds of True Buddhist Precepts.
The fruits are a kind of measure of perfect enjoyment,
And in the Universal Rule it is just as if it were death in this world.

STRENG (Skt):
11. The ten pure "paths of action" are means for realizing the dharma. And the five qualities of desired objects i.e., desire to know the form, sound, odor, taste, and touch of existence are fruits (phala) of the dharma both now and after death.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v11 Able to establish blessed virtue,
Are the ten Paths of 'white' actions.
The five desires and pleasures of the two worlds
Are the reward of these 'white' actions.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The ten paths of white action are the means of practising Dharma. Here and elsewhere, the fruits of Dharma are the five kinds of sensual qualities.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Me ten avenues of wholesome action
Are the means for performing Dharma.
Here and hereafter, the fruits of Dharma
Are the five sense pleasures. [XVII.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. The ten pure paths of action
Are the method of realizing the Dharma.
These fruits of the Dharma in this and other lives
Are the five pleasures.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. The ten pure paths of action
Are the method for practicing the Dharma.
The fruits of this Dharma in this and other lives
Are the five sensual pleasures.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The ten pure paths of action are the means of realizing the Dharma. The five pleasures are the fruits of Dharma both in this and future lives.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/11 'White' means good and pure. As for establishing the causes of blessed virtue; following the ten paths of pure actions results in no-killing, no-stealing, no-lewdness, no lying, no deception, no evil speech, no useless gossip, no, jealousy, no anger and no perverted views. These are termed good. One who produces such results in body, speech and mind attains name and wealth in this world, and in the next world is born into a place of honor amongst gods and men. Although there are other various types of blessed virtues such as almsgiving and reverence, we are summarizing, and these are therefore to be included within the ten good paths.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Following the causal pattern laid down above, namely, antecedence, the Sautrantika would explain the tenfold path of action (karma-patha) as being initiated by volition (cetana) which puts it together (tathabhisamskaranat, Akb). Volition thin becomes the karma, and the series of actions, bodily and verbal (kaya-vak), determined by that volition, becomes the vehicle of action" (karmanas ca panthanah ibid.). The pure bodily and verbal actions would then be the means by which good is achieved (dharmasya sadhanopayah). The five strands of picture to be enjoyed in a "heavenly" life (svarga), either here or in the next world, would the fruit fruit of the good volition. This is the manner in which the Sautrantikas explained the Buddha's notion of karma and its effect.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. "The ten paths" simply denotes the totality of virtuous actions as characterized by one of the Buddhist botanies of morally worthy action. (fn 89. Refraining from killing, stealing, adultery, lying, deception, slander, gossip, avarice, hatred, and philosophical error.) The five pleasures are the pleasures appropriate to the various sense faculties. According to the opponent, all we need to do in order to reach enlightenment and to lead good lives is to act virtuously. The principal consequence of this is that we will enjoy temporal happiness.

Yet another interlocutor replies that this wholly misunderstands the Buddha's explanation of the relation between action and its consequences. While it is the case that acting well is an important ingredient in Buddhist practice and in any account of what it is to lead a good life, and while it is true that when one lives well, one in general is rewarded with material happiness, this hardly indicates that action, the agent, or the consequences of action are inherently existent .. Rather, this more sophisticated opponent suggests, the nature of the link is completely abstract, like a legal obligation: (fn 90. Kalupahana (1986) misreads XVII: 12-19 as Nāgārjuna's own view. This is understandable, as Nāgārjuna is providing four rival accounts of the relation between action and its karmic consequences. Each on his view contains a kernel of truth; each is indeed accurate in a sense, though misleading in the sense in which it is intended. This final position is closest to Nāgārjuna's position and can easily be confused with it, but to read it this way misses the significance of the transition at XVII: 20.)

Kārikā XVII.12

बहवश्च महान्तश्च दोषाः स्युरपि कल्पना।
यद्येषा तेन नैवैषा कल्पनात्रोपपद्यते॥१२॥

bahavaś ca mahāntaś ca doṣāḥ syur yadi kalpanā |
syād eṣā tena naivaiṣā kalpanātropapadyate ||12||

若如汝分別 其過則甚多
是故汝所說 於義則不然

ruò rú rǔ fēn bié qí guò zé shèn duō
shì gù rǔ suǒ shuì yū;yú;wū yì zé bù rán

།གལ་ཏེ་བརྟག་པ་དེར་གྱུར་ན། །ཉེས་པ་ཆེན་པོ་མང་པོར་འགྱུར།
།དེ་ལྟ་བས་ན་བརྟག་པ་དེ། །འདིར་ནི་འཐད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| gal te brtag pa der ’gyur na | | ñes pa chen po maṅ por ’gyur |
| de lta bas na brtag pa de | | ’dir ni ’thad pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - If conceptualizations are permitted there will arise many as well as great errors. Therefore, they are not permissible (or possible) here.

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply*:12] If such a thought were true, there would be many great errors. Therefore, this thought does not occur here.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If there were to be such a thought, there would be many a great error. Therefore, such a thought is not appropriate here.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Many and great errors would be assumed to be true if by means of imagining,
these [actions] take place here and not those [results].

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. By increasing favor and greatness,
When vices have made fabrications,
Those kinds of desirable Acts might be carried out perfectly by acting the behavior concretely,
And relying upon such behaviors the desirable facts can be realized in front of us.

STRENG (Skt):
12. There would be many great mistakes if that explanation were accepted. Therefore, that explanation is not possible.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v12 If one made such distinctions as yours,
The errors would be extremely numerous.
Therefore, what you have said,
Is not correct in its meaning.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If it were as that investigation, many great mistakes would occur. Therefore, that investigation is not valid here.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When it comes to this account,
There are numerous and significant flaws.
Hence, this account
Is untenable here. [XVII.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. If such an analysis were advanced,
There would be many great errors.
Therefore, this analysis
Is not tenable here.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. If it were conceived in this way
Many serious errors would follow.
Therefore, such a conception
Is not tenable here.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[a third opponent weights in:] If such explanation were advanced, there would be many great errors. Therefore, such an analysis is not tenable here.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/12 If, in connection with the succession from action to reward, you take as an example the corn-seed, the errors will be extremely numerous, but we shall not discuss them at length here. As for your example of corn-seed, this example will not do, and why? Corn seed is tangible, it has form, can be seen, and has a succession of characteristics, but even so we may contemplate this matter and still not accept your words. How much less with thoughts and actions, which are intangible, formless and invisible? Though they arise and cease without abiding, you desire (to establish) some continuity of characteristics. This is not correct.

(22b13) Further, as for the succession from seed to sprout, etc., is this succession after (the seed) has ceased (at each juncture), or is it a succession in which the seed has not ceased? If it is a succession with the seed having ceased, then this would be causelessness, but if it is succession without the seed having ceased, then corn would be constantly arising from this seed, and if this were so, then one seed of corn would produce all the corn in the world. But this is not the case, and therefore the succession from action to reward is not like this. Question:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna is not impressed by such an explanation. He perceives many and substantial errors in such conceptualizations. Hence he considers them to be inappropriate. Inada's translation, once again, skips an extremely important qualification made by Nagarjuna. "If conceptualizations are permitted, there will arise many as well as great errors," (). The implication would be that Nagarjuna rejects all conceptualizations. However, this is not the case. Nagarjuna is very specific in his reference when he says: esa kalpana, "these conceptualizations," where "these" refers to the preceding conceptualizations or explanations. Indeed, it is for this reason that Nagarjuna can turn around and speak of a more appropriate thought or conceptualization in the next verse.

Kārikā XVII.13

इमां पुनः प्रवक्ष्यामि कल्पनां यात्र योज्यते।
बुद्धैः प्रत्येकबुद्धैश्च श्रावकैश्चानुवर्णिताम्॥१३॥

imāṃ punaḥ pravakṣyāmi kalpanāṃ yātra yojyate |
buddhaiḥ pratyekabuddhaiś ca śrāvakaiś cānuvarṇitām ||13||

今當復更說 順業果報義
諸佛辟支佛 賢聖所稱歎

jīn dāng fù gèng;gēng shuì shùn yè guǒ bào yì
zhū fú;fó pì;bì zhī fú;fó xián shèng suǒ chèn tàn

།སངས་རྒྱས་རྣམས་དང་རང་རྒྱལ་དང་།།ཉན་ཐོས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་གང་གསུངས་པའི།
།བརྟག་པ་གང་ཞིག་འདིར་འཐད་པ།།དེ་ནི་རབ་ཏུ་བརྗོད་པར་བྱ།།

| saṅs rgyas rnams daṅ raṅ rgyal daṅ | | ñan thos rnams kyis gaṅ gsuṅs pa'i |
| brtag pa gaṅ źig 'dir 'thad pa | | de ni rab tu brjod par bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - I will here relate about certain appropriate conceptualizations which have been praised (i.e., sanctioned) by the Buddhas, Pratyekabuddhas and Sravakas.

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection:*13] I shall expound this thought that does apply and that was propounded by the buddhas, the solitary buddhas, and the disciples.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Moreover, I shall expound the following thought which is appropriate and which has been extolled by the Buddhas, the self-enlightened ones and the disciples.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, I will explain where this assumption is employed by awakened ones, by self-awakened ones, and by disciples who praised it.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. Now I would like to proclaim again that,
There have been said some kinds of fabrication set up as oath,
By many Buddhas, Pratyeka-Buddhas,
And by also Sravakas for explanations in detail.

STRENG (Skt):
13. In rebuttal I will explain the interpretation which can be made to fit the facts, That which is followed by the Buddha, the self-sufficient enlightened ones (Pratyekabuddha) and the disciples of Buddha.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v13 We will now further expound,
In relation to actions and their rewards,
(Truths) which all Buddhas,
Pratyekabuddhas And sages admire and praise.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
I will fully declare the investigation which is taught by the Buddhas, Pratyekabuddhas and Sravakas, which is valid here.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The account given by the Buddhas,
The self-realized buddhas, and the listeners
Is the one that is tenable here.
That, then, shall be set forth. [XVII.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. I will then explain what is tenable here:
The analysis propounded by all
Buddhas, self-conquerors
And disciples according to which...

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. I will now explain
The analysis advocated by all
Buddhas, pratyekabuddhas, and śrāvakas
Which is apposite here.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
I shall relate what is tenable and has been taught by buddhas, pratyeka-buddhas, and sravakas.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/13 Namely:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The present statement by Nagarjuna should serve as an antidote to most of the misunderstandings that have prevailed so far regarding his views about thought and language. Nagarjuna is about to explain in no unclear terms a more appropriate thought or conceptualization (kalpana), a right thought (samyaksamkalpa), a right view or perception (samyag-drsti) relating to karma and its fruit (phala). It is one that is extolled not only by the Buddha, but also by his disciples (sravaka) and the self-enlightened ones (pratyeka-buddha). If Nagarjuna had recognized a linguistically transcendent truth or reality, he could not have made the above statement.

Kārikā XVII.14

पत्रं यथाविप्रणाशस्तथर्णमिव कर्म च।
चतुर्विधो धातुतः स प्रकृत्याव्याकृतश्च सः॥१४॥

pattraṃ yathā 'vipraṇāśas tatharṇam iva karma ca |
caturvidho dhātutaḥ sa prakṛtyāvyākṛtaś ca saḥ ||14||

不失法如券 業如負財物
此性則無記 分別有四種

bù shī fǎ rú quàn yè rú fù cái wù
cǐ xìng zé wú jì fēn bié yǒu sì zhǒng

།དཔང་རྒྱ་ཇི་ལྟར་དེ་བཞིན་ཆུད།།མི་ཟ་ལས་ནི་བུ་ལོན་བཞིན།
།དེ་ནི་ཁམས་ལས་རྣམ་པ་བཞི།།དེ་ཡང་རང་བཞིན་ལུང་མ་བསྟན།།

| ji ltar dbaṅ rgya de bźin chuṅ | | mi za las ni bu lon bźin |
| de ni khams las rnam pa bźi | | de yaṅ raṅ bźin luṅ ma bstan |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 14 - An imperishable continuing action is like a document (i.e., in constant force) and a karma is like an obligation (i.e., a discharge of duty). The imperishable continuing action is four-fold from the standpoint of the realms of action (dhatu) and is indeterminate from the standpoint of primal substance (prakrti). - Note: Reference is made to the four-fold realms of desire (kama), materiality (rupa), immateriality (arupa), and transcendent of sense attachment (anasrava).

JONES (Skt):
[14] As the unperishing is like a promissory note, so is action like a debt. In terms of realms, it is fourfold (the realm of desire, the formed and formless realms resulting from meditation, and the realm of nirvana), and by nature it is undefined.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Like an imperishable promissory note, so is debt as well as action. It is fourfold in terms of realms and indeterminate in terms of primal nature.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What is imperishable is like a promisory note and an action like a debt.
It [what is imperishable] has four kinds of elements and it is indeterminable in primoridal substance.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
14. Following the endless motion of the wings, the efforts have been continued until the expected effects.
Relying upon such a process, the flying is just Action itself.
The four kinds of fundamental Matter, that is, the ground, water, fire, and air, are Real,
But the explanations of fundamental Matter are not sufficient yet in their explanations.

STRENG (Skt):
14. As "that which is imperishable" is like a credit on an account statement, so an action (karma) is like a debt. The imperishable is of four kinds in its elements (dhatu) i.e., desire, form, non-form, and pure; in its essential nature it cannot be analyzed.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v14 The non-disappearing dharma is like a bond,
Actions are like the goods owing.
Its nature is neutral
Its classification is fourfold.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Just like a contract, irrevocable action is like a debt. In terms of realms, there are four types. Moreover, its nature is unspecified.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Nondissipation resembles a promissory note.
The action then is the debt.
It is fourfold with reference to the realms
And its nature is neutral. [XVII.I4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
14. Action is like an uncancelled promissory note
And like a debt.
Of the realms it is fourfold.
Moreover, its nature is neutral.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
14. Karma is indestructible, like a promissory note
And like a debt.
Because of the realms, there are four kinds.
Moreover, its nature is neutral.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
As with a debt, action is like an imperishable promissory note. In terms of realms it is fourfold. In terms of its essential nature it is indeterminate.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here, a debt and karma are compared to an imperishable promissory note. The metaphor is significant and needs to be carefully examined. It is used by Nagarjuna to illustrate the doctrine of karma as described in one of the most popular and authoritative statements in the Indian Buddhist tradition. Two centuries later, Vasubandhu wrote a whole treatiseKarmasiddhiprakarana -attempting to explain this statement. Candrakīrti quotes it twice in his commentary (p,390). The fact that he does not quote it at this point, where it seems to be most relevant, indicates that he was using it to illustrate a completely different point (see below XVII.21). The statement runs thus: "Karmas do not perish even after hundreds of millions of aeons. Reaching the harmony of conditions and the appropriate time, they produce consequences for human beings."

The first statement, taken in isolation, will convey the impression that the Buddhist theory of karma is deterministic in an extreme sense. However, the second statement provides sufficient qualifications to take the determinist sting away. What seems to have compelled Inada to assume that here, "With equal force he condemns any idea of an indestructible continuing action (avipranasakarma) which gives the sense of continuity or transition in man's everyday life and deeds" (Nagarjuna,), is his failure to evaluate the first statement in the light of the qualifications provided in the second statement. In the present chapter Nagarjuna is simply explaining the first statement, i.e., "karmas do not perish" (na pranasyanti karmani). His analysis, at this point, is confined to it. He leaves the second statement to be examined in two other chapters that follow. After examining what an imperishable karma is, Nagarjuna wants to keep any soultheory out of the way, and this he does with Chapter XVIII. And from there, he immediately gets down to analyse the contents of the second statement by compiling two chapters: (i) Chapter XIX on the "Examination of Time" (Kala-pariksa) and (ii) Chapter XX on the "Examination of Harmony" (Samagri-pariksa). As such, it would be inappropriate to come to any definite conclusions regarding the contents of this chapter until the three following chapters are carefully examined. However, Nagarjuna's statement at XVIII. 13 that he "will state this more appropriate view" (imam kalpanam pravaksyami yatra yojyate), which he then attributes to the Buddhas, his disciples, and the Pratyeka-buddhas would certainly seem to indicate that he is presenting an acceptable view, rather than one that should be rejected.

Furthermore, having made such a strong statement indicating that he is presenting "this" (imam) appropriate view, if Nagarjuna were to follow it up with a theory that he is condemning, one will need to think twice before considering Nagarjuna to be a second Buddha.

To return to the metaphor of the promissory note (patra) that one signs when borrowing moneythis metaphor being Nagarjuna's ownhe is not speaking of a permanent and eternal promissory note, but something that will remain so long as it is not redeemed. As long as a promissory note is preserved, and unless one were to honor one's obligations, one will eventually, depending upon time and conditions, have to face the consequences. The imperishability of the promissory note may also mean that even if the promissory note is destroyed there is an obligation on one's part to honor such an agreement. If, in order to account for such an obligation, one were to assume a substantial nature (prakrti = svabhava) in that act, Nagarjuna's reponse is that such a nature is "not determinate" or is "inexplicable" (avyakrta), an answer that the Buddha himself gave when questioned about metaphysical issues (see Chapter XXVII). Finally, in terms of the realms in which the consequences may be reaped, such actions can be fourfold. Candarkirti refers to the fourfold realms as (i) the sphere of sensuality (kamavacara), (ii) the sphere of materiality (rupavacara), (iii) the sphere of the formless (arupavacara), and (iv) the state of freedom or absence of influxes (anasrava).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

14. Using the metaphor of a promissory note, the defender of this view compares action and its consequences to a document attesting to a particular debt or other legal action: Though the ‘act to which the document attests was in one sense momentary, its consequences, and the evidence of its reality, are unlimited in duration. So the consequences of any action - however local that action might appear to be - reverberate through all realms of existence. (fn 91. The four realms reflect traditional Buddhist cosmology: the desire realm, the form realm, the formless realm, the realm of freedom.) Moreover, the fundamental nature of action and its consequences is neutral. That is, simply considered as such, on this view, neither action nor its consequent trace is either positive or negative. Any particular action or trace may of course be so - but action itself is equally capable of being positive Or negative in character. We now turn to specific advice to enable one to realize the nature of reality and to abandon the mundane concerns and attachments that lead to binding actions (advice with which Nāgārjuna would not take issue):.

Kārikā XVII.15

प्रहाणतो न प्रहेयो भावनाहेय एव वा।
तस्मादविप्रणाशेन जायते कर्मणां फलम्॥१५॥

prahāṇato na praheyo bhāvanāheya eva vā |
tasmād avipraṇāśena jāyate karmaṇāṃ phalam ||15||

見諦所不斷 但思惟所斷
以是不失法 諸業有果報

jiàn dì suǒ bù duàn dàn sī wéi suǒ duàn
yǐ shì bù shī fǎ zhū yè yǒu guǒ bào

།སྤོང་བས་སྤང་བ་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།།སྒོམ་པས་སྤང་བ་ཉིད་ཀྱང་ཡིན།
།དེ་ཕྱིར་ཆུད་མི་ཟ་བ་ཡིས།།ལས་ཀྱི་འབྲས་བུ་སྐྱེད་པར་འགྱུར།།

| spoṅ bas spaṅ ba ma yin te | (3)bsgom pas spaṅ ba ñid kyaṅ yin |
| de phyir chud mi za ba yis | | las kyi ’bras bu skyed par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 15 - It (i.e., the imperishable continuing action) is not abandoned by simple abandonment but by the virtuous practical actions. Therefore, the fruits of karma come forth from the imperishable continuing action.

JONES (Skt):
[I5] It is not gotten rid of by renunciation, but it is gotten rid of by development through meditation. Therefore, the fruit of action arises through the unperishing actions.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
That [i.e. the imperishable karma] would not be relinquished by simple relinquishing. It is to be relinquished only through cultivation. Thus, through the imperishable arises the fruit of action.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
[The imperishable is] not abandoned by the act of abandonment or by unabandoned meditation.
Therefore, by means of the imperishable, the fruit is born out of the action.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
15. An absolutely stopping job is perfectly different from being sent only as a messenger, for example.
The cause of existence is never only denial of estrangement.
Therefore during as far as possible for seeds to be maintained,
The births are continued relying upon Action.

STRENG (Skt):
15. An imperishable force is not destroyed qua destruction; rather it is destroyed according to spiritual discipline. Therefore, the fruit of actions originates by the imperishable force.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v15 It is not severed by perception of truths.
It is only severed by meditation.
By virtue of this non-disappearing dharma
All actions have their rewards.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is not let go of by letting go, but only let go of by cultivation. Therefore through irrevocability are the fruits of acts produced.

DOCTOR (Tb):
It is not eliminated by elimination,
Yet it is eliminated through cultivation.
Therefore, it is due to nondissipation
That the effects of action are produced. [XVII.15]

GARFIELD (Tb):
15. By abandoning, that is not abandoned.
Abandonment occurs through meditation.
Therefore, through the nonexpired,
The fruit of action arises.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
15. Abandonment does not occur through abandoning.
Abandonment occurs instead through meditation.
Therefore, in virtue of indestructibility
The effect of action arises.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Imperishable action is not abandoned by abandonment, but only through cultivation. Thus the fruit of action arises through the imperishable.

15. Simply by resolving to abandon attachment one cannot thereby succeed in shedding it. It is difficult to accomplish this. Attachment arises as a consequence of the persistent, pervasive psychological, verbal, and physical habits that together constitute what Buddhist philosophers call the “root delusion,” the ignorance of the true nature of things. That delusion consists in confusing existence with inherent existence and issues inevitably in one of the two extreme views - reification or nihilism. Only through extensive meditation on the nature of phenomena and on the nature of emptiness can these habits be abandoned, and only through an understanding of the ultimate nature of things can the fruit of actions done through abandonment - that is, liberation from the suffering of cyclic existence - be attained. The promissory note metaphor is at work here as well. The idea is that one cannot simply cancel a promissory note on one’s own without paying the debt. One must do something more substantial to discharge one’s obligation to one’s creditor.

Kārikā XVII.16

प्रहाणतः प्रहेयः स्यात्कर्मणः संक्रमेण वा।
यदि दोषाः प्रसज्येरंस्तत्र कर्मवधादयः॥१६॥

prahāṇataḥ praheyaḥ syāt karmaṇaḥ saṃkrameṇa vā |
yadi doṣāḥ prasajyeraṃs tatra karmavadhādayaḥ ||16||

若見諦所斷 而業至相似
則得破業等 如是之過咎

ruò jiàn dì suǒ duàn ér yè zhì xiāng sì
zé dé;děi;de pò yè děng rú shì zhī guò jiù

།གལ་ཏེ་སྤོང་བས་སྤང་བ་དང༌། །ལས་འཕོ་བ་ཡིས་འཇིག་འགྱུར་ན།
།དེ་ལ་ལས་འཇིག་ལ་སོགས་པའི། །སྐྱོན་རྣམས་སུ་ནི་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te spoṅ bas spaṅ ba daṅ | | las ’pho ba yis ’jig ’gyur na |
| de la las ’jig la sogs pa’i | | skyon rnams su ni thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 16 - If it is abandoned by simple abandonment or by the transformation of the karma, then there necessarily follows such errors as the denial of karma, etc.

JONES (Skt):
[16] If the unperishing action were to be gotten rid of by the renunciation of action or by transmigration, then errors would follow - the destruction of actions, and so forth.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is to be relinquished through simple relinquishing or through the transformation of action, then there would follow a variety of errors such as the destruction of actions.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If abandoned by the act of abandonment or by means of the transformation of what would be *karman* then errors follow, such as the denial of *karman*, etc.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
16. The Action to stop might be occurred by being sent to a far distant place,
And so miscellaneous Actions are relying upon just to act itself.
Therefore miscellaneous vices are always relying upon whether we commit them actually, or not.
Therefore in such situations the Action itself is just the destroyer of heartlessness.

STRENG (Skt):
16. If the imperishable force were that which is destroyed by usual destruction or by transference of action, Fallacies like the destruction of action would logically result.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v16 If it were severed by perception of truths,
Yet actions still reached similar (rewards)
This would mean a denial of karma
And errors such as this.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If it perished through being let go of by letting go and the transcendence of the action, then faults would follow such as the perishing of actions.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If it were eliminated by elimination
Or destroyed by a transference of action,
Various flaws would ensue,
Such as the destruction of action. [XVII.16]

GARFIELD (Tb):
16. If abandonment occurred through abandoning, and
If action were destroyed through transformation,
The destruction of action, etc.,
And other errors would arise.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
16. If abandonment occurred through abandoning, or
If action were destroyed in virtue of transformation,
Absurd consequences such as
The annihilation of karma would follow.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If it’s abandoned through abandonment or through the transformation of action, there would follow a variety of errors, including the destruction of action.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

When speaking of imperishable karma, naturally the question can be raised as to how it can be gottern rid of. Is it possible to nullify the effect, say, of a bad karma by simply not doing it again (prahanato praheyo)? The theory of prapti ("attainment") and aprapti ("non-attainment") may imply such a situation. Preventing the momentary stream of life from appropriating a bad karma would mean the nullification of the effects of all previous karmas. Nagarjuna perceives this to be a negation of the doctrine of karma (karmavadha). He therefore insists that the abandoning of the fruits of karma can be achieved, not through simple abandonment, but through constant practice (bhavana), i.e. constant performance or promotion of good actions and the constant avoidance of evil actions (cp. sabbapapassa akaranam kusalassa upasampada D 2.49; Dhp 183).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

16. If one thought that one could just resolve to abandon attachment and delusion and succeed, that would be to treat attachment and attached action as trivial entities - even as illusory in the full sense. Just as when one sees a mirage, one can, knowing that it is a mirage, stop seeing it as water. That is possible for illusory things, but not so for empirically real ones. It takes effort to see an actual puddle as empty - not of conventional water, but of nonconventional inherent existence - and it takes effort to stop reifying habits. Again, though this is articulated in defense of the opponent’s view, this is a sophisticated opponent, and Nāgārjuna in fact agrees with much of this.

Kārikā XVII.17

सर्वेषां विषभागानां सभागानां च कर्मणाम्।
प्रतिसंधौ सधातूनामेक उत्पद्यते तु सः॥१७॥

sarveṣāṃ visabhāgānāṃ sabhāgānāṃ ca karmaṇām |
pratisaṃdhau sadhātūnām eka utpadyate tu saḥ ||17||

一切諸行業 相似不相似
一界初受身 爾時報獨生

yī qiè zhū xíng;háng;xìng yè xiāng sì bù xiāng sì
yī jiè chū shòu shēn ěr shí bào dú shēng

།ཁམས་མཚུངས་ལས་ནི་ཆ་མཚུངས་དང་། །ཆ་མི་མཚུངས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི། །དེ་ནི་ཉིད་མཚམས་སྦྱོར་བའི་ཚེ། །གཅིག་པུ་ཁོ་ནར་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར།

| khams mtshuṅs las ni cha mtshuṅs daṅ | | cha mi mtshuṅs pa thams cad kyi |
| de ni ñiṅ mtshams sbyor ba'i tshe | | gcig po kho na skye bar 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 17 - When all the similar and dissimilar karmas come together in a realm, there will arise only one imperishable continuing action.

JONES (Skt):
[17] When there is a new rebirth from all similar and dissimilar actions in the realms, the effects of unperishing actions arise as one.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Of all these actions, whether dissimilar or similar, belonging to certain realms, only one would arise at the moment of birth [of a being].

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
When all similar and dissimilar *karmans*
have been put together again with the elements, only one arises.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
17. All researches are related with lotus,
And are related with the whole Universe and Actions.
They are related upon similarities, which belong to Real Matter.
Something Only One manifests itself, which is totally Reality.

STRENG (Skt):
17. At the moment of transition that imperishable force Of all identical and different actions belonging to the same element (dhatu) originates.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v17 When all predispositions and actions
Whether similar or dissimilar
First receive a body in a realm
At that time only one reward arises.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The very [irrevocability] of all actions in similar or dissimilar realms, that one alone is born when crossing the boundary [i.e. reborn].

DOCTOR (Tb):
All those associated with realm-specific actions,
Whether congruent or incongruent,
Manifest as only one
When linking takes place. [XVII.17]

GARFIELD (Tb):
17. From all these actions in a realm,
Whether similar or dissimilar,
At the moment of birth
Only one will arise.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
17. From all the karma in a realm,
Whether congruent or incongruent,
At the moment of conception
Only one will arise.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
From all these actions, whether similar or dissimilar, coming together in a certain realm, only one will arise at the moment of birth.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Even though this statement of Nagarjuna is in perfect conformity with the Buddha's own explanation of the doctrine of karma, it may come as a surprise to most Nagarjunian scholars, especially because it conflicts with most opinions expressed about Nagarjuna's philosophy. Here is an explanation of rebirth (punar-bhava) examined in relation to past karma. In the eyes of most scholars, Nagarjuna could never make a statement like this. Here, karma is presented as the connecting link between two lives. It is one of a myriad of karmas an individual may have performed, whether they be similar or dissimilar. The fact that only one (eka) among such actions of a life-time may appear at the time of the conception of a being (pratisamdhi) and which can influence the new life-process is acknowledged by Nagarjuna. He could not have been unaware of the statement of the Buddha that consciousness (vinnana which is inextricably bound up with volitional karma) was a possible connecting link between two lives (D 3.105; Chang 12.2 [Taisho 1.77b]) and also of the emphasis placed by his fellow Buddhists on the last thought of the dying person (cuti-citta) as having influence over a new life-process (patisandhi-citta, see detailed discussion at VbhA 155-160). Without falling back upon a metaphysical theory of moments, as some of the Abhidharma interpreters did, Nagarjuna is here recognizing the dependence of rebirth (pratisamdhi) on at least one previous karma. It is a similar recognition that made the Buddha declare: "Beings have karma as their own, karma as inheritance, karma as the source, karma as kin. It is karma that distinguishes human beings, for example, as inferior and superior," (kammassaka ... satta kammadayada kammayoni kammabandhu, kammam satte vabhajati yadidam hinappanitataya M 3.203; Chung 44.1 [Taisho 1.704c]). Unfortunately, Buddhaghosa's explanation, though retaining the ideas expressed by the Buddha as well as Nagarjuna, is marred by a theory of moments (see VbhA 156). Just as much as memory is being described by most psychologists as being "owned" without having to assume its permanence, here we find a person's karma being perceived as something "owned" by him.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

17. One performs countless various actions in one’s life. And the confluence of the karmic consequences of all of them, on this view, are realized in the beginning of a single individual at the moment of rebirth (the one who arises). This comment is, of course, most directly about rebirth and the mechanism of karma in transmigration. Here is a way to understand that explicit point: The mechanism by which karma operates in rebirth is not that each individual action in a continuum designated as an individual remains permanently in place or leaves a substantial trace that lies dormant until it produces its consequence. This is indeed how karma is often conceived by substantialist Buddhist schools. Rather, each moment of such a continuum, including the moment of rebirth, is a consequence, through the mechanism of dependent arising, of all of the previous moments of that continuum (and, of course, of much else besides). Those karmic consequences are, as it were, “summed up” in the total state of the individual at birth. But of course the implications of this are more general and concern every moment of any life. They can hence be made independently of any discussion of transmigration, though of course they help to demystify that Buddhist doctrine, at least as it is conceived in Mahayana philosophy. The point is this: Every moment of our lives represents the causal consequences of, inter alia, all of our prior actions. No action “lies dormant” waiting for its consequences to emerge. Nor does any action somehow become “canceled” when some salient consequence is noticed. There is no accounting kept, and no debit and credit system, either from the causal or the moral point of view in the continuum of human action and experience. Rather, at each moment we are the total consequence of what we have done and of what we have experienced. And the only sense in which some past action may determine some future reward is one in which that past action, as well as other conditions, have determined a state now that, together with other future conditions, will determine that reward. Mutatis mutandis, of course, for negative consequences. This sober empiricist account of these matters forms the basis for Mahayana moral theory and its account of the nature of soteriological practice.

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Kārikā XVII.18

कर्मणः कर्मणो दृष्टे धर्म उत्पद्यते तु सः।
द्विप्रकारस्य सर्वस्य विपक्वेऽपि च तिष्ठति॥१८॥

karmaṇaḥ karmaṇo dṛṣṭe dharma utpadyate tu saḥ |
dviprakārasya sarvasya vipakve ’pi ca tiṣṭhati ||18||

如是二種業 現世受果報
或言受報已 而業猶故在

rú shì èr zhǒng yè xiàn shì shòu guǒ bào
huò yán shòu bào yǐ ér yè yóu gù zài

།མཐོང་བའི་ཆོས་ལ་རྣམ་གཉིས་སོ།།ཐམས་ཅད་ལས་དང་ལས་ཀྱི་དེ།
།ཐ་དད་པར་ནི་སྐྱེ་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།།རྣམ་པར་སྨིན་ཀྱང་གནས་པ་ཡིན།།

| mthoṅ ba’i chos la rnam gñis po | | kun gyi las daṅ las kyi de |
| tha dad par ni skye ’gyur źiṅ | | rnam par smin kyaṅ (5)gnas pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 18 - The imperishable continuing action will arise in the present, correspondingly with respect to all the two-fold nature (i.e., similar and dissimilar) of the karmas. It will also endure in its maturing state.

JONES (Skt):
[18] In the present life, the unperished effects arise from each individual good or bad action, and they stay even when ripening.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
That [imperishable] arises in the present life, corresponding to all the actions having dual natures [similar and dissimilar, good and bad, etc.] and stays so even when matured.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The view’s teaching is it [the imperishable] arises from the action of the two *karmans* [similar and dissimilar].
And it endures in the maturation of everything from the two scattered heaps.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
18. Actions and Actions can be seen.
The Universe manifests itself totally as Reality.
In the form of belonging to the two Fundamental Substances, that is, the Universe or Something Real itself.
Something has been established as the Universe just perfectly matured in Real Stability.

STRENG (Skt):
18. That imperishable force is the dharma, having arisen by one action after another in visible existence; And it remains constant even in the development of all bifurcating action.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v18 These two kinds of action
Receive their reward in the present world,
Some say that, having received their reward,
The actions still remain.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
In the visible world there are two kinds. Actions of all [types] and that [irrevocability] of actions are produced as different things and remain [so?] even on ripening.

DOCTOR (Tb):
During the present life it arises
Separately with each instance
Of the two types of action,
Remaining even after the ripening. [XVII.18]

GARFIELD (Tb):
18. In this visible world,
All actions of the two kinds,
Each comprising action and the unexpired separately,
Will remain while ripening.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
18. In the here and now,
Each karma and that which pertains to that karma
Of either of the two kinds, arises separately and
Although they ripen, they endure.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Imperishable action arises in the present, corresponding to all actions having dual natures, and remains so even when matured.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

A further exploration of the Buddha's doctrine of karma is continued here. The phrase drste dharme is a sanskritization of Pali dittha dhamma, which itself can be traced hack to drsta-janman, meaning "the present life." The fruitioning of karma into good and bad consequences is admitted here.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

18. But here the opponent slides over into the substantialism that Nāgārjuna will criticize. For although he has characterized actions as impermanent, he has retained the seed-and-sprout metaphor that has the actions identifiable over time and, hence, as having an independent existence and identity. Moreover, he suggests, their consequences are determinate in time, delimited by death or nirvāṇa:

Kārikā XVII.19

फलव्यतिक्रमाद्वा स मरणाद्वा निरुध्यते।
अनास्रवं सास्रवं च विभागं तत्र लक्षयेत्॥१९॥

phalavyatikramād vā sa maraṇād vā nirudhyate |
anāsravaṃ sāsravaṃ ca vibhāgaṃ tatra lakṣayet ||19||

若度果已滅 若死已而滅
於是中分別 有漏及無漏

ruò dù guǒ yǐ miè ruò sǐ yǐ ér miè
yū;yú;wū shì zhōng fēn bié yǒu lòu jí wú lòu

།དེ་ནི་འབྲས་བུ་འཕོ་བ་དང་།།ཤི་བར་གྱུར་ན་འགག་པར་འགྱུར།
།དེ་ཡི་རྣམ་དབྱེ་ཟག་མེད་དང་།།ཟག་དང་བཅས་པར་ཤེས་པར་བྱ།།

| de ni ’bras bu ’pho ba daṅ | | śi bar gyur na ’gag par ’gyur |
| de yi rnam dbye zag med daṅ | | zag daṅ bcas par śes par bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 19 - The imperishable continuing action ceases to be when it has gone beyond (i.e., exhausted) the effects or met with death. Here a distinction must be made between worldly attachments (sasrava) and supra-worldly non-attachments (anasrava),

JONES (Skt):
[19] The fruit ceases through interruption of the fruit or death. In this, a division should be distinguished between actions with outflows of effects and ones without outflows of effects.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
That [imperishable] ceases as result of the interruption of the fruit or as a result of death. Herein, a distinction between one with influxes and the one without influxes is to be signified.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
It [the imperishable] ceases either from escaping the effect or from death.
A distinction between passion and purity *[outflows* and the drying up of outflows] would be drawn.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
19. Results have also habits of passing through, and it is also Reality.
And the refusal from death is also stopped perfectly.
Our efforts of neglecting pains are also very severe pain,
And it is desirable for us to recognize the real allotments of shares actually.

STRENG (Skt):
19. That imperishable force is destroyed by death and by avoiding the product (phala) . There the difference is characterized as impure and pure.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v19 Either they cease at fruition
Or they cease at death
Herein is the distinction
Between those with outflows and those without outflows.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When the fruit is transcendent and when one dies, that ceases. One should know its divisions to be without-corruption and with-corruption.

DOCTOR (Tb):
It ceases at transference
To the fruition or at death.
It should be understood that it is divided
In terms of the defiling and undefiling. [XVII.19]

GARFIELD (Tb):
19. That fruit, if extinction or death
Occurs, ceases.
Regarding this, a distinction between the stainless
And the stained is drawn.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
19. That ceases when one moves
To a stage of fruition or dies.
One should understand that it has divisions:
The uncontaminated and the contaminated.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Imperishable action ceases if extinction or death occur. Here a distinction must be made between the pure and the impure.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/19 The non-disappearing dharma, we should understand to be like a bond, and 'actions' to be like the goods received. This nondisappearing dharma may be bound to the realm of desire, bound to the realm of form, bound to the formless realm, and also unbound. As far as distinctions of good, bad and neutral are concerned, it is merely neutral, and the meaning of its being neutral is fully explained in the Abhidharma. It is not cut off by perceiving truths, but is cut off by meditation in the midst of its passing from one effect to another effect. In this way, by virtue of the non-disappearing dharma (karmic) actions produce effects.

(22c10) If it were cut off by perceiving truths, and yet actions still reached similar (rewards) this would mean the error of denying karma, a topic which is fully explained in the Abhidharma. Further, with regard to the never-disappearing dharma; at the time when actions, similar or dissimilar are first receiving a body in a particular realm, only one reward arises.

(22c12) Further actions arise from actions of the body in the present world, and these actions are of two kinds, receiving reward according to their weight. Some say that these actions still remain in existence after having received their rewards, since they do not cease moment by moment.

(22c15) 'Either they cease when at fruition, or they cease at death. ' means that for the srotapannas etc. (read: Arhats?) they cease at fruition, but for ordinary people and arhats they cease at death. 'Herein is a distinction between those with outflows and those without outflows' means that all the stages of sainthood should be distinguished from the srotapanna (read: Arhat?) in respect of having outflows and not having outflows.

Reply: These ideas are not at all free of the errors of severance and permanence, and for this reason we cannot accept them either.

Question: If that is the. case, there will be no karma and retribution.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The so-called imperishable action (avipranasa-karma) can terminate as a result of two events: (i) the interruption of the fruit (phala-vyatikrama), or ((ii) death of the individual. In the case of the latter, it is necessary to remember what was said at XVII.17, i.e., that all actions performed during a lifetime are not continued. Only one of the myriads of actions performed can dominate the last thought moment of a person. This would mean that many other karmas, even though all of them have not matured, may become nullified at the time of death.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

19. Nāgārjuna now mounts a reply against all of these positions collectively:

Kārikā XVII.20

शून्यता च न चोच्छेदः संसारश्च न शाश्वतम्।
कर्मणोऽविप्रणाशश्च धर्मो बुद्धेन देशितः॥२०॥

śūnyatā ca na cocchedaḥ saṃsāraś ca na śāśvatam |
karmaṇo ’vipraṇāśaś ca dharmo buddhena deśitaḥ ||20||

雖空亦不斷 雖有亦不常
業果報不失 是名佛所說

suī kōng yì bù duàn suī yǒu yì bù cháng
yè guǒ bào bù shī shì míng fú;fó suǒ shuì

།སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་དང་ཆད་མེད་དང༌།།འཁོར་བ་དང་ནི་རྟག་པ་མིན།
།ལས་རྣམས་ཆུད་མི་ཟ་བའི་ཆོས།།སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱིས་ནི་བསྟན་པ་ཡིན།།

| stoṅ pa ñid daṅ tshad med daṅ | | ’khor ba daṅ ni rtag pa min |
| las rnams chud mi za ba’i chos | | saṅs (6)rgyas kyis ni bstan pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 20 - (Nagarjuna asserts) The imperishable continuing action spoken of by the Buddha is sunyata and not uccheda (interruption), samsara and sasvata (constancy).

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply:*20] Emptiness and not annihilation; the cycling of rebirths and not eternalism; and the unperishing of action - this is the teaching of the buddhas.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Emptiness, however, is not annihilation; life-process is also not eternal; the imperishability is of action—such is the doctrine taught by the Buddha.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Openness is *not* disruption, and *saTf1.siira* is not permanence.
The imperishability [i.e., continuing through their fruits] of the two actions is the teaching elucidated by *the* Buddha.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
20. The balance of the autonomic nervous system is never the cutting of the two.
And the wandering of up and down in our daily life does never continue forever.
Both being connected with Action and continuity of successful conditions,
Are the Rules of the Universe, which were taught to us by Gautama Buddha.

STRENG (Skt):
20. "Emptiness," "no annihilation," existence-in-flux, "non-eternity," And the imperishable reality of action: such was the teaching taught by the Buddha.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v20 Although empty, it is not severed
Though it exists it is not permanent.
Karma and reward never disappear
This we call the teaching of the Buddha.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Emptiness is not annihilation and samsara is not permanent. The dharma of the irrevocability of actions is taught by the Buddha.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Emptiness and absence of annihilation,
Cyclic existence and absence of permanence—
The phenomenon of nondissipation
Is the teaching of the Buddha. [XVII.20]

GARFIELD (Tb):
20. Emptiness and nonannihilation;
Cyclic existence and nonpermanence:
That action is nonexpiring
Is taught by the Buddha.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
20. Emptiness is not annihiliation;
Cyclic existence is not permanent:
The doctrine of the indestructability of karma
Is taught by the Buddha.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[Nagarjuna refutes the above:] Imperishable action, as taught by the Buddha, is Emptiness rather than annihilation and *samsara* rather than eternity.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/20 The ideas which the author of this treatise sets forth are separate from severance and permanence. Why is this? Because karma is utterly empty and has the characteristic of nirvana. Its self-nature being separate from existence, what dharma is there to be cut off, and what dharma is there to disappear? Perverted views are the cause of our transmigrating in samsara, and these too are impermanent, and why? Because dharmas arising from perverted views are empty, deceptive and unreal, and being unreal they are impermanent. Moreover, it is because of your attachments to perverted views and ignorance of the true character that you say that karma does not disappear, and that this is the teaching of the Buddha.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If what is said before is an appropriate explanation of karma, then Nagarjuna can maintain that "emptiness" (sunyata) does not mean "annihilation" (uc-cheda). At the same time he can maintain that the life-process (samsara) is not a permanent and eternal (sasvata) process. In such a context, an imperishable action (avipranasa-karma) simply means the continuity of that life-process conditioned by karma until some of these karmas bear fruit or are lost on the way, while others like the threads of a web can continue to influence the future life-process. In any case, the entire process is one of dependencedependence upon a whole composite of factors.

Nagarjuna has no hesitation in attributing such a doctrine of karma and personal idenity to the Buddha himself and praising it as the Buddha-word, even though the attribution of such a doctrine to Nagarjuna would be unacceptable to some of the classical and modern followers of Nagarjuna himself.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

20. All phenomena, including action, its result, and the connection between them, will come out to be empty of inherent existence, yet conventionally real; they will be part of cyclic existence, but will be impermanent. This is not surprising. But Nāgārjuna also says that no action expires (retaining the promissory note metaphor). Obviously, he cannot mean that actions are permanent. Rather, we should understand this to assert two related theses: First, it indicates that the consequences of actions do not cease at some point. All actions have ramifications into the indefinite future, due to dependent arising. Second, actions themselves, being empty of inherent existence are not entities capable of passing out of existence, when passing out of existence is interpreted to mean the cessation entirely of something that -once existed inherently. Since actions are not inherently existent, they are not suitable bases for inherent cessation. And this resolves the final apparent paradox: The tension between the assertion that nothing is permanent and that all action is nonexpiring. All phenomena are indeed impermanent, but that entails both that they do not inherently cease and that their effects are indefinite in scope.

Kārikā XVII.21

कर्म नोत्पद्यते कस्मात् निःस्वभावं यतस्ततः।
यस्माच्च तदनुत्पन्नं न तस्माद्विप्रणश्यति॥२१॥

karma notpadyate kasmān niḥsvabhāvaṃ yatas tataḥ |
yasmāc ca tad anutpannaṃ na tasmād vipraṇaśyati ||21||

諸業本不生 以無定性故
諸業亦不滅 以其不生故

zhū yè běn bù shēng yǐ wú dìng xìng gù
zhū yè yì bù miè yǐ qí bù shēng gù

།གང་ཕྱིར་ལས་ནི་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད།།འདི་ལྟར་རང་བཞིན་མེད་དེའི་ཕྱིར།
།གང་ཕྱིར་དེ་ནི་མ་སྐྱེས་པ།།དེ་ཕྱིར་ཆུད་ཟད་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།།

| gaṅ phyir las ni skye ba med | | ’di ltar raṅ bźin med de’i phyir |
| gaṅ phyir de ni ma skyes pa | | de phyir chud zar mi ’gyur ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 21 - The reason why karma does not arise is that it is without a self-nature (nihsvabhava). As it does not arise there is no perishing.

JONES (Skt):
[21] Why does not action not arise? Because it is without self-existence. And since it does not arise, it does not perish.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Why does action not arise? Because it is without self-nature. Since it is non-arisen, it does not perish.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Why does *karman* not arise? Because it is without self-nature.
Since it does not arise, therefore it does not perish.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
21. Action does never appear from anywhere at all.
The scarcity of wealth exists everywhere,
Therefore the wealth is not easy to be accomplished,
At the same time it is rather rare for wealth to be exhausted actually.

STRENG (Skt):
Nargarjuna refutes the above arguments: 21. Why does the action not originate? Because it is without self-existence. Since it does not originate, it does not perish.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v21 All dharmas are fundamentally non-arising
Since they have no fixed nature.
All dharmas are also non-ceasing
Because they do not arise.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Because actions are not born, in this way they have no nature. Therefore, because they are not born, therefore they are irrevocable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Why does action not arise?
Because it has no nature.
Because it does not arise,
Action does not dissipate. [XVII.21]

GARFIELD (Tb):
21. Because action does not arise,
It is seen to be without essence.
Because it is not arisen,
It follows that it is nonexpiring.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
21. Why is karma without arising?
Because it is without essence.
Because it is not arisen,
It follows that it is indestructible.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Action does not arise because it is without self-nature. And because it does not arise it does not perish.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Having concluded the explanation of the more appropriate view of karma as advocated by the Buddha, Nagarjuna does not leave the discussion without taking a look at the possible metaphysical interpretations or any misunderstanding of this doctrine. He has already spoken of the arising (utpada) of karma at the moment of rebirth (pratisamdhi). That arising is understood in relation to the principle of dependent arising (prati tyasamutpada). The imperishability (avipranasa) is introduced in order to explain the continuity in the fruitioning of action. It is not intended as a justification for the belief in a permanent and eternal substance (svabhava). However, some of the Buddhists did utilize a no-don of substance to account for the functioning of karma. It is this particular notion of substance that is taken up for analysis.

If karma is "non-substantial" (nihsvabhava) in the way the Sautrantikas understood it, i.e., without any perceivable continuity, but only as something that is continually interrupted, then the arising of such karma cannot be explained. If arising cannot be accounted for in such a metaphysical way, neither can cessation be admitted. Imperishability (avipranasa), as explained by Nagarjuna, becomes the only other alternative. Unfortunately, Candrakīrti, who favored a rather absolutistic interpretation of Nagarjuna (see comments on the Dedicatory Verses), utilizes the conception of imperishability in order to deny any form of arising. It is because he had such an interpretation in mind that he quotes the famous verse elucidating karma at this point rather than utilizing it when the imperishability was first mentioned by Nagarjuna at XVII.14. As has been shown already, Nagarjuna was not critical of any and every form of arising or ceasing. He was only rejecting the metaphysical ideas.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

21. This verse emphasizes the second reading of the thesis of the nonexpiration of action and echoes the arguments from Chapter VII.

Kārikā XVII.22

कर्म स्वभावतश्चेत्स्याच्छाश्वतं स्यादसंशयम्।
अकृतं च भवेत्कर्म क्रियते न हि शाश्वतम्॥२२॥

karma svabhāvataś cet syāc chāśvataṃ syād asaṃśayam |
akṛtaṃ ca bhavet karma kriyate na hi śāśvatam ||22||

若業有性者 是則名為常
不作亦名業 常則不可作

ruò yè yǒu xìng zhě shì zé míng wéi cháng
bù zuò yì míng yè cháng zé bù kě zuò

།གལ་ཏེ་ལས་ལ་རང་བཞིན་ཡོད།།རྟག་པར་འགྱུར་བར་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མེད།
།ལས་ནི་བྱས་པ་མ་ཡིན་འགྱུར།།རྟག་ལ་བྱ་བ་མེད་ཕྱིར་རོ།།

| gal te las la raṅ bźin yod | | rtag par 'gyur bar the tshom med |
| las ni byas pa ma yin 'gyur | | rtag la (7)bya ba med phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 22 - If karma has self-nature then undoubtedly it will have the nature of constancy and will also be uncreated. However, anything characterized by constancy does not create.

JONES (Skt):
[22] If an action existed because of its self-existence, it would undoubtably be eternal. And the action would be uncreated, since what is eternal is not created.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is assumed that action comes to be from self-nature, it certainly will be eternal, and action would also be uncaused, for that which is eternal is, indeed, not caused.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *karman* had self-nature, it would certainly be permanent.
Karman that would be uncaused is indeed not caused by permanence.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
22. If Action is the fact of subjective existence,
It might be perhaps what is eternal without fail.
But at the same time it might be difficult for everyone even only to take a rest.
Because it might be perfectly impossible for eternity to be created at all.

STRENG (Skt):
22. If an action did exist as a self-existent thing, without a doubt, it would be eternal. An action would be an un-produced thing; certainly, there is no eternal thing which is produced.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v22 If actions had a nature
They would be called permanent
Inactivity would be called action
For what is permanent cannot act.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If actions existed [by] nature, without doubt they would be permanent. Actions would not be done [by an agent] because what is permanent cannot be done.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If action had a nature,
It would, undoubtedly, be permanent.
Action would not be created
Because the permanent cannot be active. [XVII.22]

GARFIELD (Tb):
22. If action had an essence,
It would, without doubt, be eternal.
Action would be uncreated.
Because there can be no creation of what is eternal.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
22. If action had an essence,
It would, without doubt, be eternal.
Action would be unproduced, because
There can be no production of what is eternal.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If action had self-nature it would be eternal. Being eternal it would be uncaused.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If the arising of karma cannot be accounted for by following the Sautrantika method, can it be explained in terms of the Sarvastivada conception? Nagarjuna's answer is negative. He seems to know with great certainty (asamsayam) that the Sarvastivada solution does not work. It implies permanence and as a result karma would appear to be "un-done" or "uncreated" (akrta).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

22. Moreover, Nāgārjuna reminds us, again drawing heavily on the arguments reviewed and redeployed in Chapter VII, things with essences don't arise and cease, and can't be related causally to other things. If action existed inherently, it couldn't be initiated. So, if one were trying to preserve the reality of action and karma against the analysis in terms of emptiness (because one viewed that analysis as undermining their genuine existence), it would be pointless to defend the existence of action and karma as inherent existence.

Kārikā XVII.23

अकृताभ्यागमभयं स्यात्कर्माकृतकं यदि।
अब्रह्मचर्यवासश्च दोषस्तत्र प्रसज्यते॥२३॥

akṛtābhyāgamabhayaṃ syāt karmākṛtakaṃ yadi |
abrahmacaryavāsaś ca doṣastatra prasajyate ||23||

若有不作業 不作而有罪
不斷於梵行 而有不淨過

ruò yǒu bù zuò yè bù zuò ér yǒu zuì
bù duàn yū;yú;wū fàn xíng;háng;xìng ér yǒu bù jìng guò

།ཅི་སྟེ་ལས་ནི་མ་བྱས་ན།།མ་བྱས་པ་དང་ཕྲད་འཇིགས་འགྱུར།
།ཚངས་སྤྱོད་གནས་པ་མ་ཡིན་པའང་།།དེ་ལ་སྐྱོན་དུ་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| ci ste las ni ma byas na | | ma byas pa daṅ phrad ’jigs ’gyur |
| tshaṅs spyod gnas pa ma yin pa’aṅ | | de la skyon du thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 23 - If an uncreated karma exists then there will be apprehensive (acts) without any creation. And a fallacy would result in which there will be no dwelling upon (i.e., carrying on) the ways of the Brahman.

JONES (Skt):
[23] If an action were not completed, there would be the fear of encountering some other unfinished action. The error of a life in conflict with one’s religious vows would follow from this.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If an action were not performed [by the individual], then there would be fear of being confronted by something not performed [by him]. An ignoble life as well as error would follow from this.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *karman* would be uncaused, there is fear of encountering [what one did] *not* cause.
In that case, an unsaintly life and error would follow.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
23. Because the Action hasn't been done, there is sometimes possibility of warning not to be done.
In that situation it might be possible for the Action not to be done.
There might be some possibility of not to maintain the vow actually,
And there the vices might be attached without fail.

STRENG (Skt):
23. If the action were not produced, then there could be the fear attaining something from "something not produced"; Then the opposite to a saintly discipline would follow as a fallacy.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XVII.23a If an action were uncreated fear would arise of encountering something not done. . . .

BOCKING (Ch):
17v23 If there were inactive actions,
Then without acting, there could still be sins.
Without lapsing from pure conduct
There could be impurity and transgression.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If actions were not done [by anyone], one would fear meeting what [one] has not done. Also the fault would follow for that [person] of not dwelling in the pure life.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If action were uncreated, there would be fear
Of encountering that which had not been done.
A lack of pure conduct
Would follow as a flaw as well. [XVII.23]

GARFIELD (Tb):
23. If an action were uncreated
Fear would arise of encountering something not done.
And the error of not preserving
One's vows would arise.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
23. If action were not produced,
One would have to fear encountering something not engendered.
And the absurd consequence would ensue
That one would nonetheless not keep one’s vows.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If action [karma] were not produced [by intention] there would be fear of retribution for actions not committed. An ignoble life as well as error would follow.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If actions were to be something not performed, then a person would be haunted by the fear (bhaya) or anxiety that he has no hand in the organization of his own life-process. Fears and anxieties, according to Nagarjuna's view, are one's own creations. Deny one's own responsibility, one does not have to justify a life of moral purity (brahmacarya-vasa). This is a clear and unequivocal assertion of personal responsibility for one's own purity and defilement.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

23. Nāgārjuna here and in XVII: 24 draws some of the moral consequences of the nihilistic view of action that seems to follow from the conditions set on its existence by the reificationist: Actions would not come into being through agency and so would have no regular relation to any agents. And so one might find oneself experiencing the consequences of some action one had not performed, or find that it was, in some sense, one’s own action. One would not take action seriously as one’s own responsibility and would not worry about moral infractions. Monks and nuns would break their vows. Since morality depends on a distinction between morally positive and morally negative acts, if there were no actions, or if actions could not be thought of as initiated by their agents, there would be no morality. From another perspective, the preservation of vows would be an impossibility anyway since preserving the vows requires taking action, which would be impossible if action were uncreated.

Kārikā XVII.24

व्यवहारा विरुध्यन्ते सर्व एव न संशयः।
पुण्यपापकृतोर्नैव प्रविभागश्च युज्यते॥२४॥

vyavahārā virudhyante sarva eva na saṃśayaḥ |
puṇyapāpakṛtor naiva pravibhāgaś ca yujyate ||24||

是則破一切 世間語言法
作罪及作福 亦無有差別

shì zé pò yī qiè shì jiān yǔ yán fǎ
zuò zuì jí zuò fú yì wú yǒu chā;chà;chāi bié

།ཐ་སྙད་ཐམས་ཅད་ཉིད་དང་ཡང༌།།འགལ་བར་འགྱུར་བར་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མེད།
།བསོད་ནམས་དང་ནི་སྡིག་བྱེད་པའི།།རྣམ་པར་དབྱེ་བའང་འཐད་མི་འགྱུར།།

| tha sñad thams cad ñid daṅ yaṅ | | ’gal bar ’gyur bar the tshom med |
| bsod nams daṅ ni sdig byed pa’i (10b1)rnam pa dbye ba’aṅ ’thad mi ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 24 - All common practices would, no doubt, be destroyed for it follows that no distinction between the virtuous and evil doers could be made.

JONES (Skt):
[24] So too, all conventions would undoubtedly be contradicted, and no distinction between meritorious and evil acts would be admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Undoubtedly, all conventions would then be contradicted. The distinction between the performance of merit and evil will also not be proper.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Undoubtedly all practices would be hindered.
The difference between causing merit or evil does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
24. To do some kinds of job are to receive an enveloping attack,
Therefore all situations of businesses similarly lose the time even to take a rest.
And so both people, neither who produce rightness, nor who produce wrongness, do not exist,
Therefore only dismemberment has been attached solely.

STRENG (Skt):
24. Then, undoubtedly, all daily affairs would be precluded. And even the distinction between saints and sinners is not possible.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XVII.24b It would be impossible to draw a distinction between merit and demerit.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v24 This would negate all
Dharmas of worldly expression
Doing evil and doing good
Would not be distinguished.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
All conventions also without doubt would be contradictory. Also the distinction between doing good and evil would not be valid.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Undoubtedly, this would
Contradict all conventions.
The distinction between virtuous persons and sinners
Would no longer make sense. [XVII.24]

GARFIELD (Tb):
24. All conventions would then
Be contradicted, without doubt.
It would be impossible to draw a distinction
Between virtue and evil.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
24. All conventions would also
Be contradicted, without doubt.
It would be impossible to draw a distinction
Between virtue and evil.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
All conventions would, no doubt, be contradicted since any distinction between wholesome and unwholesome actions could not be made.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

With the rejection of a life of moral purity resulting from the denial of human responsibility for actions, all moral conventions like merit and demerit (punya-papa) would be rendered meaningless. It is interesting to note that Nagarjuna is not referring to the good-bad (dhamna-adharma or kusala-akusala) distinction, for this latter distinction is different from the former in regard to its value as a convention (vyavahara). This is compatible with the Buddha's own explanation of karma. On pragmatic grounds, the Buddha recognized the merit/demerit distinction. It was helpful in leading the ordinary people toward accepting a moral life. However, the notions of merit and demerit could be harmful in the long run, especially because it involves the idea of accumulation of merit for the sake of future enjoyment and pleasure. Furthermore, it is easily associated with the notions of reward and punishment, a notion that the Buddha was not willing to relate to the doctrine of karma (see M 1.373; Chung 32.1 [Taisho 1.628b]). As such, the Buddha insisted that a morally perfected person would eliminate the desire to accumulate merit or demerit (punna-papa-pahina Dhp 39; samitavi pahaya punnapapam Sn 520). Yet, it does not mean that such a person also abandons the good/bad (kusalaakusala) distinction which is the very basis of merit and demerit. Indeed, a morally perfect person is expected to promote good, while eliminating evil or unmeritorious actions (see above XVII.1, 17). It may be for this reason that even a later Mahayana philosopher like Dogen deemed it approprate to compile a whole treatise on this subject.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

24. Moreover, Nāgārjuna argues in the next verse, if actions had essences, they could not cease, and if their karmic consequences had essences since they would need no conditions to arise, they would just keep arising:

Kārikā XVII.25

तद्विपक्वविपाकं च पुनरेव विपक्ष्यति।
कर्म व्यवस्थितं यस्मात्तस्मात्स्वाभाविकं यदि॥२५॥

tad vipakvavipākaṃ ca punar eva vipakṣyati |
karma vyavasthitaṃ yasmāt tasmāt svābhāvikaṃ yadi ||25||

若言業決定 而自有性者
受於果報已 而應更復受

ruò yán yè jué dìng ér zì yǒu xìng zhě
shòu yū;yú;wū guǒ bào yǐ ér yīng gèng;gēng fù shòu

།དེ་ནི་རྣམ་སྨིན་སྨིན་གྱུར་པ།།ཡང་དང་ཡང་དུ་རྣམ་སྨིན་འགྱུར།
།གལ་ཏེ་རང་བཞིན་ཡོད་ན་ནི།།གང་ཕྱིར་ལས་གནས་དེ་ཡི་ཕྱིར།།

| de ni rnam smin smin 'gyur pa | | yaṅ daṅ yaṅ du rnam smin 'gyur |
| gal te raṅ bźin yod na ni | | gaṅ phyir las gnas de yi phyir |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 25 - If karma is a fixed thing (i.e., enduring) because of its self-nature, then a maturity that is already matured will again seek maturity.

JONES (Skt):
[25] If an action is fixed and thus has self-existence, the ripening of fruit already ripened would ripen again.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If action were to be determined, because it possesses self-nature, then a maturity that has matured will again mature.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *karman* is unchanging because it arises from its own nature
then maturity that has matured will therefore mature again.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
25. And even though a cook has been well cooked, and furthermore it has been well cooked,
It might be cooked further just better again.
It is possible for Action to be placed into the systematic Order actually,
Therefore it might be possible for the situations to be identified with their own original states actually.

STRENG (Skt):
25. Then an act whose development had taken place would develop again, If an act, because it persists, exists through its own nature.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v25 If, as you say, actions are fixed
With self-existent natures,
Then, already having received rewards,
One would again receive them.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
[When] the ripening of that [action] has ripened it would ripen again and again, because if it existed [by] nature, it would [always] remain.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The ripening that has already ripened
Would go on ripening again and again.
For if it possessed a nature,
Action would remain present. [XVII.25]

GARFIELD (Tb):
25. Whatever is mature would mature
Time and time again.
If there were essence, this would follow,
Because action would remain in place.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
25. Any ripened result would ripen
Time and time again.
If there were essence this would follow,
Because karma would endure.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If action had self-nature, it would, even after having matured, ceaselessly mature again and again.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If an action were to take place without being performed by someone (akrtakam), then it will occur on its own. It will possess its own nature (svabhava). Such a substantial action will have its own consequences (vipaka) inherent in it. In that case, what is being described as the fruitioning of karma, namely, a manifestation of its consequences, would merely be a re-fruitioning. This is the same sort of criticism that Nagrjuna made of self-causation (svatautpatti) in Chapter I.

Kārikā XVII.26

कर्म क्लेशात्मकं चेदं ते च क्लेशा न तत्त्वतः।
न चेत्ते तत्त्वतः क्लेशाः कर्म स्यात्तत्त्वतः कथम्॥२६॥

karma kleśātmakaṃ cedaṃ te ca kleśā na tattvataḥ |
na cet te tattvataḥ kleśāḥ karma syāt tattvataḥ katham ||26||

若諸世間業 從於煩惱生
是煩惱非實 業當何有實

ruò zhū shì jiān yè cóng yū;yú;wū fán nǎo shēng
shì fán nǎo fēi shí yè dāng hé yǒu shí

།ལས་འདི་ཉོན་མོངས་བདག་ཉིད་ལ།།ཉོན་མོངས་དེ་དག་ཡང་དག་མིན།
།གལ་ཏེ་ཉོན་མོངས་ཡང་དག་མིན།།ལས་ནི་ཡང་དག་ཇི་ལྟར་ཡིན།།

| las ’di ñon moṅs dag ñid la | ñon moṅs de dag yaṅ dag min |
| gal te ñon moṅs (2)yaṅ dag min | | las ni yaṅ dag ji ltar yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 26 - This karma will have the nature of defilements (klesas) and these, in turn, will not be in the nature of truth (tattva). But if the defilements are not in the nature of truth, how could karma be in the nature of truth?

JONES (Skt):
[26] If action by its nature has afflictions, these afflictions are not real; and if the afflictions are not real, how could the action be real?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If this action is associated with defilements, these defilements, in turn, are not found in themselves. If defilements are not in themselves, how could there be an action in itself?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *karman* has defilements as self, the defilements are not real.
If they are not real defilements, how would *karman* be real?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
26. The place, where Action has naturally included severe pain, is just this world.
However the severe pain is not only the real situation of facts there.
In the actual situations there, the severe pain is not all at that place.
Action might produce something, which is Real Fact itself,

STRENG (Skt):
26. An action is that whose "self" (atman) is desire, and the desires do not really exist. If these desires do not really exist, how would the action really exist?

BOCKING (Ch):
17v26 If all actions within the world
Arise from the afflictions,
And these afflictions are not real,
How can (actions) then be real?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
This action has the character of affliction and afflictions are not real. If affliction is not real, how can action be real?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Action is constituted by the afflictions,
But the afflictions are not real.
If afflictions are not real,
How could action be so? [XVII.26]

GARFIELD (Tb):
26. While this action has affliction as its nature
This affliction is not real in itself.
If affliction is not in itself,
How can action be real in itself?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
26. While this karma has affliction as its nature
This affliction does not exist in reality.
Since affliction does not exist in reality,
How can karma exist in reality?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If such actions are associated with defilements, those defilements are not real in themselves. If the defilements are not real in themselves, how can action be real in itself?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/26 In the highest sense actions do not arise, and why? Because they have no nature. It is on account of their non-arising that they do not cease, it is not because they are permanent that they do not cease. If this were not so, the nature of actions would be fixed and existent, and if actions had a fixed, existent nature, this would constitute permanence. If they were permanent, they would be non-acting actions, and why? Because permanent dharmas cannot do anything.

(23a16; Moreover, if there were non-acting actions, then that man could commit a sin and this man would receive the retribution, or that man could lapse from his pure conduct, yet this man would have the sin, and this would negate conventional worldly dharma.

(23a18) If things were pre-existent, then in winter there would be no need to think about the affairs of spring, and in spring no need to think about the affairs of summer, and there would be errors such as this.

(23a19) Moreover, there would be no differentiation between doing good and doing evil. To perform deeds such as almsgiving and holding to the precepts, etc. is what is meant by 'doing good', and to perform actions of murdering, stealing, etc. is termed 'doing evil'. If there were actions, yet no doing, there would be no (such) distinction.

(23a22) Again, if actions had a fixed, existent nature, then, having already on one occasion received their rewards, one would have to receive them again. Thus, your doctrine that action and reward exist because of a 'non-disappearing dharma' has these kinds of errors.

(23a24) (23a27) Moreover, if you say that actions arise from the afflictions, these afflictions do not have any fixed (nature) but merely exist by virtue of conceptualized distinctions. Since the afflictions have no reality, how can karma have any reality? Why is this? Because they (the afflictions) have no nature, actions have no nature either.

Question: Even if both afflictions and karma have no nature and are unreal, the resultant body manifestly exists; surely it is real?

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The substantialist explanation of karma presented at XVII. 25 would lead to the distinction between karma and its quality or attribute. Qualifies referred to as defilements (klesa), etc., would be merely incidental. A karma can then make defilement "its own" (klesatmaka) or it can be freed from defilements (nih-klesika). Such a substantialist perspective, as mentioned so often by Nagarjuna, would render the defilements unreal (na tattvatah), especially because they come and go, arise and pass away, and hence without self-nature. Karma, in such a case would be substantial, and the attributes non-substantial. Nagarjuna, the empiricist, sees no way in which such a substantial karma, divorced from the attributes, can be identified.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

26. Moreover, Nāgārjuna continues, afflicted action is, for the opponent, done essentially in affliction. But given that affliction has already been shown to be empty in the chapter on suffering (XII), how could it serve as an essence for action?

Kārikā XVII.27

कर्म क्लेशाश्च देहानां प्रत्ययाः समुदाहृताः।
कर्म क्लेशाश्च ते शून्या यदि देहेषु का कथा॥२७॥

karma kleśāś ca dehānāṃ pratyayāḥ samudāhṛtāḥ |
karma kleśāś ca te śūnyā yadi deheṣu kā kathā ||27||

諸煩惱及業 是說身因緣
煩惱諸業空 何況於諸身

zhū fán nǎo jí yè shì shuì shēn yīn yuán
fán nǎo zhū yè kōng hé kuàng yū;yú;wū zhū shēn

།ལས་དང་ཉོན་མོངས་པ་དག་ནི།།ལུས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ནི་རྐྱེན་དུ་བསྟན།
།གལ་ཏེ་ལས་དང་ཉོན་མོངས་པ།།དེ་སྟོང་ལུས་ལ་ཅི་ལྟར་བརྗོད།།

| las daṅ ñon moṅs pa dag ni | | lus rnams kyi ni rkyen du bstan |
| gal te las daṅ ñon moṅs pa | | de stoṅ lus la ji ltar brjod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 27 - It is said that karma and defilements are a co-operating conditionality of differing bodies. But if karma and defilements are of the nature of sunya (i.e., thusness or "void"), what could be said of these bodies?

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection:*27] Action and afflictions are declared to be conditions of bodies – if action and afflictions are empty, what talk is this about bodies?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Action and defilements are specified as the conditions of the [different] bodies. however, if these actions and defilements are empty, what could be said about the bodies?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Actions and defilements are mentioned as conditioning causes of the body.
How are actions and defilements open if they are that [open] in bodies?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
27. Action and the severe pain are just belonging to physical bodies.
And many Truths are the contents, which are spoken with words.
When both Action and the severe pain are existing in the balanced autonomic nervous system,
What kind and from what place those kinds of many bodies come from?

STRENG (Skt):
27. Action and desire are declared to be the conditioning cause of the body. If action and desire are empty, what need one say about "body"?

BOCKING (Ch):
17v27 The afflictions and karma
Are said to be the causes of bodies.
Afflictions and actions being empty,
How much more so the bodies?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Actions and afflictions are taught to be the conditions for bodies. If actions and afflictions are empty, how can one speak of bodies?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Action and affliction are taught
To be conditions for the body.
If action and affliction are empty,
Then what can be said of the body? [XVII.27]

GARFIELD (Tb):
27. Action and affliction
Are taught to be the conditions that produce bodies.
If action and affliction
Are empty, what would one say about bodies?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
27. Karma and affliction
Are shown to be the conditions that produce bodies.
If karma and affliction
Are empty, what should one say about bodies?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Action and defilements are said to be the conditioning causes of bodies. But if action and defilements are empty, what could be said about the bodies?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/27 All the saints and sages tell us that the afflictions and karma are the causes and conditions of bodies. Within these conditions desire has the power to fertilize birth, and karma produces the (appropriate) reward of a high, middle, low, attractive, ugly, noble or base, etc., birth. Though you investigate the afflictions and karma in various ways, they have no fixed (nature. How much less do bodies have a fixed (nature), since they are effects of causes and conditions?

(23b5) Question: Although you have refuted karma and retribution on various grounds, nevertheless the sutras say that there is an originator of karma, and since the one who originates karma exists, actions exist, and their rewards exist. As it is said,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here Nagarjuna moves on to a higher generality. Both karma and defilements are generally considered to be the conditions that determine the individual. As such, karma and defilments become attributes of the personality (deha). In the previous verse, Nagarjuna questioned the substantial reality of both karma and delfilments. If they are empty of such reality, what could be said about the personality itself?

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

27. The opponent replies, however, that action and affliction are referred to in *sutras* as the causes of different kinds of rebirth and of different characteristics in rebirths. And since beings are indeed reborn and do indeed have characteristics, how, from the standpoint of a Buddhist view of rebirth, could empty actions and empty karmic consequences explain this?

Kārikā XVII.28

अविद्यानिवृतो जन्तुस्तृष्णासंयोजनश्च सः।
स भोक्ता स च न कर्तुरन्यो न च स एव सः॥२८॥

avidyānivṛto jantus tṛṣṇāsaṃyojanaś ca saḥ |
sa bhoktā sa ca na kartur anyo na ca sa eva saḥ ||28||

無明之所蔽 愛結之所縛
而於本作者 不即亦不異

wú míng zhī suǒ bì ài jié;jiē zhī suǒ fù
ér yū;yú;wū běn zuò zhě bù jí yì bù yì

|མ་རིག་བསྒྲིབ་པའི་སྐྱེ་བོ་གང་||སྲེད་ལྡན་དེ་ནི་ཟ་བ་པོ|
|དེ་ཡང་བྱེད་ལས་གཞན་མིན་ཞིང་||དེ་ཉིད་དེ་ཡང་མ་ཡིན་ནོ||

| ma rig bsgribs pa'i skye bo gaṅ | | sred ldan de mi za ba po |
| de yaṅ byed (3)las gźan min źiṅ | | de ñid de yaṅ ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 28 - (The opponent contends) The sentient being beclouded by ignorance is a bundle of cravings. He is the percipient (i.e., experiencer of karmaic effects). He is neither identical to nor different from the doer.

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply:*28] The sentient being, who is shrouded in ignorance and bound by craving, is the enjoyer of the fruit and is neither different from, nor identical to, the one committing the act.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A sentient being, beclouded by ignorance, is also fettered by craving. As an experiencer, he is neither identical with nor different from the agent.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
A sentient being unturned from ignorance is bound by craving.
He is the experiencer and he is not the same and he is not different from the agent.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
28. If it is true for human beings are ignorant and do not have ability to regulate themselves,
The facts that desire should be regulated, are just Reality.
Real people, who are only enjoying their pleasure, are absolutely different from people, who are actually working.
Another factors are not different from Reality, which is the just the same as Reality.

STRENG (Skt):
28. An opponent tries to establish an identifiable entity by saying: The man shrouded in ignorance, and chained by craving (trsna) Is one who seeks enjoyment. He is not different from the one who acts, nor identical to it.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v28 The one who is obscured in ignorance,
The one who is bound by the bond of desire,
Is not the same, and is not different,
From the original Doer.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
People who are obscured by ignorance, those with craving, are the consumers [of the fruits of action]. They are not other than those who do the action and they are also not those very ones.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The consumer is that being
Who is obscured by ignorance and has craving.
This being is not different from the agent,
Yet neither are these two identical. [XVII.28]

GARFIELD (Tb):
28. Obstructed by ignorance,
And consumed by passion, the experiencer
Is neither different from the agent
Nor identical with it.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
28. The person who is clouded by ignorance
And overcome by craving—the experiencer—
Is neither different from the agent
Nor is it itself identical to it.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[Opponent argues for an entity:] Beclouded by ignorance, and fettered by craving, sentient beings, who experience karmic effects, are neither identical with nor different from the agent.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/28 In the Sutra on Beginninglessness it says that all living beings, obscured in ignorance and bound by bonds-of desire, transmigrate in beginningless samsara experiencing various sufferings and pleasures. The one who is now experiencing is neither the same as, nor different from, -the one who previously acted. If he were the same, then when a man who did evil received the form of an ox, the man would not become an ox, and nor would the ox become a man. If they are different, then all action and reward is lost and we fall into causelessness, and causelessness is annihilation.

(23b14) Therefore, the present recipient is neither the same as, nor different from, the former- doer.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Buddha's discourse to Acela-Kassapa, the discourse which served as the foundation for Nagarjuna's treatment of "suffering" (Chapter XII. Duhkha-pariksa), rejected the theories of self-causation and external causation of suffering. Rejecting serf-causation, the Buddha maintained: "Kassapa, to say that 'a person acts and he himself experiences the consequences,' where self-caused suffering belongs to one who has existed from the beginning, implies eternalism" (so karoti so patisamvediyati ti kho Kassapa adito sato sayamkatam dukkhanti iti vadam sassatam etam pareti, S 2.20; Tsa 12.20 [Taisho 2.86a]). On the contrary, "To say that 'one acts and another experiences the consequences,' where the suffering caused by another belongs to one who has been afflicted with pain, implies annihilationism" (anno karoti anno patsamvediyati ti ... vedanabhitunnassa sato paramkatam dukkhanti iti vadam ucchedam etam pareti, ibid.). It is interesting to note that in the former case, the Buddha refers to the belief in a being who existed from the beginning (adito sato), an idea that is generally considered both by the Buddha and by Nagarjuna as contributing to a belief in a permanent entity (see Chapter IX on Purva-pariksa).

In the present verse, Nagarjuna is faithfully following the Buddha's own argument to reject the identity as well as difference between a doer and an experiencer. A person who believes either in identity or in difference is looked upon a someone who is beclouded by ignorance (avidya) and craving (trsna).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

28. Nāgārjuna focuses in his reply on the nature of the individual who is the putative agent of these actions and experiencer of their consequences. The present objection rests on the presupposition that they exist inherently. That is why the problem arises about how empty actions and empty karmic links could be sufficient to link their properties. So Nāgārjuna emphasizes that neither an analysis in terms of inherent identity nor one in terms of inherent difference between agent and action will suffice. Both presupposes, incoherently, the inherent existence and hence the possession of an essence, of each term in the putative relation. But this of course recalls the problem posed near the end of Chapter I: How can actual effects arise from empty conditions? And Nāgārjuna's reply echoes the reply developed there:

Kārikā XVII.29

न प्रत्ययसमुत्पन्नं नाप्रत्ययसमुत्थितम्।
अस्ति यस्मादिदं कर्म तस्मात्कर्तापि नास्त्यतः॥२९॥

na pratyayasamutpannaṃ nāpratyayasamutthitam |
asti yasmād idaṃ karma tasmāt kartāpi nāsty ataḥ ||29||

業不從緣生 不從非緣生
是故則無有 能起於業者

yè bù cóng yuán shēng bù cóng fēi yuán shēng
shì gù zé wú yǒu néng qǐ yū;yú;wū yè zhě

།གང་གི་ཕྱིར་ན་ལས་འདི་ནི། །རྐྱེན་ལས་བྱུང་བ་མ་ཡིན་ཞིང་།
།རྐྱེན་མིན་ལས་བྱུང་ཡོད་མིན་པ། །དེ་ཕྱིར་བྱེད་པ་པོ་ཡང་མེད།།

| gaṅ gi phyir na las 'di ni | | rkyen las byuṅ ba ma yin źiṅ |
| rkyen min las byuṅ yod min pa | | de phyir byed pa po yaṅ med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 29 - (Nagarjuna asserts) Since karma does not arise by means of relational or non-relational conditionality, there is also no doer.

JONES (Skt):
[29] Since this action neither arises from the conditions nor without the conditions, there thus also is no actor.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Since this action does not exist as arisen from a condition nor as issuing forth from a non-condition, even an agent does not exist.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Because this action does not exist arisen from conditions or not exist
arisen from conditions, therefore the agent does not even exist.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
29. The Truth has never been produced.
At the same time what is not the Truth has never appeared at once.
Therefore this world really exists as Action.
Because of that, just the distinction does never exist since that time.

STRENG (Skt):
29. Nargarjuna answers: Since action is not "originated presupposing the conditions" nor fails to arise from presupposing the conditions, There is no one acting.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v29 Karma does not arise from conditions,
Nor does it arise from non-conditions.
For this reason, there is no
Originator of karma.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Because the action does not emerge from conditions and does not emerge from non-conditions, therefore, the agent too does not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Because action does not arise
Based on conditions
Or based on nonconditions,
There is no agent either. [XVII.29]

GARFIELD (Tb):
29. Since this action
Is not arisen from a condition,
Nor arisen causelessly,
It follows that there is no agent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
29. Since this action
Is not arisen from a condition,
Nor arisen from that which is not a condition,
It follows that there is no agent.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[Nagarjuna responds:] Since this action is neither arisen from a condition nor from a non-condition, there is also no one acting.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The causal explanations of karma offered by the metaphysicians, namely, self-causation, external causation, etc., or the non-causal explanations are not acceptable. If karma itself cannot be explained in this way, it would be futile to attempt any such explanations of an agent of karma. Note the use of the term idam (this) to refer to karma, similar to the use of the term esa at XVII.6, thus specifying the type of explanation that is rejected by him. For this reason, we prefer to confine his criticism only to the metaphysical views mentioned in the verses immediately preceding (XVII.21-28), leaving the more appropriate view he mentioned untouched. This seems to be the only way in which one can recognize consistency in Nagarjuna's statements throughout this chapter.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

29. Since the action does not arise inherently, it lacks inherent existence. Since, as per the discussion of agent and action in Chapter VIII, empty actions entail empty agents, there is no inherently existing agent of the kind presupposed by the objector. But the objector continues:

Kārikā XVII.30

कर्म चेन्नास्ति कर्ता च कुतः स्यात्कर्मजं फलम्।
असत्यथ फले भोक्ता कुत एव भविष्यति॥३०॥

karma cen nāsti kartā ca kutaḥ syāt karmajaṃ phalam |
asaty atha phale bhoktā kuta eva bhaviṣyati ||30||

無業無作者 何有業生果
若其無有果 何有受果者

wú yè wú zuò zhě hé yǒu yè shēng guǒ
ruò qí wú yǒu guǒ hé yǒu shòu guǒ zhě

|གལ་ཏེ་ལས་དང་བྱེད་མེད་ན||ལས་སྐྱེས་འབྲས་བུ་ག་ལ་ཡོད|
|ཅི་སྟེ་འབྲས་བུ་ཡོད་མིན་ན||ཟ་བ་པོ་ལྟ་ག་ལ་ཡོད||

| gal te las daṅ byed med na | | las skyes ’bras bu ga las yod |
| ci ste ’bras bu (4)yod min na | | za ba po lta ga la yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 30 - If there is neither karma nor doer, where could the effect arising from the karma be? Where there is no effect, how could there be any percipient (i.e., experiencer)?

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection:*30] If there is no action or actor, how could there be any fruit arising from the action? And, the fruit not existing, how could there be an enjoyer of the fruit?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If both action and agent are non-existent, where could there be the fruit born of action? When there is no fruit, where can there be an experiencer?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If action and agent do not exist, where would there be fruit born of action?
Where there is no fruit, where will the experiencer be?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
30. And if Action does not have any distinction actually,
Where it might be always possible for what has been born is result.
Then does it possible for a person, who is living for only such kind of enjoyment, to arrive at the situation?
Where will it be possible for such a situation to be experienced even in future at all?

STRENG (Skt):
30. If there is no action, how could there be one who acts and the product of action? And if there is no product, how can there be an enjoyer of the product?

BOCKING (Ch):
17v30 No karma, and no doer,
How can there be action producing a reward?
And if there is no reward
How can there be a recipient of that reward?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If neither the action nor the agent exists, where can there be a fruit of the action? If the fruit does not exist, where can the consumer exist?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there is no action and no agent,
How could there be a result produced by action
If there is no result,
How could there be a consumer? [XVII.30]

GARFIELD (Tb):
30. If there is no action and agent,
Where could the fruit of action be?
Without a fruit,
Where is there an experiencer?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
30. If there is no action and agent,
Where could the effect arisen from action be?
If there is no effect,
Where could the experiencer be?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If there is neither action nor agent, where is the fruit of action? Without a fruit, where is there an experiencer?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/30 If there is no action and no-one who performs the action, how can there be a reward arising from that action? And if there is no reward, how can there be a recipient of the reward? Karma has three aspects; within the five skandhas what we conventionally designate as a person is the 'doer', and the good or evil situation produced by his actions is called the 'reward'. If an originator of karma does not even exist, how much less can there be actions, their rewards, or a recipient of these rewards?

(23b24) Question: Although you have refuted karma and its reward and any originator of karma in various ways, nevertheless we can see that all living beings manifestly perform actions and receive their rewards. What about this?

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

In the absence of either an aciton or an agent metaphysically conceived, there could be no fruit or consequence born of such action (karmajam phalam). Here again, it is not a denial of fruit or consequence born of action, but only of those that are born of such action as explained previously. If the fruit or consequence is not obtained, its experiencer (bhokta) would also not be appropriate.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

30. That is, if we deny the reality of the action and the agent, we seem to deny the reality of the consequences of the action and, hence, the experiencer, whether "without understanding and consumed by passion" or not. But Nāgārjuna's view is not that these things are non-existent, as he emphasized in XVII: 20 - only that they are empty. So it does follow that the consequences are *empty* - but that does not entail in any way that they are nonexistent. And it follows that the consequence and the karmic link are empty. From this it follows that the reborn individual whose existence and characteristics are determined by this causal sequence is also empty of inherent existence. And if so, there is no problem about how his/her genesis is dependent upon an empty sequence. Nāgārjuna introduces an analogy to explain this situation:

Kārikā XVII.31

यथा निर्मितकं शास्ता निर्मिमीतर्द्धिसंपदा।
निर्मितो निर्मिमीतान्यं स च निर्मितकः पुनः॥३१॥

yathā nirmitakaṃ śāstā nirmimīta rddhisaṃpadā |
nirmito nirmimītānyaṃ sa ca nirmitakaḥ punaḥ ||31||

如世尊神通 所作變化人
如是變化人 復變作化人

rú shì zūn shén tōng suǒ zuò biàn huà;huā rén
rú shì biàn huà;huā rén fù biàn zuò huà;huā rén

།ཇི་ལྟར་སྟོན་པས་སྤྲུལ་པ་ནི། །རྫུ་འཕྲུལ་ཕུན་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་སྤྲུལ་ཞིང།
།སྤྲུལ་པ་དེ་ཡང་སྤྲུལ་པ་ན། །སླར་ཡང་གཞན་ནི་སྤྲུལ་པ་ལྟར།།

| ji ltar ston pas sprul pa ni | | rdzul ’phrul phun tshogs kyis sprul źiṅ |
| sprul pa de yaṅ sprul pa na | | slar yaṅ gźan ni sprul pa ltar |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 31 - It is as if a master, by his supernormal powers, were to form a figure and this figure, in turn, were to form another figure....(continues on to the next verse).

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply*:31-32] As a teacher creates an illusory phantasm through magical powers, and that apparition in turn creates another apparition, so too is an actor like the apparition and his action like the apparition created by the apparition.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Just as a teacher, through psycho-kinetic power, were to create a figure, and this created figure were to create another, that in turn would be a created.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
As a teacher has within him the power to magically create a magical
illusion and that magical illusion magically creates another magical illusion,

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
31. In such situations, what has been established, has got the position of a Ruler already,
And the facts, that the urgent ruler has been established already, are grasping the power to hold the urgent political situations confirmly.
In such a situation, the fact that the building has been established already, is completely different from the situation, that the measurement has been finished already.
And so actually speaking the facts that the construction has been accomplished already,
Might have the absolute meaning that the building has been accomplished already..

STRENG (Skt):
31. Just as a teacher, by his magical power, formed a magical form, And this magical form formed again another magical form—

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XVII.31 As a magician creates a magical illusion by the force of magic, and the illusion produces another illusion,

BOCKING (Ch):
17v31 It is like an illusionary man, made
By the world-honored one's spiritual power,
And this illusionary man
Transforming into yet another man.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Just as a teacher creates a creation by a wealth of magical powers, and just as if that creation too created, again another would be created,

DOCTOR (Tb):
The Teacher, in a perfect miracle,
Creates emanations,
And these emanations again
Create further emanations. [XVII.31]

GARFIELD (Tb):
31. Just as the teacher, by magic,
Makes a magical illusion, and
By that illusion
Another illusion is created,

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
31. Just as when the teacher,
Through his miraculous powers,
Emanates a body, and that emanation
Emanates another emanated body,

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Just as a teacher, through sleight of hand, creates an illusory figure, which in turn creates another illusion, like so is agent and action. The agent is like an illusion, while its action is like the illusion’s illusion

[No Commentary on this verse]

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Kārikā XVII.32

तथा निर्मितकाकारः कर्ता कर्म च तत्कृतम्।
तद्यथा निर्मितेनान्यो निर्मितो निर्मितस्तथा॥३२॥

tathā nirmitakākāraḥ kartā yat karma tat kṛtam |
tadyathā nirmitenānyo nirmito nirmitas tathā ||32||

如初變化人 是名為作者
變化人所作 是則名為業

rú chū biàn huà;huā rén shì míng wéi zuò zhě
biàn huà;huā rén suǒ zuò shì zé míng wéi yè

།དེ་བཞིན་བྱེད་པོ་དེ་ལས་གང་། །བྱས་པའང་སྤྲུལ་པའི་རྣམ་པ་བཞིན། །
།དཔེར་ན་སྤྲུལ་པས་སྤྲུལ་གཞན་ཞིག །སྤྲུལ་པ་མཛད་པ་དེ་བཞིན་ནོ། །

| de bźin byed po de las gaṅ | | byas pa'aṅ sprul pa'i rnam pa bźin |
| dper na (5)sprul pas sprul gźan źig | | sprul pa mdzad pa de bźin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 32 - In exactly the same way, the doer is like the formed figure and his action (karma) is like the other figure formed by the first.

JONES (Skt):
[32] [see above]

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
In the same way, an agent is like a created form and his action is like his creation. It is like the created form created by another who is created.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
in the same way, an agent is a magical creator and his action a magical illusion.
It is as a magical illusion magically created by a magical illusion.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
32. In such situations what has been established is just a figure, which can be seen from outside,
And the establisher is that person, and this is just what has been created.
The concrete thing, which exists there, is different from what has been constructed,
And what has been established and what has been measured, are existing there.

STRENG (Skt):
32. Just so the "one who forms" is himself being formed magically; and the act performed by him Is like a magical form being magically formed by another magical form.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XVII.32 in the same way the agent is a magical illusion and the action done is the illusion created by another illusion.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v32 Just as the first illusionary man
May be called a 'doer',
What the illusionary man performs
May be called an action.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Like this, whatever action too done by that agent [is]also like the aspect of a creation. It is just like, for example, a creation creating another creation.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Likewise, the act performed by the agent
Resembles an emanation,
Just as when one emanation
Gives rise to another. [XVII.32]

GARFIELD (Tb):
32. In that way are an agent and his action:
The agent is like the illusion.
The action
Is like the illusion's illusion.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
32. So is the agent's performance of the action
Just like the process of emanation.
It is just like one emanation
Emanating another.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
(included above)

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

One metaphysical view leads to another, that to a further metaphysical view. Such is the unending circle. A metaphysical view is, indeed fabricated by someone. Yet the fact that such a metaphysical view turns out to be empty does not mean that the experience depending upon which the metaphysical view was formulated or the process of conception are themselves non-existent. Experience as well as concept are available. Only that the conception is carried beyond its limits to assume the existence of independent entities, whether they be atman or svabhava. To understand the significance of Nagarjuna's statement here it would be necesary to take a look at one of the rare statements of the Buddha recorded in the Samannaphala-suttanta (D 1.76-77). In this passage, which explains the fruit of recluseship, the Buddha refers to two forms of knowledge a contemplative could develop before he directs his attention to the so-called higher forms of knowledge (abhinna). The first is described as follows:

With his mind thus serene, made pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of evil, supple, ready to act, firm and imperturbable, he applies and bends down his mind to that knowledge and insight whereby he grasps the fact: "This body of mine has form, it is built up of the four elements, it springs from mother and father, is continually renewed by so much boiled rice and juicy foods, its very nature is impermanence, it is subject to erosion, abrasion, dissolution, and disintegration; and therein lies this consciousness of mine, too, bound up, on that it does depend.

This represents the Buddha's experience and conception of his own personality. Having stated this, he immediately proceeds to examine whether there is anything beyond this experience and conception. What he describes is no more than the funciton of manas, the faculty which is responsible for the formulation of the metaphysical ideas of self (atman) and substance (svabhava). The statement reads:

With his mind thus serene, . . . firm and imperturbable, he applies and bends down his mind to the calling up of a mental image. He calls up from this body another body, having form, made of mind (mano-maya), having all (his own body's) limbs and parts, not deprived of any organ.

This is how manas becomes a sensus communis surveying the sensory fields of other faculties (M 1.295) and maintaining a feeling of identity, which then gets converted to a permanent and eternal atman, Could it not be possible that Nagarjuna was aware of the above statement of the Buddha? What could be the difference between the creation of a non-existent form through the power of psychokinesis and the generation of a belief in a permanent and eternal self though the activities of mawas? It seems that human beings, with faculties through which they are able to perceive and conceive, are not the objects of Nagarjuna's criticism. It is only the manner in which perceptions and conceptions are formulated that is under criticism.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

32. That is, we can understand the entire sequence of agent, action, consequences of action, and arising of new agent, whether within a single lifetime or - in the context of Buddhist ontology and doctrine - across lifetimes, as an entirely empty sequence with entirely empty stages. But that does not prevent its being perceived, or its reality for those who participate therein.

———

Kārikā XVII.33

क्लेशाः कर्माणि देहाश्च कर्तारश्च फलानि च।
गन्धर्वनगराकारा मरीचिस्वप्नसंनिभाः॥३३॥

kleśāḥ karmāṇi dehāś ca kartāraś ca phalāni ca |
gandharvanagarākārā marīcisvapnasaṃnibhāḥ ||33||

諸煩惱及業 作者及果報
皆如幻與夢 如炎亦如嚮

zhū fán nǎo jí yè zuò zhě jí guǒ bào
jiē rú huàn yǔ mèng rú yán yì rú xiàng

།ཉོན་མོངས་ལས་དང་ལུས་རྣམས་དང་།།བྱེད་པ་པོ་དང་འབྲས་བུ་དག།
།དྲི་ཟའི་གྲོང་ཁྱེར་ལྟ་བུ་དང་།།སྨིག་རྒྱུ་རྨི་ལམ་འདྲ་བ་ཡིན།།

| ñon moṅs las daṅ lus rnams daṅ | | byed pa po daṅ 'bras bu dag |
| dri za'i groṅ khyer lta bu daṅ | | smig rgyu rmi lam 'dra ba yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 33 - Defilements, karmas, bodily entities, doers and effects are all similar to the nature of an imaginary city in the sky, a mirage, and a dream.

JONES (Skt):
[33] Afflictions, actions, bodies, actors, and fruit are like the castle in the sky of the Gandharvas, a mirage, and a dream.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Defilements, actions, and bodies, agents as well as fruits, all these are similar to the cities of *gandharvas*, are comparable to mirages and dreams.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Defilements, actions, bodies, doers, and effects are like dreams and mirages, made up imaginary cities in the sky.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
33. Miscellaneous kinds of Pain, miscellaneous kinds of Action, miscellaneous kinds of bodies and,
Miscellaneous kinds of workers and, miscellaneous results and,
Gandharva City without prison,
The Sun Beam, sleep, and so on.

STRENG (Skt):
33. Desires, actions, bodies, producers, and products Are like a fairy castle, resembling a mirage, a dream.

BOCKING (Ch):
17v33 All afflictions and actions
Doers and rewards,
Are like illusions or dreams,
Like flames or like an echo.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Afflictions, actions and bodies and agents and fruits are like a city of gandharvas, a mirage, a dream.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Affliction, action, the body,
The agent, and the result
Are all like a city of scent-eaters,
Like an illusion, and like a dream. [XVII.33]

GARFIELD (Tb):
33. Afflictions, actions, bodies,
Agents and fruits are
Like a city of Gandharvas and
Like a mirage or a dream.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
33. Afflictions, actions, bodies,
Agents and effects are
Like a city of gandharvas and
Like a mirage or a dream.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Defilements, actions, bodies, agents, and fruits are all similar to a city of *gandharvas*, and comparable to mirages and dreams.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Mental afflictions, actions, and bodies,
As well as actors and results,
Are like cities of gandharvas,
Like mirages, and like dreams. (33)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

17/33 It is like an illusionary man created by the Buddha's spiritual power, who in turn transforms himself into another illusionary man. Such an illusionary man has no actual existence and is merely a vision, but the illusionary man's actions of speech in preaching the dharma, and actions of the body in giving alms and so forth, though they are unreal, can be seen by the eye.

Likewise, the body of birth and death, the doer and the action, should be understood in the same say.

(23c7) 'All the afflictions' means the three poisons whose subdivisions constitute such unlimited afflictions as the ninety-eight temptations, the nine bonds, the ten ties, the six defilements and so forth. 'Actions' means the actions of body, speech and mind. In respect of the present and future worlds they are divided into good, bad and neutral, rewards of pain, rewards of pleasure, rewards of neither pain nor pleasure, actions with rewards in the present, actions producing rewards, and actions with rewards in the future, and so on ad infinitum. 'Doer' means one who can originate the afflictions and karma and can receive the rewards and retribution. 'Rewards' means the neutral five skandhas produced from good and bad actions. All karmas such as these are empty and without nature, like an illusion, like a dream, like a flame or like an echo.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The metaphors used at the end of Chapter VII to illustrate the nature of metaphysical theories pertaining to arising, stasis, and ceasing, are employed here to elucidate the character of similarly conceived theories relating to defilements, actions, personalities, agents, and consequences.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

33. Again, it is important to emphasize that emptiness, rather than being a kind of nonactuality contrasting with empirical reality, is in fact the very condition of empirical reality and hence the only kind of genuine actuality. Mirages and dreams are actual phenomena, which actually appear and which have consequences. But that does not mean that they appear to us in a nondeceptive way. Mirages are not water and do not quench thirst, and dream-elephants carry no loads. By analogy, saṃsāra, action, karmic link, and consequence, Nāgārjuna argues, are real empirical phenomena, but are empty of anything more than conventional existence. While they may appear to exist inherently, either as persistent phenomena, as processes or elements of processes, or as abstract phenomena - as per the various opposing views considered in this chapter - they do not so exist. For to exist in those ways would in fact be incoherent. This analysis hence does not entail the nonexistence of agent and action, except from the ultimate point of view. Rather it explains how it is possible for them to exist at all.

Chapter XVIII

आत्मपरीक्षा अष्टादशमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀法品第十八(十二偈)

།བདག་དང་ཆོས་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅོ་བརྒྱད་པའོ།།

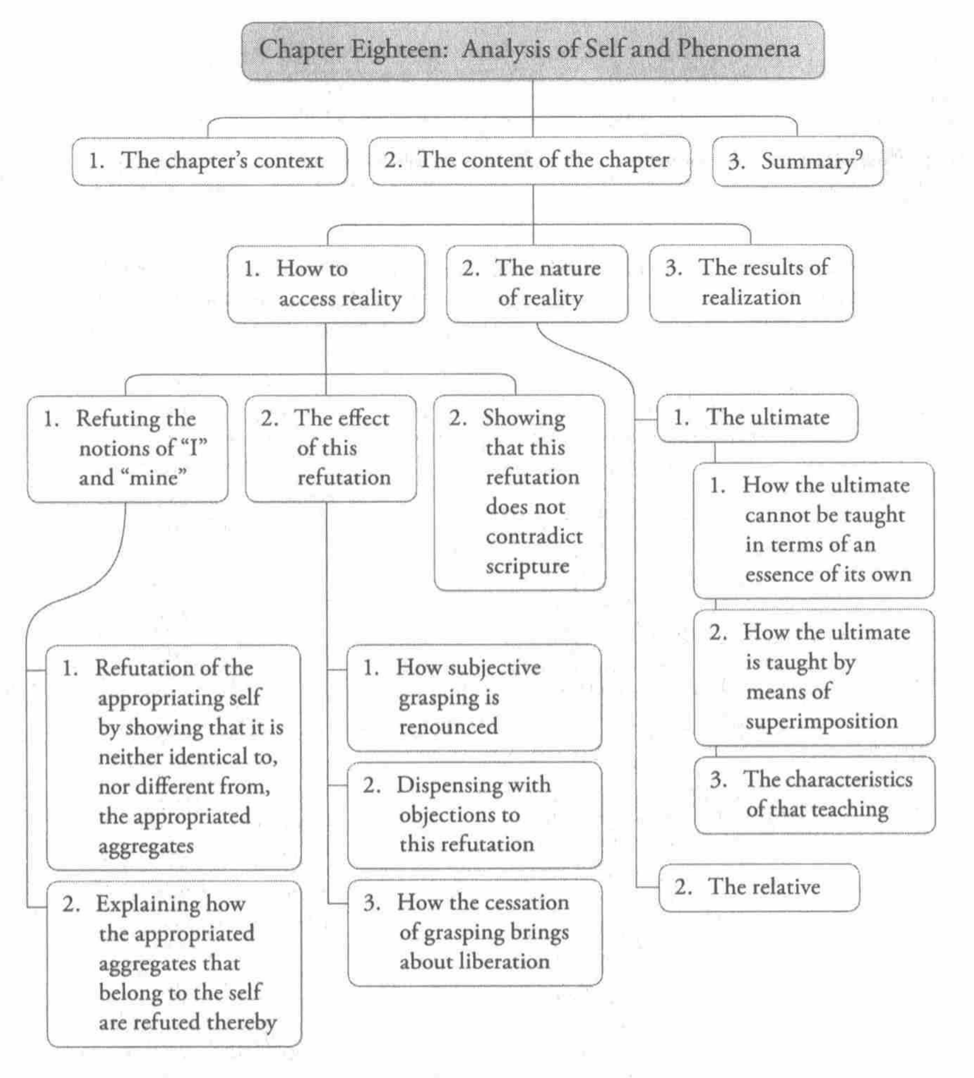
ātmaparīkṣā nāmāṣṭadaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XVIII: Examination of Self and Entities

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter XVIII

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We have now completed the second part of the section on the two selflessnesses, the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. This chapter comprises the third of its five parts: the mode of positing the selflessness of things as they really are.

EXPLANATION:

This section has five parts: the mode of engaging with things as they really are, dispelling the charge that this contradicts sutras, the process leading to the realization of how things really exist, the characteristics of things as they really are, and showing that one must practice this.

SUMMARY:

This chapter presents a prescription for practice that wraps up the profound meaning expounded in the earlier and later chapters. Therefore, having understood that all that has been expounded philosophically comes down to the essenceless of the self and of phenomena, one must practice as has been explained previously.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XVIII - Examination of the Bifurcated Self

This chapter discusses the concept of atman which had been hinted at in the previous chapter on karma. It is one of the more important chapters dealing with man's self and, eventually, as one would expect, Nagarjuna argues on the non-existence of atman. In the opening verse he quickly destroys any idea that the atman can be equated with the skandhas and concludes that they are logically untenable. The bifurcated self (atman), self-hood (atmiya), self-identity (mama) and individuality (ahamkara) are all mental constructions and detrimental to the attainment of moksa or release. The Buddha only employs the term, atman, provisionally for he is actually interested in teaching the truth of anatman. Truth is non-relational, non-descriptive, non-differential... It is thatness or thusness. In Verse 8 Nagarjuna introduces the famed Four-cornered logic, i.e., the possible conditions of is, is not, both is and is not, and neither is nor is not, in order to exhibit the fact that final truth transcends all these possibilities; it is sunyata per se.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

18. *Self (atman).* The examination of self nature (*svabhava*) was undertaken by Nagarjuna after a detailed analysis of all factors of experience (*dharma*), such as aggregates, spheres, and elements. The subjects coming under the two previous chapters (XVI-XVII) pertained to bondage and freedom, action and consequence. Therefore, a close scrutiny of the notion of a personal self (*atman*) and all other concepts associated with it, such as selfishness, identity, or pride, was considered to be relevant. Hence the subject-matter of Chapter XVIII.

The conception of a permanent and eternal self (*atman*) arose in relation to the conception of the psychophysical personality (*namarupa*). The untenability of the former has already been alluded to in Chapters VIII-XI. In the present chapter, however, a further question in relation to the notion of self needs to be examined, and that pertains to the manner in which the notion of self (*atman*) leads to bondage (*bandhana*).

Nagarjuna begins this chapter with the assertion that if the self (*atman*) is identical with the aggregates (*skandha*), then it will be subject to arising and ceasing (*utpadavyayabhag*). If it is different from the aggregates, then it will not have the characteristics of the aggregates. Having raised such questions regarding the existence of the self, Nagarjuna proceeds to show that it is the belief in a *permanent* and *eternal* self that gives rise to notions of possession (*atmiya*). Absence of possessiveness (*nirmama*) and of pride (*nirahamkara*) are, therefore, the inevitable consequences of the appeasement (*sama*) of that belief in an eternal self (XVIII. 2). For similar reasons, the belief that there is a *person* who is without selfishness and pride is also not appropriate (XVIII.3).

The use of the *iti*-formula at XVIII.4 as *aham-iti* and *mama-iti* is important in that it implies the denial of "theories" pertaining to "oneself" (*aham*) as well as "self-possession" (*mama*), rather than the simple reflexive uses of these terms. When such metaphysical views are abandoned, grasping (*upadana*) as well as rebirth (*janma*) are avoided. The cessation of the defilements of action (*karma-klesa*) is then declared to be release (*moksa*). The *vikalpa* that leads to such defilements of action is, therefore, not any and every form of conceptualization, as some of the translations seem to suggest, but only the discrimination or thought of substantial (*svabhavika*) entities such as 'I' (*aham*), rejected at the beginning of this chapter, and substantial events like action (*karma*) and effect (*phala*), criticized in the previous chapter. The belief in such substantial entities and events gives rise to the feeling of" possession" as "this is mine" (*mama*), which in turn produces obsessions (*prapañca*). Such obsessions can be prevented by the perception of emptiness (*sunyata*) relating to the notion of "self" (*atman*) referred to above. To speak of "emptiness" apart from this context is m make it not only "nihilistic" (*uccheda*, XVIII.20) but also absolutistic and hence a metaphysical "view" (*drsti*, XVIII.8).

A superficial glance at XVIII.6 may leave the impression that Nagarjuna viewed truth or reality as being beyond conceptualization. However, a more careful consideration of the contents, especially in the light of the teachings of the Buddha as embodied in the "discourses" would indicate that this is not the case. Nagarjuna seems to have been fully cognisant of the Buddha's use of the term "self" (Pali, *atta*; Sk. *atman*) to explain individuality, and his attempt m reject a metaphysical entity when he spoke of "no-self" (Pail, *anatta*, Sk. *anatman*). This does not involve two languages: a provisional or ordinary and philosophical.99 It is a question of two definitions. If the "self" is defined as a permanent and substantial entity, the Buddha was ready to negate it with his conception of "no-self' (*anatman*). If it was not defined as such, he had no difficulty in utilizing that conception in his discourses. Nagarjuna's understanding of the Buddha's intentions is clearly demonstrated in the first line of XVIII.6, when he said: "The Buddha's have made known the conception of self and taught the doctrine of no-self." When, in the second line, Nagarjuna maintained: "They have not spoken of something (*kascit*) as the self or as the non-serf," he was certainly denying the conceptions of self-nature (*svabhava*) and other-nature (*parabhava*) of

phenomena admitted by the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas respectively.

With the above statement Nagarjuna could have concluded his chapter on the "self" (*atman*). However, there was one more significant issue to be resolved. Up m this point he was discussing an embodied serf, a serf associated with a psychophysical personality. The question regarding the self that is freed from the psychophysical personality also had to be examined, for it was the belief of the substantialists that when a person attains freedom his permanent and eternal self, dissociated from the psychophysical personality, continues m exist after death. The two verses that follow (XVIII. 7-8), therefore, are intended to explain the Buddha's view regarding the nature of a person when he attains *parinirvana*.

What happens to the freed person *at* death was clearly expressed by the Buddha. He ceases to exist, is not reborn, his birth has waned (*khina jati*), and there is no further existence for him.100 Yet, if someone were to ask him the question as to whether that person exists in some form after death (*param marana*), the Buddha was not willing to say anything, primarily because there was no epistemological basis on which any predication can be made.101 With verses 7 and 8, Nagarjuna is attempting to state this very same idea. "When the realm of thought has ceased, that which is to be designated also has ceased."

"Realm of thought" (*cittagocara*) that has ceased (*nivrtta*) can refer to the person who is freed (*Pall parinibbuta*, Sk. *pari-nirvrta*) without his thought being re-established (*appatitthitena cittena*).102 The difficulties that would arise if someone were to ask the further question as to what happens to him when his thought process has ceased or is not re-established is then explained. "That which is to be designated has also ceased." This is identical with the Buddha's statement: "That by which one should speak of him does not exist for him" (*yena nam vajju tam tassa n' atthi*).103 Indeed, the term *dharmata* is used in the verse to refer to the nature of the freed one who has passed away. It is not possible to assert whether he has arisen (*utpanna*) after death or whether he has ceased to exist (*niruddha*) after death.

One of the epithets by which the "enlightened one" (*buddha*) came to be described is *tathagata*, meaning "one who has thus gone." This term gave rise to much controversy probably because of the metaphysical implications of the term "thus'' (*tatha*). And it is interesting to note that in the early discourses whenever the question regarding the nature of the freed one after death is raised the term used to refer to him is *tathagata*. The term *tatha* ("thus" or "such") involves the epistemological problem of "reality," as opposed to *no tatha* ("not thus"). Hence the secondary derivative *taccha* (Sk. *tathya*) came to be used in the sense of what is true or real.104 It is, therefore, not surprising to see the term *tathagata* being utilized when ever the question regarding the *destiny* of the freed one is raised,105 for in the eyes of the ordinary man no other question would be more important than the *ultimate destiny* of the freed one. As mentioned earlier, for epistemological reasons, the Buddha refused to make any assertions, either positive or negative, regarding this problem. Nagarguna's application of the fourfold negation (*catuskoti*) to the conception of "suchness" (*tathya*) comes immediately after his discussion of the nature (*dharmata*) of the freed one who has reached his final destiny. It is the same context in which the Buddha himself applied the fourfold negation. The four-cornered negation is always used by the Buddha to avoid metaphysics, and the destiny of the *tathagata* was one of those popular metaphysical issues. Nagarjuna could not have been unaware of the metaphysical assertions of the pre-Buddhist thinkers who assumed that a "freed self" (*atman*) becomes united with the all-pervading universal self, the reality in everything (*sarvam*). The dangers involved in the Sarvastivada conception of substance (*svabhava*) in everything (*sarvam*) and how such an idea could influence the interpretation of a *tathagata* or *tathya* was, indeed, evident to Nagarjuna. Thus, we have two metaphysical issues combined hereone of "everything" (*sarvam*) and the other of *tathya*and the fourfold negation was the only reasonable solution that Nagarjuna could provide. To explain the conception of "suchness" (*tathya*) going beyond the context of the problems of "everything" and the "thus gone one" (*tathagata*) after death would undoubtedly lead to a distortion of the philosophical standpoint of Nagarjuna.

As mentioned before, the Buddha was not willing to speculate on the nature of the freed one after death (*param-marana*) but that he was willing to speak positively about what happens to him *at* death. In a passage in the *Anguttaranikaya* the Buddha's understanding of this state is succincntly expressed in the following verse: "This is the last body and is the essence of the higher life. In regard to that this perfect knowledge has arisen without depending upon another." (*Asekhananam uppannam antimo yam samussayo, yo saro brahmacariyassa tasmim aparapaccaya.*)106This realization is elsewhere explained in a stock passage: "Birth has been eliminated, the higher life has been lived, done is what needs to be done and there is not another of this [life]."107

This is the highest realization that one can attain and is referred to in the discourses as *anna.108*It is the result of the moral perfection one attains by being freed from the

three poisons: greed, hatred, and confusion. It is final nirvana, and may justly be called the ultimate moral truth about the world (see p. 15 above). As such it is to be realized by oneself and is not a state to be known by depending upon another (*aparapaccaya*). When, therefore, concluding the discussion of the freed one after death, Nagarjuna proceeded to speak of *tattva* ("reality"), he was not referring to an "ultimate truth" *per se* but to the realization and attainment of freedom from birth. Hence he asserts that the knowledge of this truth is not dependent on another (*aparapratyaya*). It is peaceful (*santa*), unobsessed by obsessions (*aprapañcita*), and, hence, nondiscriminative (*nirvikalpa*) and non-contradictory (*ananartha). Nirvikalpa* does not necessarily mean the absence of the subject-object discrimination. It means the absence of any discrimination based upon one's likes and dislikes, one's obsessions. Conceptions of identity and difference, permanence and annihiliation are then rejected as being part of the Buddha's teaching. This is became things are recognized as being dependently areisen (*pratitya... bhavati*).

The conclusion of the chapter represents Nagarjuna as one who remains aloof from the so-called Hinayana-Mahayana conflict. He asserts that in the non-emergence of the Buddhas and the waning of the Sravakas, the knowledge of the "truth" continues to be perpetuated by the Pratyeka-buddhas, even without association with the Buddhas. The need to depend primarily upon an unbroken tradition or an uninterrupted line of patriarchs for the perpetuation of the "true doctrine" is discounted here.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Self

Were mind and matter me,
I would come and go like them.
If I were something else,
They would say nothing about me.

What is mine
When there is no me?
Were self-centeredness eased,
I would not think of me and mine
There would be no one there
To think them.

What is inside is me,
What is outside is mine –
When these thoughts end,
Compulsion stops,
Repetition ceases,
Freedom dawns.

Fixations spawn thoughts
That provoke compulsive acts –
Emptiness stops fixations.

Buddhas speak of "self"
And also teach "no self"
And also say "there's nothing
Which is either self or not."

When things dissolve,
There's nothing left to say.
The unborn and unceasing
Are already free.

Buddha said: "it is real,"
And "it is unreal,"
And "it is both real and unreal,"
And "it is neither one nor the other."

It is all at ease,
Unfixatable by fixations,
Incommunicable,
Inconceivable,
Indivisible.

You are not the same as or different from
Conditions on which you depend;
You are neither severed from
Nor forever fused with them –
This is the deathless teaching
Of buddhas who care for the world.

When buddhas don't appear
And their followers are gone,
The wisdom of awakening
Bursts forth by itself.

18. The Self

Note that emptiness is not the same as selflessness *(an-atman).* The concept of emptiness in effect expands selflessness to all phenomena. All Buddhists agree that all constructed things are impermanent and subject to suffering, and their components - the *dharmas* - are all without self (e.g., *Majjhima Nikaya* 11.228, *Anguttara Nikaya* 1.286). In the Buddhist ontology, a "person" consists of five aggregates - one physical component *(namarupa)* and four mental ones (dispositions, sensations, perceptions, and cognitions). One school, however, argued that the person *(pudgala)* was neither the same nor different than the aggregates and was in some way substantive. Nagarjuna argues that even in the conventional sense a "self' is not identical to the bodily aggregates - if that were so, it would cease when one of the aggregates changes - but there also is no self existing apart from the aggregates. He argues then that both the aggregates *and* the self are empty.

Here the argument is that there is no self-existent self, but there is a conventional but empty "self." If we think of a self-existent self that *has* properties. then there is the issue of who or what has the properties - some reality must bear the properties. But if we stop thinking in terms of self-existent entities and properties and instead think only in terms of an impermanent series of properties, this issue goes away (v. 2). One who is free of thinking in terms of "mine" and "I" is not found (and thus does not exist) since there are no real entities called "persons" (v. 3). And anyone who still sees in terms of "mine" or .. ," docs not perceive reality correctly since he or she is still conceptualizing experience in terms of real entities (v. 3). Verse 4 brings out the religious implications of this.

Verse 5 makes conceptual projection (*prapancha*) the source of our "mental discriminations of discrete entities (*vikalpa*)." Thus, *vikalpa* cannot be merely thoughts or ideas or language, but something more: the discrimination of multiple, real entities.

The plural "buddhas" in verse 6 can be an honorific way of referring to the one known Buddha - Gautama of the Shakya clan - but it can also refer to *all* buddhas. Most translators treat the word as referring to Gautama. Either way, the teaching of the Buddha or the buddhas is the same.

Verse 6 is sometimes translated to state three of four options: the buddhas have taught 'There is a self," and "There is no self," and "There is neither the self nor what is not the self." (Also see YS 44.) Verse 8 contains all four options, and all options are affirmed: "Everything is real, and everything is not real; everything is both real and not real; everything is neither real nor not real." But the first two options seem to contradict each other, the third option apparently violates the law of non-contraction, and the fourth apparently violates the law of the excluded middle. (This will be discussed in the Essay.) Buddhists explain verse 6 by claiming that the Buddha had a "graduated teaching" - i.e., he taught beginners that there is a self, to more advanced students that there is no self, but to more advanced adepts he taught that there is neither a self nor a non-self. (See R394-96; YS 30.) The prefix for the Sanskrit word translated here as "teaching" *(anushasana)* does justify the idea of a "fitted" teaching. But the translation of verse given here also is warranted and does not have the buddhas ever teaching that there is a self - their teaching becomes simply that there is neither a real self nor anything real that is not the self (non-self entities) – i.e., no entities whatsoever. In sum, Nagarjuna is saying that the Buddha denied both the doctrine of the self *and the doctrine of the non-self* - if nothing else, there is no real self to contrast "non-self' with. (See also R103, YS 30.) This goes beyond early Buddhism significantly: in Nagarjuna's way of thinking, even the concept of "non-self' would lead us to a sense of something existing by self-existence.

Note that in verse 7 Nagarjuna says that "When the domain of thought has ceased, then what can be named has ceased." If nothing is ultimately real, there is nothing to name and names are unreal (VP 73 Comm.). Ultimately, "the character of what is actually real is this: not dependent upon another, peaceful, not conceptually projected by conceptual projections, free of thoughts that make distinctions, and without multiplicity (v. 9)." Thus, there are no separate entities in reality as it really is to refer to.

Also note in verse 7 that Nagarjuna speaks of the "nature of things *(dharmata).*" Buddhists also use "thusness *(tathata)*" to how things really are. Some may see this as conventional truths only, but in verses 9-11 he gives the defining characteristics *(lakshanas)* of what is ultimately real *(tattva):* not dependent upon another, peaceful, free of being projected upon with conceptual projections, free of the conceptualizations of distinct entities, and without a multiplicity of real entities (v. 9); not one, not diverse, not annihilated, not eternal (v. 11). Verse 10 states the central position: whatever arises dependently upon another thing is not that thing, nor is it completely distinct from that thing; therefore, it is not a thing that is either annihilated or eternal. Thus, it is part of a continuing, substanceless process. Since this is the "immortal teaching of the buddhas," it is describing reality from the highest point of view.

18

An Examination of Self and Phenomena

In the sutras, the Buddha taught:

Form is empty of the self of the individual and the self of phenomena.

THE STATEMENT HERE is specifically made with regard to form, but it actually applies to everyone of the inconceivable number of phenomena that there are. In this chapter, Nagarjuna proves its validity with logical reasoning.

All the Buddha's teachings on emptiness can be included in the descriptions of the selflessness of individuals and the selflessness of phenomena. These two types of selflessness or emptiness are the focus of this eighteenth chapter, and therefore it is like the heart of the entire text.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in response to the people who asked, "If actions, mental afflictions, actors, and so forth are all false appearances, then what is the true nature of reality after all?" To answer this question, Nagarjuna explains the two types of selflessness that are the essence of genuine reality.

The first four verses and the first line of the fifth are an exceptionally clear explanation of the selflessness of the individual. The first verse reads:

If the self were the aggregates,
It would be something that arises and ceases.
If the self were something other than the aggregates,
It would not have the aggregates' characteristics.

In chapter 10, "An Examination of Fire and Firewood," Nagarjuna analyzed the five possible relationships between the self and the aggregates; here, those five are condensed into the two that form their essence. The question is, if the self exists, is it the same as or different from the five aggregates that compose the individual's body and mind?

First, the self cannot be the same as the aggregates, because if it were, it would arise and cease just as the aggregates do. For example, just as the parts of the body arise and cease moment by moment, so the self would be born and die moment by moment. Just as feelings change every instant, so the self would only last one instant and then be replaced by another self. Furthermore, if the self were the aggregates, then just as the aggregates are many in number, so there would be that many selves. Each part of the body would be a different self; each thought would be a different self. Finally, if the self were the aggregates, it could no longer be said to possess the aggregates. You could no longer say, "my head," "my thoughts," or "my feelings," because those statements assume that the self and the aggregates are different things.

The self cannot be different from the aggregates either, however, because if it were, it would not have any of the aggregates' characteristics. It would not take birth, live, or die, because all the things that arise, abide, and cease are included in the five aggregates. The self would not be able to perform any function, because everything that performs a function is included in the five aggregates. Rather than being a thing, it would be inert nothingness, like empty space.

Thus, the self is not the same as the aggregates, it is not different from the aggregates, and there is no other possibility for how the self could exist in relation to the aggregates. Therefore, the self does not truly exist. It is as simple as that. The second verse reads:

If there is no "me" in the first place,
How could there be anything that belongs to me?
When "me" and "mine" are found to be peace,
Clinging to "me" and "mine" ceases.

This verse is fairly easy to understand. Once we determine that there is no self, it necessarily follows that there is nothing belonging to the self. This shows us that all of our possessiveness and attachment to things we consider to be our own is just as confused as the thought that we really exist in the first place.

By listening to and reflecting upon these reasonings, however, we can develop the precise knowledge that "me" and "mine" do not genuinely exist, that their nature is peace, beyond conceptual fabrications. This precise knowledge is enough to put a stop to our confused clinging to them as being real, and in fact, there is no other way to do so. You cannot stop clinging to the belief in "me" and "mine" until you are certain that they do not exist; mere unsubstantiated faith in the Buddha's teachings on selflessness is not enough.

The stronger your precise knowledge in selflessness becomes, however, the weaker your clinging to the true existence of the self becomes, and the easier it is to use your knowledge of selflessness as a remedy for the mistaken belief in self whenever you notice it arising. When you apply this remedy, clinging to the belief in self dissolves in the open, spacious, and relaxed certainty that the self is a mere appearance, the union of appearance-emptiness. This is something you have to train in again and again.

Some people might argue, "There are yogis and yoginis who realize selflessness, and this proves that the self really does exist after all, or else who would be the ones who possessed this realization?" Nagarjuna answers this claim in the third verse:

The ones who do not cling to "me" or "mine"
Do not exist either.
Those who do not cling to "me" or "mine" see accurately,

So they do not see a self.

We can apply the analysis from the first verse to the yogis and yoginis who realize selflessness, and see that since they are neither the same as nor different from the aggregates, they do not truly exist either. Therefore, these realized beings are also dependently arisen mere appearances, conceptual designations that lack inherent nature. They are appearance-emptiness: That they appear does not cause them to be truly existent, and that they do not truly exist does not prevent them from appearing, just as is the case with appearances in dreams.

The last two lines teach how it is that yogis' and yoginis' realization of selflessness prevents them from clinging to themselves as being truly existent. Their realization also prevents them from feeling proud as a result of having accomplished it—since they know that there is really no one there who realized anything, what reason would there be to be proud? Conversely, as long as someone is proud of or attached to their accomplishments or meditative experiences, they should know that they have not yet realized selflessness.

The fourth verse and the first line of the fifth verse describe how realization of the selflessness of the individual leads to liberation from samsara:

When one stops thinking of the inner and outer aggregates as being "me" or "mine"
All wrong views disappear,
And once they have disappeared, birth in the cycle of existence stops.

When karmic actions and mental afflictions cease, that is liberation.

The inner aggregates constitute one's own body and mind, and the outer aggregates are everything on the outside that one does not conceive of as being part of oneself. Our mistaken concepts of these inner and outer aggregates as being "me" and "mine" are the root of samsaric suffering. When we believe in the true existence of "me" and "mine," that leads to thoughts of "I find this pleasant" and "I find this unpleasant," which are the roots of the mental afflictions of attachment and aversion, respectively. These mental afflictions motivate us to pursue what we find pleasing and shun what we find displeasing—in short, to perform the defiled karmic actions that result in the uninterrupted suffering of samsara.

When we realize the selflessness of the individual, however, this whole process stops. The wrong views that have their root in the belief in self cease, then the mental afflictions cease, then karmic actions cease, and as a result of that, birth in samsara's cycle of existence ceases. This cessation of compulsive birth in samsara is the liberation that is described as nirvana in the Shravakayana and Pratyekabuddhayana. Once practitioners who follow those paths perfectly realize the selflessness of the individual, they attain the level of an arhat in "nirvana with remainder," because as long as they are still alive, they have the remainder of their defiled aggregates. When they pass from that final life, they attain the state of an arhat in "nirvana without remainder," leaving all their aggregates behind and entering the expanse of peace.

Bodhisattvas who realize the selflessness of the individual gain the same liberation from samsaric rebirth as the arhats do, but for them the outcome is different: They continue to take rebirth again and again in samsara, out of their love and compassion for sentient beings and their desire to lead them out of samsara as well. They are not satisfied simply to gain liberation for themselves—they want everyone to do so! As the bodhisattva Ngulchu Thogme writes in The Thirty-seven Practices of a Bodhisattva:

From beginningless time, my mothers have cherished me;
What is the point of my happiness if they are suffering?
Therefore, in order to liberate limitless sentient beings,
To give rise to bodhichitta is the practice of a bodhisattva.

Therefore, the bodhisattvas are delighted to take birth again and again in samsara. They do not suffer as a result of doing so, however, because they have realized the selflessness of the individual in the manner described above. How could they suffer when they know that no self exists to suffer? Realizing this, for them samsara is a delightful experience, and their work for the benefit of sentient beings is uninterrupted by thoughts of depression, discouragement, fear, or selfishness. This is why realizing the selflessness of the individual is so important.

To be able to benefit beings to the utmost, however, one must attain the state of omniscience, the state of buddhahood. In order to do that, one must perfect one's realization of the selflessness of phenomena, which is the next subject of the chapter.

There are several synonyms for that which is to be realized: "emptiness," "actual reality," "the expanse of genuine reality" (dharmadhatu), "essential reality" (dharmata), and "the precise nature of reality." Here, the last of these terms is used, and its characteristics are described in verse nine:

Unknowable by analogy; peace;
Not of the fabric of fabrications;
Nonconceptual; free of distinctions—
These are the characteristics of the precise nature.

These are the five parts of the definition of the precise nature of reality. It is called by this name to highlight that it is precisely that and nothing else. It is only genuine reality and nothing else.

First, the precise nature is “unknowable by analogy.” The precise nature of reality transcends all conceptual fabrications, and therefore 110 example, sign, or expression can describe what it is. In fact, the only way to lead disciples to realize it is to describe what it is not. Thus, the Buddha taught that the precise nature neither arises nor ceases, is neither one nor many, does not come or go, and is neither existent nor nonexistent. These explanations cannot describe the precise nature directly, but they can help us to dissolve our conceptual fabrications of what it is, and this will lead to our direct experience of it. Experiencing it directly with the precise knowledge arising from meditation is the only way to realize it—it is impossible for someone else to demonstrate or show it to us.

Therefore, if it is something that concepts, terms, and examples can describe or identify, and we can thereby know it without the precise knowledge arising from meditation, it is not the precise nature of reality.

Second, it is “peace in its true nature.” The precise nature is the peace that is naturally free from the four extremes of existence, nonexistence, both existence and nonexistence, and neither existence nor nonexistence. Therefore, if something can be said to fall into one of these four extremes, it is not the precise nature of reality.

Third, it is “not fabricated by fabrications.” If speech can fabricate an expression of it as being “this” or “that,” then it is not the precise nature. For if within it not even the slightest movement of conceptual mind stirs, what need to mention its transcendence of the contrivances of speech?

Fourth, it is “nonconceptual.” It is not the object of conceptual mind, but rather of nonconceptual primordial wisdom. This is also taught by the bodhisattva Shantideva in his Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Conduct, where he explains:

Genuine reality cannot be experienced by the intellect.

This is the case because genuine reality itself cannot be described by any conceptual fabrication, like existent, nonexistent, and so forth. Since no such label can apply to it, and since thoughts can only relate to things in terms of names and labels, then genuine reality cannot be known by the intellect, cannot be fathomed by conceptual mind. Therefore, if the intellect is conceiving of something, then whatever it is, it is not reality’s precise nature.

Fifth and finally, the precise nature is “free of distinctions.” There are not different things within it, because it is the equality of all opposites. Good and bad, enemy and friend, poor and rich, male and female, clean and dirty, suffering and happiness, and so forth— the precise nature is the equality of all these distinctions because it transcends them all. Therefore, if something falls into the category of one of these distinctions, it is not the precise nature of reality.

To summarize the teachings in this chapter, everything in samsara and nirvana is empty of the self of the individual and empty of the self of phenomena. It is all empty of inherent existence, and therefore the nature of genuine reality cannot be described. It is not an object of expression; it is beyond the conceptual fabrications of arising, abiding, and ceasing. This explanation is in harmony with those of the Mahamudra and Dzogchen traditions, in which there are many teachings on how it is that genuine reality is inexpressible and inconceivable. The reasonings that those teachings rely upon to prove their validity are none other than the ones in Nagarjuna’s great text.

7

The Self

After considering Nāgārjuna's arguments for the selflessness of external phenomena such as causation and motion, we can now turn toward an assessment of the most important example of a subjective phenomenon, namely the self. Of all the discussions of the emptiness of various entities which Nāgārjuna examines in his works, that of the emptiness of the self occupies a special position. He notes:[1]

Where something prior to, simultaneous with, or after seeing and so forth [which could be regarded as a self] is not evident, there conceptions "it exists," "it does not exist" [with *svabhāva*] have ceased.

Nāgārjuna claims here that once the emptiness or lack of *svabhāva* in the self has been realized, it will be comparatively easy to understand the emptiness of other phenomena. This is so because the view of a substantial self is particularly natural and tends to assert itself in an especially convincing manner.[2] Having seen through this fundamental illusion, Nāgārjuna wants to argue, all other mistaken ascriptions of *svabhāva* can be unmasked in a relatively straightforward manner. In order for one to appreciate Nāgārjuna's arguments for the emptiness of the self, it is essential to have a clear idea of what he argues against, that is, what a self with *svabhāva* would amount to. Such a self can be characterized by four core properties.[3] First, it is an entity *distinct* from both our body and our psychological states. The self is not the same as the body but is what *has* the body; similarly the self is what has sensations, thoughts, beliefs, desires, and so forth. Second, it is *essentially unchanging*. Whether or not we think that our selves survive the death of the bodies we have, we still want to claim that it is the same self that is present in the elderly general now and in the schoolboy he was sixty years ago. This permanence of the self also serves as the foundation for the ascription of moral responsibility, since we are dealing with a single entity unified over time. Third, the self is a *unifier:*[4] it integrates diverse sensory information, beliefs, and desires in such a way as to allow us to make decisions and to act on the basis of them. Fourth, the self is an *agent*. It is the permanent core which makes the decisions that shape our lives. The results of these decisions may then in turn influence the self, but there is little doubt that it is the self, not the decisions, which occupy the driver's seat. This substantialist conception of the self appears to be a relatively accurate description of our intuitive, everyday belief of what we are.[5]

As is to be expected, the aim of Nāgārjuna's examination of the self is to show that this intuitively plausible view of the self is fundamentally mistaken. The substantialist view of the self has to be replaced by a different one. We can divide Nāgārjuna's discussion into two main parts. The first deals with the relation of the self to its synchronic parts at a single time and to its diachronic parts across time. The second investigates the relation between the self and its properties.

7.1. The Self and Its Parts

The Buddhist tradition divides the person into five main constituents (*skandha*): matter or the physical body (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*sam. jñā*), intellect (*saṃskāra*), and consciousness (*vijñāna*).[6] What is important from a philosophical perspective is not so much the precise nature of these constituents

1. *prāk ca yo darśanādibhyah. sām. pratam. cordhvam eva ca / na vidyate 'sti nāstīti nivṛttās tatra kalpanā.* MMK 9:12.

2. Garfield (1995: 188).

3. Compare Gowans (2003: 70).

4. Gautama makes this point in NS 3, 1, 1. See Chakravarti (1982: 222–223); Siderits (2003: 22–23).

5. The extent to which the notion of a self denied by Nāgārjuna (and the early Buddhists, for that matter) was influenced by the Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika concept of ā*tman* is difficult to determine. See Conze (1967: 38); Bhattacharya (1973); Harvey (1995: 33–34).

6. These can in turn be subdivided further (RĀ 1:81). See Nyanatiloka (1950: s.v. *khanda*, 73–76) for an overview of the standard Abhidharma analysis. A detailed exposition is in chapter 14 of the *Visuddhimagga* (Buddhaghosa 1991).

and the merits and demerits of the resulting psychological theory for explanatory purposes, but primarily the fact that the human person or self is conceptualized as composite.[7] In addition it is essential to keep in mind that the analysis of the self into different components is meant to be exhaustive. It is supposed to not just illustrate various aspects or properties of a person, but also list all the aspects it consists of. Bearing this point in mind will keep us from interpreting a denial of any of the five constituents' being the self as an assertion that something else is.[8]

Once an exhaustive analysis of the self into a fixed number of constituents is in place, the question concerning the relation between these constituents and the self they comprise naturally arises. Nāgārjuna mentions four different ways in which the self and the constituents could be related.[9] The self could be identical with the constituents (either with a subset or with all of them together), it could exist as a separate entity distinct from them, it could contain the constituents as a part, or finally it could itself be part of the constituents. Nāgārjuna observes that identifying the self with a particular constituent, such as the body or consciousness, entails the difficulty that the individual constituents are constantly changing.[10] Neither the body, nor consciousness, nor any of the other constituents remains as it is over time. Such an identification would therefore not do justice to the view of the self as essentially unchanging. This is a familiar argument for the absence of a substantial self and is frequently encountered in the Pali Suttas.[11] The *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*, for example, describes the Buddha as investigating each of the constituents by asking: "Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"[12]

If we cannot identify the self with a single constituent, we might consider equating it with some or all of the constituents across a stretch of time. We would then, for example, regard as our self not just our body as it is now, but a sequence of bodies which incorporate the past as well as the future stages of our body. This solves the problem of the self disappearing from one moment to the next (because each single constituent is only in existence for a short duration) but entails other problems. First of all, if we have to include constituents at future times (such as our body tomorrow) into the entity we regard as our self in order to explain our concern for our future self, we face the difficulty that these future constituents do not yet exist. We then could not claim that our self as it existed today was in fact the entire self. We (that is, our selves) could never be wholly present at the present time.[13] Second, our candidate for a self is now no unified whole any more, but rather a series of ever-changing parts. In this series there will not be any one thing that remains constant and changes only its accidental properties. Such an account would therefore be hardly satisfactory for an advocate of a substantial self.

Given that the identification of the self with constituents at one time or across a stretch of time does not appear to be satisfactory, the other alternative for the defender of a substantial self is to assume that the self is an entity distinct from the various constituents of a person.[14] The self would then be regarded as the owner of the body, the experiencer of the sensations, the perceiving subject, and so forth. However, as Nāgārjuna points out, such a self could not bear the marks of the constituents (*bhaved askandhalakṣaṇah*), that is, it could not be characterized as the owner of the body, the experiencer of the sensations, the one undergoing change, and so on.[15] This is because such a self would be completely unknown to us. Once we have abstracted from all the constituents of the person, there seems to be nothing left that could qualify as a self.[16] The familiar Humean observation that introspection shows us all sorts of inner psychological events but never acquaints us with any object that has the characteristics of the substantial self [17] means that a self existing apart from the five constituents of a person (or any other set of constituents we might come up with) could not be one with which we are directly acquainted. But it would then be distinctly odd to assume that such a self would be the one we cared about. For all we know, it might be an entity we have never even come across.

Another difficulty with this position is that the assumption of the self as an entity distinct from the constituents also implies that it would be possible for the self to exist without any of them, since it does not existentially depend

7. Garfield (1995: 142, 245).

8. Collins (1982: 7–10, 98).

9. MMK 22:1. See also RĀ 1:82. A detailed discussion of these possibilities can also be found in MA 6: 126–165. The Buddhist commentarial literature often illustrates the possible relations between the self and its constituents by a series of similes, like the relation between a flower and its scent, a tree and its shadow, etc. See Conze (1967: 38); Collins (1982), for references.

10. MMK 18:1a, 27:3.

11. Collins (1982: 98).

12. *Sam. yutta Nikāya* 22.59 (Bikkhu Bodhi 2000: I: 901–903).

13. See Garfield (1995: 345).

14. MMK 18:1b.

15. MMK 13:5.

16. RĀ 2:1.

17. "For my part, if I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, of love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception and never can observe any thing but the perceptions." Hume (1896: I, IV, VI: 252). See also Parfit (1984: 223).

on them.[18] There could be something that we would be justified in regarding as our self even though it was not connected with our body, shared none of our memories, desires, or preferences, and would not even have to stand in any specific temporal or causal relation to these. Even if such a thing could exist, it would be questionable with what motivation we could call it a self, given that it is devoid of all the connections which we usually regard as crucially important for our selves. More worryingly, its independence makes it difficult to conceive of this self as an agent shaping our lives with its decisions. If there is no essential causal connection between the self and our various cognitive faculties, how does it enter into the formation of beliefs, the making of decisions, and the bringing about of actions? Such a self would be devoid of action (*akarmakah.*)[19] and for this reason could not be regarded as an agent.

The final two possibilities considered by Nāgārjuna, that the self contains the constituents as a part or is itself part of the constituents, can be seen to be equally unsatisfactory in the light of the arguments presented above. The former would lead once again to the problem of the unity of the self, the latter would entail the difficulty of how constantly changing entities such as the five constituents of a person could have any permanent parts at all.

The picture of the self thus emerging might strike us as very close to Hume's bundle theory. While this parallel is illuminating to some extent, it is important to be aware that for Hume his view of the self is the corollary of an epistemological theory which is not seen as having any practical implications. For Nāgārjuna, however, as for Buddhist thinkers in general, the emptiness of the self constitutes a central philosophical position with major practical and soteriological implications.[20] Its realization, that is not just the intellectual understanding of the absence of *svabhāva* in the self but the cognitive shift accompanying the ability to stop conceiving of oneself as a substantial self,[21] is taken to be an essential step on the road to liberation.[22]

The inability to come up with a satisfactory account of the relation between the self and its parts might now lead us to think that there is no temporally extended self at all. Thus what we would take to be our self existing now would not be in any way the same as what we regarded as our self yesterday, since there is no continuity between them.[23] There would be just mutually independent entities each of which would be regarded as a self at a time, but there would be nothing that could be interpreted as an overarching, essentially unchanging self.

A minor difficulty with this view is that if the various selves were indeed independent and each existed by *svabhāva,* the existence of one would not depend on the non-existence of another. But then it would be conceivable that yesterday's self just continued existing while today's self came into being, so we would end up with two mutually independent selves at the same time and thereby fail to account for the self's unity.[24]

The main difficulty with this view of episodic selves is that it transforms most of the relations we regard as intrapersonal into interpersonal ones. An obvious example is memory. Given that the self that had an experience and the one that later remembers it are independently existent objects, the transmission of memory turns out to be on the same level as the transmission of information between two persons, and perhaps even more problematic. Since any causal influence of the former on the later self would imply a dependence relation between the two, it is hard to see how anything could be transmitted between them at all.[25] In any case it would be impossible to distinguish between true and false recollections, since a criterion of the former is exactly the connection between selves which the episodic theory denies. An even greater difficulty is presented by the issue of moral responsibility.[26] For apportioning praise and blame, but also for making sense of the Buddhist concept of karma, we need to be able to postulate some sort of dependence relation between different stages of a self, because only in this way could we explain why today's self should be responsible for yesterday's actions, and how a being reborn in the form of a god at the present time could have been a human being in a previous life.[27]

7.2. The Self and Its Properties

Most of these arguments for the emptiness of the self based on an investigation of its relation to its synchronic and diachronic parts are familiar to us from pre-Madhyamaka Buddhist literature. However, the MMK also presents us with

18. MMK 10:1b.

19. MMK 10:2.

20. MMK 18:4–5; Siderits (2003: 29–31).

21. Collins (1982: 94).

22. Further cautionary remarks about drawing parallels with Hume's bundle theory can be found in Conze (1963: 113–115).

23. MMK 27:9a.

24. MMK 27:10.

25. This then also entails the problem of how the different stages of the self could arise at all, given that they are not causally produced. See MMK 27:12. 26. MMK 27:11.

27. See MMK 27:15–17.

a set of arguments against the substantial conception of the self which has a distinctly Nāgārjunian slant.

Nāgārjuna's opponent wonders, "If there was no self, where would the self 's properties come from?"[28] Similarly we might want to ask, "How can seeing and so forth belong to something that is not found? Therefore there is an independently existing thing (*bhāvo vyavasthita*) which is earlier than those [sensory faculties]."[29]

The worry behind these questions is that the undeniable fact that there are *properties* of the self—since the Mādhyamika does not want to deny that seeing, feeling, tasting, and so forth take place—implies that there must be a *bearer* of such properties, that is, a self. Since properties depend existentially on something that instantiates them, a self must be postulated as the instantiator of all the mental properties we observe. Vātsyāyana argues:[30]

[D]esires are qualities, and qualities inhere in a substance, so that in which they inhere is the self.

Summarizing the Nyāya criticism voiced by Udayana in the eleventh century, Matilal observes:[31]

A sort of robust realism dictates that the substance or the substratum must be distinguished from the features, properties, or qualities it holds. This would require a substratum for the so-called *mental* episodes and dispositions, awareness, desires, preferences, etc.; and the body, because of its continuously changing nature, cannot be regarded as adequate for such a substratumhood.

However, if we take into account Nāgārjuna's distinction between constitutive and instantiating properties described on page 210, it seems possible to dissolve this worry. Nāgārjuna differentiates between the property we see as constituting an individual (such as roundness in the case of a circle, treeness in the case of a tree, etc.) and those properties that the individual is then taken to instantiate (such as redness in the case of the circle, and greenness in the case of the tree). As became evident in the discussion of motion, where Nāgārjuna introduces this distinction, the difference between constitutive and instantiating properties is not regarded as bearing any ontological weight. It is rather a reflection of our epistemic priorities and practical concerns that we describe an object as a tree that is green, rather that as a green object that has the property of treeness.[32] There is therefore no fundamental ontological difference between a substratum (*dravya*) and the qualities (*guṇa*) which inhere in it, contrary to what is assumed by the Naiyāyika. When we speak of an individual having a property, we nominalize the predicate that expresses the property we take to be constitutive and ascribe the instantiating properties to the individual thus created. There would, however, be no deep ontological reason why we could not change our view of what the constitutive and what the instantiating properties are, and thereby describe the very same situation in terms of different individuals and properties.

But if we accept this picture of ontology, it is evident that we are not obliged to infer the existence of a substratum or underlying individual from the existence of a quality. Of course the Mādhyamika does not deny that there are a variety of sensory and mental events which happen in close temporal and causal connection. But our ascription of these to a single self does not commit us to the existence of such a self at the ontological level, any more than the ascription of redness to a circle commits us to the existence of an individual—the circle—and the redness it instantiates. In the same way in which we select one property, such as circularity, as constitutive and then group all the other properties around this new-found "individual," we also select certain properties of a causal nexus of sensory and mental events, some "shifting coalition of psychophysical elements,"[33] and group the remainder of the properties around this new-found "self."[34] To speak of the self and its properties in terms of substratum and quality is perfectly acceptable, as long as we do not assume that such talk is based on a distinction with an ontological grounding.

7.3. Epistemology of the Self

In MMK 9:3 Nāgārjuna raises the question of the origin of our knowledge of the self. He asks:[35]

The independent thing which is earlier than seeing, hearing, and so forth, and [also earlier than] feeling and so forth [i.e., the self], by which means is it known?

28. *ātmany asati cātmīyaṃkuta eva bhaviṣyati.* MMK 18:2a.

29. *katham. hy avidyamānasya darśanādi bhaviṣyati / bhāvasya tasmāt prāg ebhyah. so 'sti bhāvo vyavasthitah. .* MMK 9:2.

30. In the *Bhāṣya* to NS 1, 1, 5 (Nyaya-Tarkatirtha and Tarkatirtha [1985: 156:3–157:2]): *icchādayo gun. āh. gun. āsca dravyasaṃsthānāh. tadyadeṣāṃsthānam sa ātmeti.*

31. Matilal (1989: 76). See also Chakravarti (1982: 214–217, 227), Siderits (2003: 32, n. b).

32. Compare Siderits (2003: 26).

33. Siderits (2003: 27).

34. Dennett (1991: 228). For details of how this construction of a self might be carried out, see the discussion in Siderits (2003: 43–51).

35. *darśanaśravan. ādibhyo vedanādībhya eva ca / yah. prāg vyavasthito bhāvah. kena prajñapyate 'tha sah. .*

This investigation of the epistemology of the self might strike us as curious. After all, there seem to be few things more epistemically obvious than our own self, which seems to accompany us all the time. While there might be all sorts of problematic issues connected with the parts and properties of the self, surely the way in which we get to know it is unproblematic.

The difficulty arises once we note that in its role as a unifier of our cognitive life, a substantial self is the *subject of all experiences,* but at the same time given the distinctness of such a self from our body and all parts of our mental life, it must also be *distinct from all experiences.* So in order to have epistemic access to our self, it must be able to function as a cognitive object. Since we assume, however, that it is not only a cognitive subject but also *essentially* a cognitive subject, it cannot ever occupy this role—at least if we make the plausible assumption that being an object and being a subject are mutually incompatible properties.[36] Now given that we do not seem to be able to acquire knowledge of the self by directing the self 's attention at it (i.e., by introspection) nor by empirical observation (because of the private nature of mental states), it appears that the only cognitive route left open to us is inference. We have to establish by a (hopefully sound) argument that the self exists. This position is by no means an absurd one to hold (in fact it is just what the Naiyāyika sets out to do), but it might still strike us as slightly curious that what seems to be the most intimate object of our acquaintance has to be known by a most indirect route. We might also consider it as somewhat epistemically implausible to assume that everybody's belief in a self is arrived at by a process of drawing inferences from a set of clues.[37]

One Nyāya argument for the existence of the self based on the supposed existential dependence of qualities (*guṇa*) on a substratum (*dravya*) has already been discussed here.[38] The Mādhyamika will be reluctant to accept it, since he does not agree with the Nyāya ontology of individuals and properties it presupposes. Other arguments would obviously have to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. But the Mādhyamika will argue here that in fact no such argument is needed, since it is perfectly possible to account for our self-awareness, as long as we give up the conception of a substantial self. If we conceive of the self as a temporally stretched-out compound of psychophysical events, then there is no fundamental difficulty that the same type of event turns up on the cognizing subject side on one occasion and on the cognized object side on another. Given that there is no unified substratum constituting the self, there is also no necessity for something to be essentially a subject of experience. As different parts can play different roles at different times, our self-knowledge can be explained just by a momentary identification with a mental event which presently functions as a cognizing subject.

7.4. The Madhyamaka View of the Self

Given that Nāgārjuna rejects the picture of a substantial self described above, we have to consider which alternative picture we are presented with instead. The self is obviously seen as depending on the five constituents, a view that rules out the assumption that any independently existent substance could be regarded as a self.[39]

The emerging view of the self is characterized by two main properties. First, it is to be regarded as a *sequence of events* which stand in close temporal and causal relations. Physical processes cause sensory events, which are then framed by concepts, used as the basis of decisions, which give rise to actions, which in turn set physical processes in motion, which cause new sensory events, and so forth. The self is seen not as a cognitive nucleus that stays constant amid the stream of changing sensory impressions and mental deliberations, but rather as the entire set of such sensory and mental events which are interconnected in complicated ways.

In order to stress this point, Nāgārjuna compares the collection of constituents of the self to a lamp.[40] The light of the lamp is not a persisting thing, but a process, a sequence of events one following the next which arise on the basis of the interaction of a complex set of causes, such as fuel, a wick, the presence of oxygen, and so forth.[41] It is for this reason that Nāgārjuna claims that his analysis of fire and fuel given in chapter 10 of the MMK also explains the relation between the self and its constituents.[42] This example adds the additional

36. Nāgārjuna observes that the same epistemic difficulty of self-perception holds for vision: *svam ātmānam. darśanam. hi tat tam eva na paśyati.* MMK 3:2a.

37. Siderits (2003: 20).

38. Well-known Western arguments to this effect are the Cartesian *cogito* and the Kantian demand for a self to unify mental events spread out in time as belonging to a single subject. For a Madhyamaka response to these two, see Siderits (2003: 21–31).

39. MMK 22:2.

40. MMK 27:22.

41. In the *Sam. yutta Nikāya* 4.196–198 (Bikkhu Bodhi [2000: II: 1254]) the same point is illustrated by the example of the sound of a lute, which is a process based on the parts of the lute and the skill of the player but no part to be found anywhere among them. See Collins (1982: 101).

42. "With [the investigation] of fire and fuel, the way [for the solution of the problem of] the self and of grasping is completely described." *Agnīndhanābhyām. vyākhyātā ātmopādānayoh. kramah. / sarvo niravaśeṣena sārdham*. . MMK 10:15. The example of the lamp is well known in the Buddhist philosophical tradition. It can already be found in the earliest Buddhist literature (Trencker [1888: 486–487]); (Bikkhu Nalamoli and Bikkhu Bodhi [2001: 593]) and lends itself to a further metaphorical explanation of transmigration (lighting one flame

complexity of the mutual dependence of the self and its constituents.[43] Not only does the self depend for its existence on the constituents, but the constituents acquire their existence as distinct parts of the stream of mental and physical events only by being associated with a single self, which, regarded as a constitutive property, produces the basis for postulating the individual in which the various properties of the self inhere. It is precisely this reason which keeps the Mādhyamika from regarding the constituents as ultimate existents (*dravya*) and the self as merely imputed (*prajñapti*). For the Mādhyamika not only is there no substantial self, there is also no substantial basis on which a nonsubstantial self could be built.

Second, the self is characterized by a *mistaken self-awareness.* This means that the self which is essentially a sequence of events does not regard itself in this way but considers itself to be a substantial self, that is, an essentially unchanging unified agent distinct from its physical and mental properties.[44] To this extent it is deluded about its real nature. Nāgārjuna therefore compares the agent to an illusion (*nirmita*) created in a magical performance, which in turn brings about another illusion.[45] This construction allows Nāgārjuna to reconcile his rejection of a substantial self as an essentially unchanging unifier of our mental life distinct from both its physical and mental attributes with the acceptance of the self as an agent who will experience the results of his actions, an assumption that could not be relinquished within the Buddhist worldview. This is a very important point, since the identification of the self with a causally interlinked set of events might tempt us to throw out all prudential considerations for our future selves, as well as those for other selves.[46] Since none of these has any ultimate existence, we might think that all actions referring to them in some way (that is, all our conscious actions) are all equally insubstantial too, so that in the ultimate analysis it does not make any difference how we act.

Nāgārjuna counters this view by distinguishing the view from the inside of an illusion from that from the outside. When we are dreaming and are not aware we are doing so, we understandably prefer to leave a building by using the stairs rather than jumping out of the window. For somebody who is not dreaming, however (and also for our later, waking selves), it does not make any difference whether we jump or not, since at the ultimate level (from the point of view of the awakened one) there is no fundamental difference between the two actions. This does not imply that while we are still under the thrall of the illusion we should leave all prudential and moral considerations behind. On the contrary, as long as we are under the influence of the illusion, we have to act in accordance with its laws, even if we might suspect that it is an illusion. Unlike in the case of dreaming, where the mere wondering whether we are dreaming sometimes allows us to see through the nature of the dream, the mere suspicion that there is no substantial self is (unfortunately) not yet a realization of the emptiness of the self.

by another) and the notion of nirvāṇa in terms of its literal meaning as the "blowing out of a flame." See Collins (1982: 186–187); also compare Siderits (2003: 25–26).

43. [. . .] *indhanam apekṣyāgnir apekṣyāgnim*. [. . .] *indhanam.* MMK 10:8a. See also 10:9b.

44. Gowans (2003: 71).

45. "As a magician creates a magical illusion by the force of magic, and the illusion produces another illusion, in the same way the agent is a magical illusion and the action done is the illusion created by another illusion." *yathā nirmitakam*. *śāstā nirmimītarddhisam*. *padā / nirmito nirmimītānyaṃsa ca nirmitakah. punah. // tathā nirmitakākārah. kartā yat karma tat kṛtam*. */ tadyathā nirmitenānyo nirmito nirmitas tathā.* MMK 17:31-32. This metaphor is encountered frequently both in Nāgārjuna's works and in later Madhyamaka literature. See YS. 16–17; ŚS 66, VV 23, 27; RĀ 1:52–56; CŚ 7:24, BCA 9:150.

46. Garfield (1995: 243–244). For a detailed discussion see Siderits (2003: chapters 3, 5, 9).

8

Epistemology

An account of the theory of knowledge is important for Nāgārjuna's investigation for at least two reasons. First of all, objects of knowledge and means of accessing them form an essential part of our conceptualization of the world and our place in it. The means of knowledge are instruments used by the self in order to apprehend objects of knowledge which connect our inner world with that of a world of outside objects. Given the centrality of these key notions of epistemology, it is obviously important to investigate whether any of these could be regarded as existing with *svabhāva*. Second, Nāgārjuna's account of epistemology also has to provide the foundations of his own project. Given that the *knowledge* of the theory of universal emptiness is what Nāgārjuna wants to establish, it is important for him to describe the epistemology on the basis of which such knowledge is to be gained.

The Indian philosophical tradition distinguishes a variety of *means of knowledge* (*pramāṇa*) by which *objects of knowledge* (*prameya*) are epistemically accessed. Which means of knowledge are accepted and how their function is understood differs among different philosophical theories.[1] In his discussion of epistemology Nāgārjuna lists four such means of knowledge: perception

1. See Potter (1970–2003: II, 154–178) for a summary; also Chatterjee (1939: 53–74).

(*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), recognition of likeness (*upamāna*), and testimony (*āgama*).[2]

Nāgārjuna's primary concern is not a discussion of the nature and interre lation of these different means of knowledge, but the question of how to establish *any* particular set of means of knowledge, whether it is the one just indicated or a different one. Once we have agreed that the existence of objects of knowledge is established by the means of knowledge (as for example the existence of the desk in front of me is established by my perceptual abilities, in this case primarily non-defective vision), we then have to address the further question of how to establish the means of knowledge.[3] How do we know that these means of knowledge are good guides to the objects out there in the world?

There are three different ways in which we could try to establish the means of knowledge. First of all we could regard them as *established by mutual coherence*: perception is an adequate means of knowledge of the desk because its accuracy is established by other means of knowledge indicating its presence as well. Having the receipt of the delivery of the desk allows me to *infer* that there must be a desk in my room (since if I have such a receipt, the item in question must have been delivered), my perceptual recognition of the desk is in important ways *like* the perception of other medium-sized dry goods, such as tables and chairs, and finally, I can rely on the *testimony* of other people who also see the desk in my room. In a similar way we could then argue for the establishment of inference by the fact that the conclusions inferred are supported by perception, likeness, and testimony, and so on for all the other means of knowledge.

Second, we could assume that the means of knowledge *justify themselves*. We do not have to go beyond perception to realize that perception usually delivers an accurate picture of the world, but perception itself presents a faithful representation of the world and of its own validity. A popular example illustrating this point is that of the lamp which illuminates other objects at the same time as illuminating itself. We do not need another lamp in order to illuminate the lamp.

Finally, one could regard the means of knowledge and their objects as *mutually establishing each other*. The means of knowledge establish an object of knowledge by giving us epistemic access to it. But we could also argue that the object in turn establishes the means of knowledge. Given that we manage to interact with the objects of knowledge more or less successfully (as confirmed

2. VV 5, VS(S) 46:15–16, 72:6–17.

3. Matilal (1986: 49).

by the evolutionary success of our species), there must be something among our cognitive means that gives us a relatively accurate account of the way things are. In this way epistemic success allows us to establish the means of knowledge via the objects successfully cognized.

Nāgārjuna does not devote a great deal of discussion to the first alternative, the establishment of the means of knowledge by mutual coherence.[4] This seems sensible, for even if the argument succeeds, the kind of establishment of the means of knowledge that can be derived from it is not exactly what Nāgārjuna's Naiyāyika opponent is looking for.[5] He is trying to argue that the means of knowledge provide us with information about the nature of independently existing reals. But it is clear that the mutual establishment of means of knowledge can do no such thing. All it can do is establish the *coherence* of statements arrived at by different means of knowledge. But the mere coherence of some set of statements is not sufficient for showing that there is anything with an independent existential status that they describe. There are, after all, coherent fairy-tales.[6]

Let us therefore now consider the remaining two possible ways of establishing the means of knowledge.

8.1. Means of Knowledge as Self-established

Regarding the means of knowledge as self-established[7] has the immediate advantage of avoiding two difficulties. First, we get around the infinite regress of establishing the means of knowledge by other means of knowledge, which then in turn need yet other means of knowledge to establish them, and so forth.[8] Unlike other forms of infinite regress that Nāgārjuna accepts (such as an infinitely extended chain of causes and conditions), this regress is vicious, since the burden of proof is transferred in its entirety to the preceding stage, since preceding means of knowledge would have to establish all the succeeding ones.[9] Second, the self-establishment of the means of knowledge allows the opponent to hold on to the assumption that *everything* knowable is established by the means of knowledge.[10] It might be attractive to give up this assumption in order to escape the vicious regress, but doing so then makes it necessary to give a special reason (*viśeṣahetu*) explaining why ordinary objects are established by means of knowledge, but the means of knowledge themselves are not.[11]

8.1.1. Means of Knowledge Compared to Fire

In support of the self-establishment of the means of knowledge, we are presented with the following example:[12]

Fire illuminates itself as well as other objects. In the same way, the means of knowledge establish themselves as well as other objects.

This argument is based on a recognition of likeness (*upamāna*).[13] Because the means of knowledge are like the fire, to the extent to which fire illuminates objects in the dark and thus brings them to our attention, in the same way the means of knowledge retrieve objects from the darkness of ignorance.[14] Now it would be absurd to suggest that there is a vicious regress involved in the illumination of the fire, with someone arguing as follows: "Because we can see the object, it must be illuminated by something. It is illuminated by the fire. But we can see the fire too. So something must illuminate it. So there must be a second fire, which is either invisible or visible. But how can it be invisible, since it illuminates a visible object (namely the fire)? So it must be visible. But then we need a third fire to illuminate the second fire, and so forth." It is clear that the error occurs through the assumption that there must be a *different* fire illuminating the fire: a fire can illuminate both itself and other things. Therefore, given the similarity of fire and means of knowledge, and thereby of

4. *na* [. . .] *prasiddhih.* [. . .] *parasparatah.* [. . .] *bhavati* [. . .] *pramān. ānām*. VV 51.

5. For the relationship between Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka and Nyāya with a special focus on epistemology, see Oberhammer (1963), Bhattacharya (1977), Bronkhorst (1985).

6. I do not think that the problem of an infinite regress (as argued by Matilal [1986: 56]) is the main difficulty with the establishment of means of knowledge by mutual coherence.

7. *na* [. . .] *svatah. prasiddhih.* [. . .] *bhavati* [. . .] *pramān. ānām*. VV 51. See Matilal (1986: 51–53).

8. VV 32, 51, VP 5, Siderits (1980: 310–312); Matilal (1986: 50). Compare NS 2, 1, 17.

9. To argue that the regress could just be stopped after a finite number of steps, after which the correctness of the means of knowledge is established as " highly probable" (as is done by Burton [1999: 159], following the arguments presented in NS 2, 1, 8–20), confuses the pragmatic question of how our epistemic enterprise should proceed with the philosophical question of its justification. See also Siderits (1980: 331); Siderits (2003: 141).

10. *don thams cad tshad mas bsgrub par bya ba yin no*. VP(S) 23:15; see also VV(S) 63:6–7 31, 64:11–13.

11. See NS 2, 1, 18.

12. *dyotayati svātmānam. yathā hutāśas tathā parātmānam / svaparātmānāvevam. prasādhayanti pramān. āni*. VV(S) 64:18–19. See also VP 6, MMK 7:8–12, NS 2, 1, 19.

13. Chatterjee (1939: 325–342); Potter (1970–2003: II:174–176); Matilal (1986: 57–58).

14. Some references supporting the close connection between illumination and cognition in Indian thought are given by Burton (1999: 163–164). He also offers a different reading of this argument, claiming that as an illuminated object manifests the existence of light, the existence of a known object manifests the existence of a means of knowledge (161). This, however, appears to conflate this argument with the establishment of means of knowledge by their objects, discussed separately below. This reading is also not very satisfactory from a hermeneutical perspective, given that it lets all of Nāgārjuna's arguments dealing with self-illumination come out as very problematic (as Burton sets out to argue on pages 165–172).

the relations of illumination and establishment, the means of knowledge can establish both themselves and other things.[15]

Nāgārjuna tries to counter the use of the example of fire to demonstrate the means of knowledge as self-established by arguing for two claims:

- Fire does not illuminate other objects.
- Fire does not illuminate itself.

Note that the establishment of either of these theses is sufficient for refuting the opponent, because each one would demonstrate that an argument by the recognition of likeness between the means of knowledge and fire cannot be used. Nāgārjuna sets out to establish both claims.

In order to argue for the first claim, he observes that in order to illuminate an object, a fire has to illuminate the darkness concealing that object. In order to do so, fire and darkness must come into causal contact, so that one can remove the other. Such a situation, however, is impossible:

A lamp cannot illuminate when it is connected with darkness since their connection does not exist. Why are the lamp and darkness not connected? Because they are opposed. Where the lamp is, darkness is not. How can the lamp remove or illuminate darkness?[16]

The point Nāgārjuna wants to make here is that darkness and light cannot be understood as two independently existent objects one of which acts on the other when they come into contact.[17] The illumination of darkness by light is not analogous to the dissolution of salt by water, because darkness is the *mere* *absence* of light[18]; it is wherever light is not. For this reason the two can never come into spatial contact.

Nāgārjuna's opponent argues in VV 38 that light and darkness might coexist during the process of origination (*utpadyamāna*) of light. So light and darkness would both be present at the same time for a single moment, and then the light would start to act on the darkness in order to remove it. But this theory leaves us with the problem of explaining what causes light to remove the darkness in its second moment of existence but not in the first. If light does not have the causal power to remove darkness in the moment of its origination, how could it have this power later on?[19]

On the other hand it would be highly unsatisfactory to regard light and darkness as independently existing objects which interact *without* coming into contact. For if light could act on darkness at a distance without spatial contiguity (as the planets were seen to act on human beings in ancient India,[20] and as we now know such forces as gravity and magnetism to work) without influencing it causally, it is difficult to explain why for example a certain lamp can dispel only a certain darkness (namely the one in this room) but not other ones (such as the darkness in the room next door).[21]

The refutation of the second claim (that fire illuminates itself) proceeds by analysis of the notion of illumination. For something to be illuminated, it must first exist hidden in darkness and subsequently made visible by light shining on it.[22] But it is obvious that this is not true of the fire: it does not first exist hidden away in darkness, like a pot in a dark room, and is then made visible by shining its own light onto itself.[23] If we conceive of illumination as the prevention of darkness (*tamasah. pratigātah.*),[24] we would have to assume that darkness is somewhere in the fire or encapsulating it to hide it from view.[25] But this would mean that we are again thinking of darkness as an independently existing substance preventing illumination, something like a thick lampshade which prevents the light from reaching our eyes. But as Nāgārjuna has argued above, this view of darkness as a substance is thoroughly unsatisfactory, since darkness is nothing but the absence of light.

15. We might want to note the similarity of this argument to the "glue" objection to Bradley's regress. This regress occurs once we think that what unifies two constituents of a state of affairs (such as an individual and a property) is the instantiation relation holding between them, and that this instantiation relation has a distinct ontological status, because then we need a further relation to connect the instantiation relation with the individual and the property and so forth. To see what goes wrong here, we can argue that when glueing two things together we do not require superglue to first glue the glue to the objects and then super-superglue to glue the superglue to the glue and so forth. It is the glue itself that can connect to the objects, as well as connecting the objects themselves.

16. *re zhig mar me ni mun pa dang phrad nas gsal bar byed par mi 'gyur te phrad pa med pa'i phyir ro | gang gi phyir mar me dang mun pa ni phrad pa yod pa ma yin te | 'gal ba'i phyir ro | gang na mar me yod pa de na mun pa med na ji ltar mar me 'di mun pa sel bar byed pa'am gsal bar byed par 'gyur*. VP(S) 24:2–8. See also VV 38, MMK 7:10.

17. Another example where Nāgārjuna rejects this assumption (even though we are here dealing with mutually dependent rather than with mutually exclusive entities) is the case of fire and fuel. Nāgārjuna argues that we cannot conceive of these as two distinct entities which produce an effect (heat and illumination) when put together, in the same way in which the union of man and woman produces an effect, i.e., a child (MMK 10: 1, 6. See also Garfield (1995: 191–192)). This is so because fire is existentially dependent on fuel, while fuel is at least notionally dependent on fire.

18. *'od med pa ni mun pa'o*. VP(S) 25:10. See also Burton (1999: 71–72).

19. See Siderits (1980: 314).

20. VP 8; compare the discussion in Burton (1999: 178–179, n. 27). See also Āryadeva's *Śataśāstra*. Tucci (1929: 9).

21. MMK 7:11; VP 8, VV 39; Tucci (1929: 9). See also Burton (1999: 169–171).

22. VV(S)65:3–4. See also Burton (1999: 166).

23. Siderits (1980: 313).

24. VV(S) 66:10.

25. VP 10. See also BCA 9:18.

Nāgārjuna also adds a second argument against the self-illumination of fire. He first claims that since the illumination by fire proceeds by the consumption of fuel, self-illumination would entail self-consumption, that is, fire would burn itself as well as its fuel.[26] Of course we cannot argue that if one quality of an object acts on itself, any other of its qualities will do so as well.[27] An oven may heat a piece of wax as well as itself, and melt the wax, but not melt itself. Nāgārjuna must therefore regard the fire's burning of fuel and its illumination of objects as the very same process. But we do not have to say that the fire burns down because there is less fuel (it being gradually consumed by the fire) *and* less fire (because it gradually consumes itself). Fire *is* just the burning of the fuel rather than some distinct entity acting both on the fuel and also on itself.[28] Therefore, if there is no self-consumption of fire, there should also be no self-illumination.[29]

Second, if fire illuminated itself, and perception was to be understood as structurally similar to illumination, the different modes of perception should also be able to perceive themselves: seeing should be able to see itself, hearing hear itself, and so on.[30] Vision would be possible in the absence of any distinct object, because vision could act as its own object of sight. Visual perception would then be regarded not as an intrinsically relational phenomenon, but as something based solely on some essentially perceptive quality of vision. Since such a non-relational understanding of visual perception (and of any other kind of perception as well) is unsatisfactory, Nāgārjuna argues that if the parallel between perception and illumination is maintained, fire cannot be seen as self-illuminating.

Third, since darkness is the opposite of light, if light illuminates itself, darkness should conceal itself.[31] But then we should not be able to perceive darkness, as we are not able to perceive a pot concealed in darkness. Since darkness can be perceived, however, it is not self-obscuring and therefore, Nāgārjuna argues, fire cannot be self-illuminating either.[32]

8.1.2. The Problem of the Independence of Means of Knowledge from Their Objects

Apart from attempting to find fault with the opponent's example based on the supposed self-illumination of fire, Nāgārjuna also presents us with positive arguments against the self-establishment of the means of knowledge. First of all, if a means of knowledge, such as visual perception, were self-established, it should be able to exist independently of the existence of an object of vision.[33] But if we then assume that it is an essential property of visual perception to see,[34] visual perception must be able to function as its own object, because otherwise there might be no other object to be seen. This reasoning, Nāgārjuna claims, then leads to the same problem encountered in the analysis of motion. [35] Because the mover and the place being moved over cannot exist simultaneously, since motion takes time, vision cannot see something that exists simultaneously with it (such as itself), since vision takes time too.[36]

Second, observing again that if the means of knowledge are self-established, then they will be established independently of the objects known,[37] Nāgārjuna argues as follows. Assume that we wanted to chose those among all the different means of cognitive access to the world that deliver accurate knowledge of the nature of the objects known, that is, that qualify as means of knowledge. We would select all those that have a specific internal quality (such as the cognitive equivalent to self-illumination). The possession of this quality would then guarantee that its possessor delivered accurate information about the nature of the objects cognized. But how is the connection between the specific internal quality and the correct representation of the object justified? After all there are all sorts of properties our means of cognitive access to the world can have, so how do we know that a specific one is a guide to accurate representation?

Suppose we are presented with a set of fancy mechanical devices and are asked to select the five best can openers from these. No detailed study of the

26. VV 35.

27. As pointed out by Burton (1999: 167).

28. MMK 10:1.

29. It is interesting to note that the Madhyamaka argument against the Yogācāra view of the mind as selfilluminating (*svaprakāśa*) given by Śāntideva in the BCA is another reason by recognition of likeness (*upamāna*): that of a sword that cannot cut itself (9:17). The Yogācāra view is also criticized by Śaṅ˙ kara in the *Upadeśasāhasrī* 16:13, in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 2:2:28, and in his commentary on the *Br. hadāran. yaka Upaniṣad* 4:3:7. For further references to this "anti-reflexivity principle," see Siderits (2003: 32, ṇa). It is important to note, however, that even though the example of the lamp or fire is used in the discussion of both, the question of whether the mind is self-illuminating and the question whether the means of knowledge are self-established are distinct. See Siderits (1980: 334–335, n. 4), Burton (1999: 155–156).

30. Nāgārjuna mentions only the case of seeing seeing itself (MMK 3:2). This reading of the verse is supported by a variety of commentaries, such as PP 114:1–5, Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (2006: 130), Garfield (1995: 137–138) and Weber-Brosamer and Back (1997: 15). For a different reading see Kalupahana (1991: 133–134). See also the further references given in May (1959: 79, n. 135).

31. MMK 7:12, VV 36, VP 11.

32. Some more discussion of this argument is in Burton (1999: 167–168).

33. MMK 3:2.

34. As is stated, e.g., in Vimalamitra's *Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti*, Kalupahana (1991: 133).

35. MMK 3:3.

36. See Garfield (1995: 138–139).

37. VV 40. See Siderits (1980: 314–315).

internal properties of each will allow us to accomplish that task. We have to analyze each *in relation to a can* and try to determine the way in which it might open it. Only then would we be able to conclude which particular properties of the mechanisms are correlated with good can-opening abilities. In the same way, we can regard an internal quality of a way of accessing the world only as a characteristic of a means of knowledge once we have assessed it in relation to the objects cognized. Only then can we conclude that this particular property really leads us to the knowledge of the nature of the object, rather than doing something else. But in this case the establishment of the means of knowledge can no longer be regarded as self-establishment, since it incorporates reference to other objects (namely the objects known) at an essential place.

8.2. Means of Knowledge and Their Objects as Mutually Established

If the argument for the self-establishment of the means of knowledge is not successful, the remaining option is to argue that the means of knowledge and the objects of knowledge mutually establish one another.[38] Assume that I see an apple on the table. The existence of the apple, the object of knowledge, is established by the means of knowledge that is perception. But we could equally argue the other way around: that the object known establishes the means of knowledge. This argument would invite the immediate objection that we then need prior cognitive access to the object known, and if we have this we must already have established the means of knowledge.[39] We are therefore pointlessly establishing it twice.[40] But if we somehow gain this access without relying on the means of knowledge, the whole project of establishing these means seems futile, since it is precisely the justification of our means of gaining knowledge of the world which we have set out to scrutinize.[41]

We will therefore need a different argumentative strategy to argue for the mutual establishment of objects known and means of knowledge, and in particular for the establishment of the latter by the former. One way of going about this (which does not commit us to the viciously circular mutual establishment criticized by Nāgārjuna)[42] is to argue that because the object of knowledge is perceived, there must be something bringing about such a perception, and this is the means of knowledge. In this case the apple establishes the existence of the means of knowledge by which it is known.[43] An essential prerequisite for this latter direction of establishment is of course *success*. Because we successfully apprehend an apple, our means of apprehension is regarded as a means of knowledge.[44] If we were susceptible to frequent apple-hallucinations which disappeared once we tried to touch them, we would not regard perception as a reliable apple-detector, that is, as a means of knowledge. But since we are generally successful in our cognitive interactions with the world and normally only perceive the existence of apples which are indeed there, the very fact that we successfully apprehend a world of outside objects serves as an argument for regarding the successful means of apprehension as means of knowledge.[45]

An immediate difficulty with this procedure is that we also need a means of knowledge for establishing the success of our cognitive actions,[46] that is, we need to ascertain whether we really are perceiving the apple or just an applehallucination. Nothing seems to rule out that there are some means of knowledge that first deceive us about what we see and later deceive us about the outcome of whatever procedure we use to establish whether the first cognition was successful.[47] But this possibility need not rule out any attempts of mutually establishing the means and the objects of knowledge if we do not use epistemically suspect procedures (which we know to have led to unsuccessful cognitions in the past) to establish the success of our cognitive actions.[48]

A more worrying question is whether the mutual establishment of means and objects of knowledge—if successful—actually delivers the account of means of knowledge that Nāgārjuna's opponent wants to defend. In order to see whether it does, we have to note first that the notion of "successful cognitive apprehension" referred to above cannot just be an act of cognition which leads to a successful action, since many of our cognitions (and many of the beliefs subsequently acquired) are never acted upon. We therefore also have to include coherence with other cognitions or beliefs as a criterion for the success of some means of knowledge as well. Our cognition of the apple on the table might therefore be deemed successful either if it leads to a successful action

38. VV 42–51.

39. Matilal (1986: 56–57); Burton (1999: 183).

40. This is the fallacy of "proving the proven" (*siddhasya sādhanam*.). See VV 42.

41. VV 44.

42. VV 46–48.

43. This way of establishing the means of knowledge is what Nāgārjuna criticizes in VV 51 by saying *prasiddhih.* [. . .] *bhavati na ca prameyaih.* [. . .] *pramān. ānām*.

44. VP 17. See the commentary in Tola and Dragonetti (1995b: 111–112).

45. For more discussion of the Nyāya criterion of pragmatic success as an indication of valid knowledge see Chatterjee (1939: 81–89); D'Almeida (1973: 46–62); Bijalwan (1977: 53–60); Matilal (1986: 160–179).

46. Siderits (2003: 140–141).

47. Burton (1999: 184–185).

48. Siderits (1980: 317).

(we reach out, grasp the apple, and eat it) or if it coheres with other means of knowledge (for example, with my memory of buying a bag of apples and putting them on the table). However, the difficulty with employing coherence in this way is that we have to select a certain set of cognitions or beliefs which we hold fixed, so that we can then evaluate the status of *other* cognitions relative to them. One problem now is of course how to ensure the accuracy of this selected set: if they are not accurate themselves, coherence with them has very little weight. But let us assume for the sake of argument that they are indeed accurate and constitute an epistemological fixed point relative to which other means of knowledge could be justified.

The remaining worry is that Nāgārjuna's Naiyāyika opponent wants to establish the means of knowledge as something which gives us cognitive access to a world of independently existing reals. But as long as we do not *know* the initial set to be accurate (even though it may be), it is hard to see why coherence with the selected set should provide us with such access. Since we cannot establish the accuracy of the initial set without circularly assuming that we have already established some means of knowledge, the possibility remains that a different selected set would have provided us with a different set of means of knowledge coherent with it. As Mark Siderits observes: "Since at no point in our proof is there appeal to any facts other than those concerning logical relations among cognitions, we cannot legitimately include in the resultant theory of the pramāṇas the claim that they yield direct knowledge of their objects."[49] There is no explanation why coherence with the selected set should assure us that the means of knowledge indeed "reach out" to provide us with knowledge of an independently existent world of objects as long as we do not have an independent way of establishing the accuracy of the selected set.[50] But if such could be done, the entire attempt of mutually establishing means and objects of cognition would be superfluous.

The argument against the mutual establishment of means and objects of knowledge just presented is very much a rational extrapolation: it is what Nāgārjuna (as well as a Mādhyamika more generally) should say in response, even though we do not find such a detailed argument in Nāgārjuna's texts. The argument in the VV fundamentally boils down to the observation that the mutual establishment of the means and objects of knowledge excludes the possibility of either existing by substance-*svabhāva*, that is, independently of any other object. If father and son were mutually established in the same way as means of knowledge and their objects, Nāgārjuna argues, father and son would not be distinguished by any substantial difference.[51]

This is a familiar argumentative move we encounter repeatedly in Nāgārjuna's works. A different and more unusual response to the proposal of mutual establishment is given in the VP. Nāgārjuna observes:[52]

Potness is perceptible, but the pot is not. That which is the object of the sense-faculty (*dbang po la rab tu phyogs pa'i don*), that is perceived. If we apply the term (*brda*) "visual sense-faculty" then the object [of that faculty] is perceptible and depends on conditions like light and so forth. Thus pot and so forth are established as perceptible.

The idea behind this argument is to deny the establishment of the means of knowledge by the object known by denying that the object of knowledge (the *prameya*) is an external, independently existent real. The Naiyāyika opponent wants to argue that since our cognitions are generally successful, and since this success serves as an indication of the existence of an external, mindindependent reality, the means of knowledge are just those things that allow us access to this reality. Nāgārjuna replies that in fact the object perceived by our sense-faculties is not the external object, but a mental representation of the object. Nāgārjuna here embraces a representative theory of perception which does not assert (as a naïve realist would) that we have direct and unmediated cognitive access to the objects of the external world.[53] What is directly perceived is the sense-datum (what Nāgārjuna calls the object of the sense-faculty [*dbang po la rab tu phyogs pa'i don*]), on the basis of which information about the external object is inferred. If, for example, we look at a white disc under red light at an angle, our sense-datum will be a red ellipse, though, knowing some basic facts about vision and about the peculiar lighting conditions, we perceive a white disc. Nāgārjuna stresses the contribution of inference to knowledge gained by

49. 1980: 318.

50. See Siderits (1989: 237–238).

51. VV 49–50. Compare BCA 9:12–14.

52. *bum pa nyid mngon sum yin gyi bum pa ni ma yin te dbang po la rab tu phyogs pa'i don gang yin pa de ni mngon sum yin par byas nas | mig gi dbang po la dbang po'i brda byas la de la rab tu phyogs pa'i don gang yin pa de ni mngon sum yin zhing de yang snang ba la sogs pa'i rkyen la ltos pa ste | de phyir bum pa la sogs pa nyid mngon sum du yongs su grub pa yin*. VP(S) 29:6–13.

53. Burton (1999: 192) "suspects that Nāgārjuna actually means that [. . .] the knowledge-episode itself is constitutive of the object known." This is indeed the case. Burton is also correct in claiming that there is not much of an argument for this position in Nāgārjuna's texts. But given the generally elliptic nature of the VP, this philological gap does not necessarily entail the existence of a gap in Nāgārjuna's philosophical argumentation as well. Tola and Dragonetti (1995b: 12) suggest that the Yogācāra flavor of VP 18 could be interpreted as evidence for locating the composition of the VP after the appearance of the Yogācāra school, about 350 A.D., which would speak against its attribution to Nāgārjuna. Given the somewhat isolated nature of VP 18 in Nāgārjuna's argument, this suggestion does not seem to me to be able to bear much weight.

perception.[54] He notes that in the same way in which the inferential process is based on some perception in order for us to arrive at some piece of nonperceptual knowledge, such as when we infer fire from smoke,[55] there is an inferential process at work in ordinary perception as well, which, on the basis of the object of direct acquaintance (the sense-datum) subsequently produces the object of perception.[56] But it is evident that for the proponent of a representative theory of perception, an object of knowledge cannot serve as establishing a means of knowledge in the way the Naiyāyika requires. Since all we are directly acquainted with is the sense-datum, we cannot use this acquaintance to support the view that there are epistemic processes which give us direct access to a world of external, independently existent reals.

8.3. Temporal Relations between Means and Objects of Knowledge

Apart from the question of how the means of knowledge are established, Nāgārjuna also investigates the question of how they are related to the objects of knowledge. The two stand in a causal relation. In the case of perception, for example, the contact between the sensory faculty and the object perceived brings about the object of knowledge which for Nāgārjuna is not an external object but a sense-datum.[57] It is therefore hardly surprising that Nāgārjuna sees the relation between means of knowledge and objects of knowledge as facing the same difficulties as those of other causes and effects. He concentrates specifically on the problematic nature of their temporal relation.[58]

If the means of knowledge exists *before* its object, there is no justification for calling it a means of knowledge, since Nāgārjuna argued earlier that being such a means cannot be a purely intrinsic feature of some cognitive way of accessing the world.[59] A different interpretation of this difficulty is found in Vāt.syāyana's *Bhāṣya* on the NS 2.1.9.[60] Here the means of knowledge is regarded not as the perceptual faculty, but as a specific act of perception, and the object of knowledge as the object in the world which, when in contact with the sense-organ, produces the perception.[61] The prior existence of the means of knowledge would then be equivalent to the existence of the effect before the cause.[62]

If it existed *after* the knowable object, there is no justification for calling the object of knowledge an object of knowledge, since there is not anything yet by which it is known.[63] Nāgārjuna also identifies another difficulty when he argues that an arisen and a non-arisen thing cannot abide together.[64] If two things are such that one exists only now and the other only at a later moment, it cannot be the case that the second has any effect on the first, such as making it known.

The final possibility is that the means of knowledge and its object exist *simultaneously*.[65] The difficulty is here that for two simultaneously existing things (such as the two horns of a cow, which Nāgārjuna gives as an example, but also, e.g., the two ends of a see-saw moving in opposite directions), it becomes problematic to establish which is the cause and which is the effect. For Nāgārjuna the means of knowledge brings about the object of knowledge, the sense-datum. Therefore the means of knowledge is a cause, the object of knowledge its effect. But in this case we would better not assume that they exist

54. See Matilal (1986: chapter 8).

55. "In the same way [in the case of inferential knowledge] based on the connection between fire and smoke there is an inference preceded by a perception." *de bzhin du me dang du ba la 'brel pa las mngon sum sngon du 'gro ba can rjes su dpag pa yin no*. VP(S) 29:14–16.

56. The role of inference (or, as contemporary cognitive science would prefer to put it: the implicit reliance on biologically hard-wired rules in interpreting perceptual input) in the formation of visual perception in particular is now well supported by empirical research. See Hoffman (1998) for an accessible summary.

57. See VV(S) 70:17–18 where the means of knowledge is described as the cause (*kāraṇa*) of the object of knowledge.

58. VP 12. See also the discussion in Burton (1999: 191–199); Siderits (2003: 146).

59. See also Burton (1999: 172–174).

60. NS 443–445. Bronkhorst (1985: 107–111) argues that the discussion of the arguments concerning the temporal relations between means and objects of knowledge in NS 2, 1, 8–15 is evidence of Sarvāstivādin influence rather than an anticipation of Madhyamaka arguments, as claimed by Phaṇibhūṣaṇa. Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya (1968: 21–22).

61. In accordance with the definition of perception in NS 1, 1, 4.

62. While it is instructive to compare the explanation of the difficulties connected with the temporal relations between means of knowledge and their objects in the commentaries on NS 2, 1, 8–15 and Madhyamaka treatises, it is important to be aware of the significance of their respective background assumptions. The Nyāya theory of means of knowledge, based on Vaiśeṣika metaphysics, regards a particular knowledge-episode, such as an instance of perception, as caused by the combination of an externally existing object of knowledge and the respective sense-faculty. For Nāgārjuna, on the other hand, the object of knowledge (*prameya*) is not external but an internal object, a sense-datum. If we now regard the means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) as bringing about the internal representation which is the *prameya,* we realize that the causal relation between *pramāṇa* and *prameya* is seen in different ways by the Naiyāyika and by Nāgārjuna. For the former the *prameya* is causally prior, for the latter the *pramāṇa*.

63. For the Naiyāyika this dependence is purely notional (Jha [1984: 609, n. *]), whereas for Nāgārjuna it is both notional and existential, as argued in our discussion of causation on page 98 of this book.

64. *ma skyes pa dang skyes pa dag lhan cig mi gnas pa*. VP(S) 28:24–25.

65. In his commentary on NS 2, 1, 11 (NS 421–424) Vāt.syāyana argues that the problem is that if means and object of knowledge existed at the same time, there could be no sequence of cognitions. The point seems to be that if, for example, we hold a pot in our hand and thereby have both a visual and a tactile perception of it, the optical and haptic properties of the pot exist at the same time—and so should the corresponding perceptions. In our consciousness, however, they occur as successive, and indeed this non-simultaneity occupies an important place in the Nyāya theory of mind (see NS 1, 1, 16).

simultaneously, since it is the temporal ordering which characterizes one item as a cause, the other as an effect.[66]

One potential way of dealing with the difficulty of the temporal relation between means and object of knowledge is outlined by Vāt.syāyana in his commentary on NS 2, 1, 11.[67] He claims that the term *pramāṇa* is to be applied to something that has been the cause of apprehension of an object in the past, is so at present, or will be in the future. Similarly, the term *prameya* is to be used for an object that was apprehended in the past, is presently being apprehended, or will be apprehended in the future. Only in this way can we make sense of somebody saying "Bring the cook to do the cooking," since he has not cooked yet—otherwise the term "cook" would fail to refer. In this case we use "cook" just as a synonym for "whoever will do the cooking." The problem with this reply is that in this case it is obvious that being a cook is not regarded as an essential property of the person referred to. Since statements about the future are contingent, the expression "whoever will do the cooking" must be able to refer even if it turns out that person designated does not cook in the end. But now it is evident that someone who takes "cause" and "effect" to denote essential properties of things—as Nāgārjuna's Naiyāyika opponent does—cannot help himself to this reply. Because a statement referring to a cause or a means of knowledge might really be talking about what this thing is likely to do in the future, it must be possible that the thing picked out does not cause anything, or does not give us access to an object of knowledge—otherwise its intelligibility now would depend on what happens in the future. Since this is not the case (we know what "what is going to be a means of knowledge in the future" etc. refers to, and we do not know what is going to happen in the future), being a cause or a means of knowledge cannot be an essential property of the thing, since it could lose this property while remaining that very thing.

8.4. The Aim of Nāgārjuna's Arguments

Nāgārjuna's aim in his discussion of epistemology is not to argue that means of knowledge and their objects do not exist at all.[68] Such an argument immediately generates a paradox, for the non-existence of the means and objects of knowledge is itself an object of knowledge arrived at by some means. But then there must be at least one means and object of knowledge, something that was previously denied.[69]

What Nāgārjuna sets out to do is refute the existence of either means or objects of knowledge with substance-*svabhāva*.[70] He thus wants to show that there are no procedures that are intrinsically and essentially means of knowledge, nor are there independently existent reals of which they give us knowledge. Means of knowledge and their objects are notionally interdependent: without its ability to give us epistemic access to some thing, we would not label a cognitive procedure a means of knowledge. Similarly something cannot be called an object of knowledge unless there exist a means which allows us to know it. We can also argue that the two are existentially dependent on one another. The existence of certain objects of knowledge allows us to divide off certain types of our cognitive procedures and label them as means of knowledge; it is not the case that this division proceeds along certain fissures which had been there all along. Since our consciousness is a continuous flow without ready-made fissures, the objects of knowledge can be regarded as bringing the means of knowledge into existence. Similarly if the object of knowledge is to be identified with a mental representation (as Nāgārjuna argued above), it is evident that the means of knowledge brings this object about by unifying information received through the different sensory modalities. Means of knowledge and their objects therefore cannot be regarded as distinct substances.

This point is also stressed by Nāgārjuna's argument that each can assume another's role: a means of knowledge can be an object of knowledge and vice versa. There are two different ways to argue for this position.

First of all,[71] building on the familiar Nyāya definition that a means of knowledge is what produces the knowledge of something,[72] we can argue that since the object of knowledge is what brings the means of knowledge about, it is an essential part of what produces the knowledge of something, and therefore is an essential part of a means of knowledge. A similar argument can be applied to means of knowledge.[73]

Alternatively we could argue that a means of knowledge at one time can be an object of knowledge at another time, and vice versa. For example, when we establish a certain cognition as correct, this means of knowledge is an object of

66. I disagree with Burton's claim (1999: 193) that Nāgārjuna "provides no justification [. . .] for his unusual and far from self-evident assertion," since this matter is extensively discussed in those passages where Nāgārjuna deals specifically with causation (rather than with causal issues in epistemology). See chapter 5, section 5.4.3.

67. NS 421–424.

68. As claimed by Burton (1999: 194, 198).

69. VP 13.

70. MMK 3:5–6, VP 3–4.

71. VP 2.

72. See Vātsyāyana's *Bhāṣya* on NS 2, 1, 11 (NS 421–424).

73. See Burton (1999: 177).

knowledge. And what is thus known to be correct and is an object of knowledge can in turn be a means of knowledge for knowing other objects of knowledge later on. Vātsyāyana illustrates this point with the example of a piece of gold which can be both the object tested (if we want to determine how heavy it is) or a testing object itself (if we want to check the accuracy of a pair of scales).[74] In fact, as Nāgārjuna points out,[75] the Naiyāyikas themselves count ideas (*buddhi*, *blo*) both as a means of knowledge and as an object of knowledge.[76] Either way it becomes evident that means of knowledge and their objects cannot exist as essentially different entities.

It is important to realize that Nāgārjuna's rejection of the essentially existing means and objects of knowledge is presented within the discussion of the knowability of emptiness. His opponent argues that if all things are empty, means and objects of knowledge are empty too.[77] But if ultimately there are no objects of knowledge, emptiness cannot be an object of knowledge. And if there are ultimately no means of knowledge, if nothing has the intrinsic nature that is characteristic of a means of knowledge, then emptiness, even if it obtained, could never be known. There appears thus to be a fundamental inconsistency in the Madhyamaka project of establishing the truth of emptiness.[78]

Nāgārjuna's response to this difficulty is to investigate the realist's way of accounting for means and objects of knowledge with characteristic natures as means and objects, in order to demonstrate that all possible ways of establishing them fail. This sequence of arguments, which has already been discussed above, is to be seen not so much as a *tu quoque* move on the side of Nāgārjuna[79] but as an assessment of the realist's epistemological position which lets emptiness come out as unknowable. For the realist, means and objects of knowledge have intrinsic characteristics, and there are invariant relations of epistemic priority, that is, cognitive procedures which are means of knowledge in all possible contexts. On this account of epistemology it is indeed impossible to establish emptiness. But as we saw earlier in this chapter, Nāgārjuna tries to argue that this is not the right account of epistemology. Even though there are no means of knowledge that are intrinsically such, that deliver knowledge in every context, there are still cognitive procedures which function as means of knowledge in the specific context in which they are employed, regimented by certain background constraints and other pragmatic features. By using these procedures (which, Nāgārjuna argues, are all the means of knowledge there are anyway) we can achieve knowledge of emptiness even though ultimately there are neither means of knowledge nor objects of knowledge. Certain procedures can still count conventionally as means of knowledge within the framework of certain aims and directions of inquiry. Nāgārjuna's arguments about epistemology have therefore to be seen as fulfilling two purposes. First, they continue his general project of examining different types of objects one by one and arguing that none has substance-*svabhāva* by considering means of knowledge and their objects. Second, and more specifically, they establish the necessary background epistemology needed for understanding how emptiness could in fact be known. It is this second aim which is particulary interesting, since it provides us with the outlines of a specific Madhyamaka theory of knowledge.[80]

74. In the commentary on NS 2, 1, 16 (NS 433–440). See also (Bhattacharya 1977: 268).

75. VP 20.

76. NS 1, 1, 9.

77. VV 5–6.

78. Siderits (2003: 140) refers to this as the "self-stultification objection."

79. Siderits (2003: 147).

80. For a good assessment of this and its relation to the debate about anti-realism, see Siderits (2003: chapter 7).

9

Language

In contrast to such topics as causation, motion, the self, and the theory of knowledge, language is not given much explicit discussion in Nāgārjuna's works. This does not mean that such matters were not important to Nāgārjuna but merely that his extant writings do not contain an extended connected discussion of the impact of his theory of emptiness on our view of language. Nevertheless it is possible to extract some of Nāgārjuna's views on this philosophically highly interesting issue from remarks found at different places in his works.

9.1. Nāgārjuna's View of Language and the "No-Thesis" View

A good starting point for the discussion of Nāgārjuna's conception of how the theory of emptiness affects our view of language is his so-called no-thesis view. This is without a doubt one of the most immediately puzzling philosophical features of Nāgārjuna's thought and is also largely responsible for ascribing to him either sceptical or mystical leanings (or indeed both). The *locus classicus* for this view is found in verse 29 of the VV:

If I had some thesis the defect [just mentioned] would as a consequence attach to me. But I have no thesis, so this defect is not applicable to me.[1]

1. *yadi kācana pratijñā syān me tata eṣa me bhaved doṣah. / nāsti ca mama pratijñā tasmān naivāsti me doṣah.* .

That this absence of a thesis is to be regarded as a positive feature is stressed in YS. 50, where Nāgārjuna remarks about the Buddhas:

For these great beings there is no position, no dispute. How could there be another's [opposing] position for those who have no position?[2]

Now it is important to observe that when these passages are considered in isolation, it is very hard to make any coherent sense of them, for even if we assume that the Buddhas do not hold any philosophical position anymore (having perhaps passed beyond all conceptual thinking), how are we to make sense of the first quotation which, in the middle of a work full of philosophical theses, claims that there is no such thesis asserted at all?

In fact this first statement is even more difficult to interpret than the famous last sentence of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, which is preceded by the equally famous ladder-metaphor.[3] Although Wittgenstein here denies that his preceding statements are of anything but instrumental value, claims that they turn out to be nonsensical *after* they have fulfilled their instrumental role, and that there is something outside of the grasp of these statements, at least he does not deny making any statements at all!

9.2. VV 29 in Context

In order to get a clearer understanding of what these passages might mean, it is important to consider them in the argumentative context in which they occur. The VV, which contains the first passage given above, is a work of seventy verses, accompanied by Nāgārjuna's autocommentary. As its title—which translates as "The Dispeller of Objections"—suggests, its main aim is to answer objections which had been advanced concerning Nāgārjuna's theses. Its being of a rather technical and specific nature makes it plausible to assume that the VV was written later than his main work, the MMK, and was meant to deal with particular problems arising from the arguments set out there.[4] The first twenty verses and their commentaries contain criticisms of Nāgārjuna's

2. *che ba'i bdag nyid can de dag / rnams la phyogs med rtsod pa med / gang rnams la ni phyogs med pa / de la gzhan phyogs ga la yod*.

3. 6.54 My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually realizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)[. . .] 7. Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.

4. Mabbett (1996: 306–307); Bhattacharya (1999: 124).

position, which are answered in the remaining verses and their commentaries. Verse 29, given above, specifically addresses the problem raised by the opponent in verse 4.

The principal point the opponent makes at the beginning of the VV concerns the status of Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness. The opponent argues that Nāgārjuna faces a dilemma whose horns are *inconsistency* and *impotence*. If he assumes his claim not to be empty, he has contradicted his own thesis of universal emptiness (because there is now at least one thing that is not empty). If, on the other hand, Nāgārjuna takes his own claim to be empty too, the opponent argues, this claim is then unable to deny the existence of independently existing phenomena that the opponent asserts. As becomes clear later in verse 22, Nāgārjuna accepts the second horn of the dilemma: everything is empty, and his claim that everything is empty is empty too. As he stresses in the next verse, this reasoning, however, does not entail that the claim could not carry out its philosophical function. A key can open a door in a film even though it is only a key in the film, not a real key.[5] Verse 4 now considers a specific comeback Nāgārjuna could make in reply to the difficulty arising from accepting this second alternative, the charge of the argumentational impotence of his claim of universal emptiness. Nāgārjuna could argue that if universal emptiness renders his own claim impotent, the opponent's claims, being also subsumed under the universal statement of everything being empty, are similarly impotent and therefore cannot act as a refutation of Nāgārjuna's claim either. But as the opponent is quick to point out, this thinking involves a blatant *petitio principii*: only if we already accept that everything is empty will the opponent's arguments be rendered empty and impotent. But this is exactly the thesis the opponent denies. For him at least, some things are not empty, and in particular his own statements are not subject to Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness. The difficulty the opponent raised is one that arises because of the specific character (*lakṣaṇa*) of Nāgārjuna's system, namely the claim that everything is empty. It does not apply to someone who does not make that assumption.

Verse 29 then is made in reply to this supposed counterargument and its rejection as a *petitio*. There Nāgārjuna claims that the particular defect (of his thesis of universal emptiness rendering his own philosophical assertions impotent) would indeed apply *if he had any position*. But given that he has no position, the difficulty therefore does not apply to him.

Now it will strike the reader that this is a rather curious reply to make. It is evident that the opponent's criticisms formulated in verse 4 as well as in the preceding verses rest on a misunderstanding of the central term "emptiness." What exactly this misunderstanding amounts to is less clear. In fact the above set of arguments would make sense if we assumed that the opponent understood "empty" to mean "false," or "meaningless," or even "nonexistent."[6] But as a reply to a criticism based on misunderstanding of this kind Nāgārjuna's reply in verse 29 seems a little extreme, given that it would have been perfectly sufficient and far less controversial for him to point out that emptiness entailed neither falsity nor meaninglessness nor non-existence and that he thereby could assert that his claims both are empty *and* simultaneously are able to refute the opponent's objections (in fact he makes exactly these points in verses 21 and 22). Even if we agree with Mabbett that

> it may be the case that the objection addressed by a given verse has already been essentially refuted, but in turning to each new objection Nāgārjuna seeks to make a fresh rebuttal in order to administer the *coup de grâce*[7]

Nāgārjuna here seems to use a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Why deny holding any proposition whatsoever if it would have been perfectly sufficient to point out that since "empty" does not mean "non-existent," it is completely unproblematic to claim that one's own position is as empty as everything else?

We can distinguish at least three different ways in which Nāgārjuna's crucial statement that he has no position can be interpreted. I will refer to these as the *semantic*, *argumentational*, and *transcendent* interpretations. According to the *semantic* interpretation Nāgārjuna does not claim to hold no thesis whatsoever, but claims only to accept no statements that are taken to have a particular semantics. If we follow the *argumentational* interpretation, Nāgārjuna makes a claim about how one should proceed in debates, namely by always refuting

5. As Nāgārjuna points out in MMK 1:10, this is in fact a necessary condition for its being able to perform its function: only a cinematic key could open a cinematic door, a real key could not. See also the commentary on this verse in Garfield (1995: 119).

6. Indeed we might think that the argumentative context makes it most likely that the opponent misunderstands "empty" as "nonexistent." In this case the problem that nonexistent statements cannot really refute anything seems to be most pressing. But in the case of the other two alternatives other problems become more serious. If Nāgārjuna meant "meaningless" when he said "empty," his claim that everything is empty would obviously just be false, given that we perfectly well understand the claim he makes (in the same way as somebody saying "all statements, including this one, are not grammatically well formed" would be uttering a falsehood). If, however, "empty" meant "false," Nāgārjuna's thesis of universal emptiness would reduce to the liar paradox and there is no good textual evidence that *this* is the problem the opponent had in mind. On this last point compare also the discussion in Mabbett (1996) and Sagal (1992).

7. (1996: 307).

opponents via *reductio* arguments, without ever adopting any thesis oneself. The *transcendent* interpretation finally reads Nāgārjuna's statement as the assertion of the existence of an inexpressible reality beyond concepts and language.

All three of these interpretations have historical predecessors in the commentarial tradition. The semantic and argumentational interpretation can be found in works of the dGe lugs tradition, in particular those of Tsong kha pa[8] and mKhas grub rje,[9] while a variety of views which can all be regarded as some kind of transcendental interpretation can be found in the writings of scholars like rNgog blo ldan shes rab,[10] Go rams pa,[11] and dGe 'dun chos 'phel.[12] The following discussion will be restricted to an exposition of the semantic interpretation, primarily because this appears to give us the clearest understanding of the role of verse 29 in the context of Nāgārjuna's arguments.

The argumentational and transcendent interpretations tend to use Nāgārjuna's denial of a thesis as a textual peg on which to hang an argument concerned with quite different matters from those dealt with in the VV. Tsong kha pa, for example, refers to this verse in the context of expounding the distinction between Svātantrikas and Prāsaṇgikas; Sa skya Pandita[13] offers the transcendent interpretation in the context of a debating manual (advising the reader on how to debate with somebody who does not put forward a position); dGe 'dun chos 'phel's work, despite its title, is not a study of Nāgārjuna's thought in particular, but is concerned mainly with criticizing the then prevalent dGe lugs interpretation of Madhyamaka philosophy more generally.

This is not to say, of course, that the argumentational and transcendent interpretations are for this reason deficient or lacking in interest within the context in which they are presented. However, it is important to be aware that these contexts were not Nāgārjuna's context. There is certainly no reason for suspicion toward later Indian or indeed non-Indian works as not giving a valid interpretation of Nāgārjuna's thoughts. Nevertheless, the most interesting of these for the present purpose of a philosophical analysis of Nāgārjuna's thoughts are those that allow us to understand passages from his works in their argumentative context, rather than using them as a starting point for presenting their own ideas on a particular topic.

8. Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (2000–2004: III:230, 236–249).

9. Ruegg (2000: 173–187).

10. See Ruegg (2000: 32–33, n. 59).

11. See Ruegg (2000: 194–195, n. 135).

12. See Lopez (1994). A translation of dGe 'dun chos 'phel's *Klu grub dgongs rgyan* is in Lopez (2005).

13. In his *mKhas pa rnams 'jug pa'i sgo*, III: 37–39. See Jackson (1987: vol. 1, 271) for the Tibetan text, volume 2, 341–342 for an English translation. A summary with comments is in Ruegg (2000: 169–171).

9.3. The Semantic Interpretation

If we consider the major dGe lugs pa commentaries on verse 29 it becomes evident that these usually regard Nāgārjuna's statement as elliptical. What Nāgārjuna *really* means when saying that he has no position, these commentaries claim, is that he has no positions that are non-empty.[14]

The key to understanding the point made in these commentaries lies of course in a precise understanding of what it means for a position or statement to be empty. An object is empty if it does not exist from its own side and is therefore dependent on other objects, so that its existence is not grounded in its "own-nature" (*svabhāva, rang bzhin*). The Buddhist commentarial tradition considers a variety of dependence relations in which objects stand and which prevent them from existing in a non-empty way. These dependence relations include causal dependence, dependence of a whole on its parts, as well as dependence on a cognizing subject.[15] While in the case of certain objects their independent existence seems at least a *prima facie* plausibility which the Mādhyamika then attempts to refute by appropriate arguments, the emptiness of statements appears to be entirely uncontroversial. Material objects might be considered to exist in causal and mereological dependence, but independent of a cognizing subject; abstract objects, platonistically conceived, will be assumed to be independent in all three ways. Statements, however, can hardly be taken to "exist from their own side" in any of the three senses.

As even Nāgārjuna's opponent affirms in VV 1, *token*[16] utterances are events that arise in dependence on causes and conditions like all other events. When we consider utterances as *types*, it is equally clear that, assuming a compositional semantics, these are mereologically dependent on their parts, since the meaning of the sentence type is a function of the meanings of its constituents or parts. Finally, considering a constituent like the expression "red," we realize that its referring to the color red is no property the word "red" has independent of everything else: the connection of this particular phonetic or typographic object with the property is a convention that holds for speakers of English; for speakers of French the same property is connected (by a different set of conventions) with "rouge," for speakers of Tibetan with "dmar po," and so forth. That

14. "It is not being said that the Mādhyamika has no theses; he merely has not theses that inherently exist." Hopkins (1983: 471). The same point is made in mKhas grub rje's commentary on this passage; see Ruegg (2000: 179).

15. See, e.g., Gyatso (2005: 66–69).

16. A particular utterance of a sentence is a sentence-token, what is expressed by several such utterances that say the same thing is a sentence-type.

"red" refers to the color red depends on a complex framework of conventions connecting a community of cognizing subjects that share a language. Unless we mistakenly consider "empty" to mean "false" or "meaningless" or "nonexistent," the claim that utterances conceived of as either tokens or types are *not* empty seems to be a position it is hard to make sense of.

Despite the *prima facie* strangeness of their claims, theories of the nonemptiness of language have found their defenders. Perhaps the most extreme example is the view of language defended by the Mīm. āmsākas.[17] A primary motivation of the Mīm. āmsā theory of language was to provide a justification of the authoritative status of the Vedas. As opposed to the Naiyāyikas, who justify the Vedas by their divine authorship, the Mīm. āmsākas regard them as authorless (*apauruṣeya*). The elements of the Vedic language are assumed to exist eternally, without the necessity of a speaker. Any particular human utterance of course depends on a phonetic or typographical instantiation of a piece of language, but the types thus instantiated exist *ante rem*, without depending on the tokens instantiating them. The referents of expressions, which the Mīm. āmsākas take to be eternal and unchanging universals, are related to these expressions via a set of objective and necessary relations.[18]

While the Mīm. āmsā view of language attracted plenty of criticism from the Buddhist side (centred around Dignāgas *apoha* theory),[19] there is no good evidence that this is the view Nāgārjuna's opponent in the VV wants to defend.[20]

There is, however, some interesting evidence that at least some of Nāgārjuna's Indian commentators saw him as opposed to similar conceptions of language. When commenting on MMK 2:8 in his *Prajñāpradīpa*, Bhāviveka raises the question why the verbal root *gam*, "to go," is used in its *ātmanepada* form "*gacchate*" rather than being conjugated in the usual *parasmaipada* manner as a "*gacchati*."[21] Bhāviveka lists a variety of quotations from Indian grammarians illustrating the perils of wrong grammar. When the god Tvaṣtr created a serpent to destroy Indra, he exclaimed *indraśatrur vardhasva*, intending to say "May you prosper, destroyer of Indra!" Since he intended the compound to be a *tatpuruṣa*, it should have been stressed on the ultimate syllable. Unfortunately Tvaṣtr stressed it on the first syllable, turning it into a *bahuvrīhi* meaning "having Indra as a destroyer." The words did what they meant rather than what Tvaṣtr intended them to mean, and Indra destroyed the snake, not the other way round.[22] Bhāviveka then continues to observe that Nāgārjuna's irregular use of *gacchate* not only was intentional, but served a philosophical purpose. By demonstrating that no disaster would strike from an irregular use of grammar, Nāgārjuna was aiming to convince his opponents to give up their attachment to mere words, together with the assumption that there was a substantial nature (*svarūpa*) of words which determined that they could appear only in certain grammatical forms.[23]

Nevertheless, for the purposes of interpreting the VV it makes better systematic sense to ascribe a different (and less extreme) theory than that to Nāgārjuna's opponent. According to this theory, whether a statement is empty or not does not depend on the mind-independent existence of language in some Platonic heaven but on the *semantics* we employ when interpreting the statement. Even if we accept that the link between "red" and the property of redness is conventional, this fact does not imply that we also think that the property of redness only has conventional existence as well. It can still be a property that exists in the world independent on human conventions and intentions. Moreover, even if the linkage of *particular words* to their referents should prove to be conventional, the linkage of entire sentences to the world might not be. For example we might suppose that the statement "The apple is red" is linked to the state of affairs it refers to by a relation of structural similarity, by their sharing of a common logical form, which in turn is not a product of convention. Once we have linked up the simple signs of our language with the simple objects in the world, we then do not need a *further* set of conventions to link up the complex signs (the sentences) with the complex objects (facts or states of affairs), in the same way as once we have settled by convention how the different chessmen are to move we do not have to bring in further conventions to decide whether a particular distribution of chessmen on the board will allow white to mate in five moves. This can be decided just by reference to the initial conventions, and in the same way the truth-conditions of a sentence such as "The apple is red" can be worked out by considering the simple signs it is made up of and how these are put together in the sentence.

17. The basic text of this school is Jaimini's *Pūrva Mīm. āmsā Sūtra*. For the Mīm. āmsā theory of language, see especially the first *adhyāya*, first *pada* of this text (Jaimini [1916: 1–22]). See also D'Sa (1980: 80–82, 113–140).

18. Sharma (1960: 220–222).

19. See Dreyfus (1997: 213–215).

20. That Nāgārjuna's opponent was a Naiyāyika (as claimed by Bhattacharya [1977: 265] and Bhattacharya et al. [1978: 1]) is supported by the close connection between the VV and the NS (Meuthrath [1999]). See Bhattacharya (1999: 124) for further references.

21. Ames (1995: 309). This form is not found in any version of Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* from which the Sanskrit text of the MMK is usually extracted. Here we just read "*gacchati*" (PP 97:14, see also de Jong [1978]). Only recently some fragments of older manuscripts of the MMK independent of the *Prasannapadā* have been discovered (see Ye [2006a; 2006b]). Unfortunately the verse in question is not among them. Nevertheless, recent palaeographical research strongly suggests that "*gacchate*" is indeed the correct reading MacDonald 2007: 32–33.

22. Ames (1995: 342, n. 65). Notes 64–70 provide very useful information for identifying some of the authors Bhāviveka quotes.

23. Ames (1995: 310).

In fact both the assumptions behind this picture of the non-emptiness of statements—the assumption that there is a "ready-made world," to borrow a phrase of Putnam's, and the assumption that there is a structural link between language and the world—are extremely widespread, so widespread indeed that we might refer to them jointly as the "standard picture." This standard picture provides us with a good idea of what is meant by the notion of *svabhāva* in the context of language, as opposed to an ontological understanding of *svabhāva* in terms of substance, or a cognitive understanding in terms of a superimposition (*samāropa*) which conceptualizes objects as permanent and observerindependent. The standard picture therefore represents the third, the semantic dimension of *svabhāva* mentioned in chapter 2.

It is evident that the standard picture does not sit well with the thesis of universal emptiness. Neither the existence of a world sliced up "at the joints" into particulars and properties nor the existence of an objective structural similarity between sentences and the world would be acceptable for the Mādhyamika. A Mādhyamika-compatible semantics would deny the existence of a world differentiated objectively into different logical parts and would try to replace the structure-based picture of the language-world link by a different one, perhaps by a theory built on speaker conventions.

There is good historical evidence that the standard picture is indeed what Nāgārjuna's opponent presupposes if we take into account how closely many of the arguments in the VV engage with the NS. Garfield[24] points out:

[I]n the Nyāya-influenced logico-semantic context in which these debates [in the VV] originate the dominant view of meaningful assertion (the one that Nāgārjuna calls into question) is one that from our vantagepoint can best be characterized as a version of Fregean realism: meaningful assertions are meaningful because they denote or express independently existent properties. A proposition is the pervasion of an individual entity or groups or entities by a real universal or sequence of universals.[25]

On this understanding of the emptiness of statements we can read the opponent as claiming in VV 1 that because of Nāgārjuna's thesis of universal emptiness, the Mādhyamika cannot accept the standard semantic interpretation for his utterances. For Nāgārjuna both questions of ontology (how the world is sliced up) and of semantics (how language and the world are linked) must be settled by appeal to conventions. The opponent, on the other hand, can assume that there is a "ready-made world," as well as an objective, structural way of linking this to our language.[26] Now the opponent argues that on this picture Nāgārjuna never gets out of his system of conventions to connect his claims with the things—and *that* is the reason why his claims are unable to refute the opponent's claims, which manage to connect with the things. Nāgārjuna's arguments can no more refute the opponent than the rain in a meteorological simulation can moisten real soil.[27] Nāgārjuna's opponent thus considers the interesting case of a language in which we have two kinds of statements: some are interpreted according to the standard semantics (referring via an objective reference relation to objects that exists independently of us), some are interpreted according to Nāgārjuna's semantics (which does not make these assumptions). The opponent argues that statements of the second kind could not possibly influence the first kind. To see this point, consider a similarly structured case. Assume we recognize two kinds of norms, norms that are real, objective, "out there," and norms that are the product of human convention. (Moral realists take certain ethical norms to be of the first kind, rules for the regulation of traffic are generally considered to be of the second kind). Now it is clear that although the two kinds of norms could be in conflict, a norm of the second kind could never override one of the first kind, since the former are part of the objective normative framework of the world while the latter are only a supplement of human design.

Although he does not explicitly say so, Nāgārjuna's arguments seem to imply that he agrees this situation would indeed be problematic. If there are two kinds of statements, the latter would be as impotent compared to the former as a film would be to reality: we could not escape the burning cinema by entering the scene projected onto the wall. Nāgārjuna counters the charge of impotence by denying that there are two kinds of statements, which differ like film and reality. All statements are to be interpreted in the same way, so that their interaction is not ontologically any more problematic than the interaction of different characters in a film.[28]

Understanding the emptiness of statements as their interpretation according to a non-standard semantics, we can also give a more interesting rendering

24. Garfield (1996: 12).

25. On the relation between the VV and the Nyāya school, see Oberhammer (1963), Bhattacharya (1977) and Meuthrath (1999). For some remarks on the realist background of the Navya-Nyāya see, Ingalls (1951: 1, 33–35).

26. Another manifestation of the Naiyāyika opponent's conception of a harmonious word-world link is the view that the simple terms of our language cannot fail to refer (as is discussed in chapter 3).

27. In VV(S) 43:2–6 the opponent claims, that "A fire that does not exist cannot burn, a weapon that does not exist cannot cut, water that does not exist cannot moisten; similarly a statement that does not exist cannot deny the *svabhāva* of all things." *na hy asatāgninā śakyam. dagdhum | na hy asatā śastreṇa śakyam. chettum | na hy asatībhir adbhiḥśakyaṃkledayitum | evam asatā vacanena na śakyah. sarvabhāvasvabhāvapratiṣedhah. kartum.*

28. See particularly VV 23, 27; MMK 17:31–33.

of the argument in VV 4. Remember that there the opponent claims that Nāgārjuna might want to say:

According to this very method, a negation of negation is also impossible; so your negation of the statement negating the intrinsic nature of all things is impossible.[29]

The opponent has just claimed that because Nāgārjuna's theory entailed a nonstandard semantics, his assertions did not manage to connect with the world and were therefore meaningless. But if the opponent then sets out to refute the thesis of universal emptiness, this attempt means either that he takes it to be meaningful after all (and therefore deserving refutation) or that the statement he wants to defend (which is the negation of Nāgārjuna's claim) is meaningless as well, since plugging in the word "not" will not help to turn nonsense into sense.

The opponent could reply to this charge by pointing out the difference between internal and external negation. While it is plausible to assume that the internal negation of a nonsensical statement is nonsensical too ("the number seven is *not* yellow [but rather some other color]" is as problematic as "the number seven is yellow"), this is not the case for an external negation ("*it is not the case that* the number seven is yellow" is not just meaningful but also generally taken to be necessarily true). Nāgārjuna's opponent could then claim that his negation of the claim of universal emptiness is external only and therefore not affected by the lack of meaning in the claim it negates.[30]

It is possible that the opponent had argued like this because a distinction between the different scopes of negation, as well as between the accompanying presuppositional and nonpresuppositional readings, was made in the philosophical literature of the time.[31] It has to be noted, however, that the passage in question fails to make any direct reference to different kinds of negation being involved.[32]

A more abstract way of employing the distinction between the two kinds of negation in the opponent's reply consists in rejecting Nāgārjuna's peculiar semantics. Here the opponent points out that he does not have to accept Nāgārjuna's semantics, since it is a particular characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) of Nāgārjuna's system but nothing the opponent would be forced to take on board.[33] The opponent negates not just Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness, but the entire non-standard semantics which comes with it. If *prasajya*-negation is seen as a presupposition-cancelling negation which negates not just a proposition but also that proposition's presuppositions,[34] and if the semantics according to which a speaker wants the set of his utterances interpreted is included among these presuppositions, denying a claim together with the semantics it comes with can be regarded as an example of *prasajya*-negation.

9.4. The Specific Role of Verse 29

It is interesting to note that verse 29, which is meant to be a reply to the opponent's argument given in verse 4, does not attempt a comeback in trying to argue that the opponent's negation of Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness is somehow impossible after all. Instead Nāgārjuna addresses a difficulty (*doṣa*) arising from the "specific character" of his system which the opponent raises at the end of verse 4.

In mKhas grub rje's *sTong thun chen mo*, an influential dGe lugs commentary which deals with the interpretation of this passage,[35] this difficulty is taken to be inconsistency. If Nāgārjuna assumed that his thesis of universal emptiness was non-empty itself (*rang bzhin gyis yod pa*) and, on our interpretation, would therefore have to be supplied with a semantics according to the standard picture, his position would be inconsistent (at least until he proposed a special reason why this statement should be excepted, which Nāgārjuna does not do). But, mKhas grub rje argues, since none of Nāgārjuna's claims of universal emptiness are taken to be non-empty, the difficulty of inconsistency does not arise.[36] The same point is made by Tsong kha pa:[37]

Therefore, the issue as to having or not having theses is not an argument about whether [Nāgārjuna] has them *in general*. It is an

29. *pratiṣedhapratiṣedho 'py anenaiva kalpenānupapannah. tatra yadbhavān sarvabhāvasvabhāvapratiṣedhavacanam. pratiṣedhayati tad anupapannam iti.* VV(S) 45:16–18.

30. Garfield (1996: 12) reads the argument in this way and argues that the opponent just wants to negate Nāgārjuna's position, without asserting the contrary.

31. For present purposes we can assume a (simplifying) identification of *paryudāsa* with internal negation and of *prasajyapratiṣedha* with external negation. For further differentiation, see Ruegg (2002: n. 6, 19–24) as well as the discussion in chapter 4, section 4.1.

32. Compare also the discussion in Ruegg (2000: 117).

33. "The objection applies only to the specific character of your proposition, not to that of mine. It is you who say all things are void, not I. The initial thesis is not mine." *tava hi pratijñālakṣaṇaprāptam. na mama | bhavān bravīti śūnyāh. sarvabhāvā iti nāham | pūrvakah. paks.o na mama*. VV(S) 45:19–66:2.

34. As, e.g., in Shaw (1978: 63–64).

35. See Ruegg (2000: 173–187) for a summary and analysis of the relevant part of the commentary.

36. 150a1–3: Ruegg (2000: 179).

37. *des na dam bca' yod med ni spyir yod med rtsod pa ma yin gyi | dngos po thams cad la rang bzhin med do zhes dam bcas pa'i tshig la rang bzhin yod med rtsod pa yin pas | de 'dra ba'i dam bcas pa'i tshig de la rang bzhin yod par khas blangs na dngos po thams cad rang bzhin med par dam bcas pa dang 'gal ba'i skyon nged la yod na'ng | nged de ltar mi 'dod pas skyon de nga la med* (1985: 687:13–17); (2000–2004: III:241).

argument as to whether the words of the thesis "all things lack intrinsic nature" have intrinsic nature. [Therefore the meaning of the lines from the VV is this:] If I accepted that the words of such a thesis had an intrinsic nature, then I could be faulted for contradicting the thesis that all things lack intrinsic nature, but because I do not accept that, I cannot be faulted.

What is unsatisfactory about this interpretation is that Nāgārjuna has already made the point ascribed to him here in verse 22. There he claims that his claim of universal emptiness is also empty, and he gives reasons why he thinks it can still have argumentative force, thus avoiding the charge of impotence. Unless we assume Nāgārjuna to be unnecessarily repetitive, it is not clear why we should assume that he makes the very same point once again a couple of verses later, and also formulates it in a much more obscure manner than the first time.

It is important to note that verses 21–28, which deal with the objections raised in the first three verses of the VV, are concerned primarily with solving the dilemma of inconsistency and impotence which is faced by Nāgārjuna's claim of universal emptiness. Verse 29, however (*pace* mKhas grub and Tsong kha pa), is not again concerned with the thesis of universal emptiness. Nāgārjuna realizes that the twin problem of inconsistency and impotence is a problem not just for his thesis of universal emptiness, but for *any other claim* he holds as well. Any other claim either will face the problem of being a counterexample to Nāgārjuna's assertion that all claims should be given a non-standard semantics, or will fail to connect with the world in the way sentences with the standard semantics do, and will therefore be meaningless. I want to argue that this is the difficulty arising from the "specific character" of Nāgārjuna's system to which the opponent refers in verse 4 and which Nāgārjuna takes up again at the beginning of verse 29. He is not interested in defending the claim (attributed to him by the opponent in verse 4) that his thesis of universal emptiness could not possibly be negated. Instead he takes up the opponent's more important point that apart from defending his claim of universal emptiness from the twin problems of inconsistency and impotence, he should better say something about the status of his *other* assertions as well. This is why he says in verse 29 that none of his other assertions should be regarded as propositions with standard semantics (*pratijñā*) either.[38]

The plausibility of this interpretation rests on there being two meaning of "thesis" (*pratijñā*) in play here, one referring to theses with standard semantics (which Nāgārjuna rejects) and one refering to theses with nonstandard semantics (which Nāgārjuna does not reject). In fact there appears to be good textual evidence that the notion of "thesis" is indeed used in two different ways in Madhyamaka literature.

Candrakīrti's commentary on Nāgārjuna uses one sense of thesis (*pratijñā*) to refer to statements with clearly unproblematic status; indeed some utterances by Nāgārjuna himself are regarded as theses in this way,[39] while theses in another sense are firmly rejected. We might want to refer to the first kind of theses as *propositions*, and to the second as *views*. How are we to understand the distinction between them? It has been claimed that views are theses with philosophical or metaphysical commitments[40] and, more specifically, that they postulate an independently existing entity (*bhāva*).[41] Propositions, on the other hand, do not make such commitments and are therefore philosophically unproblematic. It is important to note at this point, however, that what distinguishes a view from a proposition is not just that the former asserts the existence of objects existing by *svabhāva* while the latter does not. On this understanding the statement "Object *x* does not depend in any way on any other object" would be a view concerning *x*, while "Object *x* stands in a variety of dependence relations with other objects" would not be. Ontological commitment comes into play only at the level of semantics. Whether someone asserting that the average man has 2.4 children is committed to an object that acts as the reference of the expression "the average man" depends on the semantics given. If we interpret the statement in the way statements such as "Paul has two children" are usually interpreted, such commitment to a strange man with partial children ensues; if, on the other hand, we read it (more plausibly) as a statement about ratios between the number of men and children in a certain set, there is no such commitment.

It therefore seems to be plausible to take the distinction between views and propositions and between theses with standard and non-standard semantics as coinciding. The views the Mādhyamika rejects are theses that are interpreted by referring to a ready-made world and a structural link between this world and our language. The propositions he takes to be unproblematic, and some of which he holds himself, are theses that are given a semantics that makes neither of these two assumptions.

38. Oetke (2003: 468–471) reconstruction of Nāgārjuna's argument results in a different reading of verse 29; he argues that here Nāgārjuna claims that for the Mādhyamika there is no thesis to be made at the absolute level (*paramārtha*)—a reading entirely consistent with Nāgārjuna's other statements (e.g., MMK 18:9).

39. For example, MMK 1:1 in PP 13:3. See Ruegg (1983: 213–214) for further examples. Oetke (2003: 458– 459), however, argues that the distinction between two senses of *pratijñā* arises only in the later Prāsan. gika literature and should not be read back into Nāgārjuna's works.

40. Sagal (1992: 83).

41. Ruegg (1983: 213).

Some support for this semantic interpretation of the difference between the two senses of "thesis" can be gained from MMK 13:8:

The Victorious Ones have announced that emptiness is the relinquishing of all views. Those who in turn hold emptiness as a view were said to be incurable.[42]

Although Nāgārjuna does not use the word *pratijñā* for "view" but rather talks of *dṛṣṭi*, it seems sensible to treat the two terms as synonymous in this context.[43] If the difference between propositions and views just depended on what the statement asserted, statements asserting the emptiness of some phenomenon such as "each spatio-temporal object depends causally on some other object" *ex hypothesi* could not be views, contrary to what Nāgārjuna says in the verse just cited. If, however, we treat "view" as denoting a statement together with the standard semantics, this is indeed possible. For if we read "each spatio-temporal object depends causally on some other object" as asserting the existence of various objectively existing individuals in the world, linked by a relation of causation, about which we speak by exploiting an objectively obtaining structural similarity between language and the world, it would indeed be turned into a view.

That the point at issue here is a specific (and, as Nāgārjuna sees it, inappropriate) conception of semantics is supported by Candrakīrti's commentary on this verse. Candrakīrti argues that one taking emptiness to be a view is like one who, when being told by a shopkeeper that he has nothing to sell, asks the shopkeeper to sell him that nothing. The customer (like the White King in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*) treats "nothing" like a proper name and therefore expects it to denote a particular object, as proper names do. But though this view is justified by the surface grammar of the sentence concerned, it does not lead to an understanding of what the merchant wants to say. Similarly, giving a standard semantical interpretation of statements asserting emptiness does not lead to an understanding of what Nāgārjuna wants to say.[44]

The semantic interpretation outlined above provides a good way of making sense of verse 29 within the argumentative structure of the VV and also provides us with an idea of what a Madhyamaka theory of language would look like. What Nāgārjuna means when he says that he "has no thesis" is that none of his theoretical statements (including the claim of universal emptiness) is to be interpreted according to a semantics based on the standard picture. For the Mādhyamika no assertion is to be taken to refer to a ready-made world of mindindependent objects, nor can he assume that there is a structural similarity linking word and world which is independent of human conceptual activity.

42. *śūnyatā sarvadṛṣṭīnām. proktā nih. saraṇam. jinaih. / yeṣām. tu śūnyatādṛṣṭis tān asādhyān babhāṣire*.

43. As done by Ruegg (1986: 232–233) and Mabbett (1996: 301). For more details on the relation between the two terms *pratijñā* and *dṛṣṭi*, see Ruegg (2000: 129–136).

44. This interpretation does not imply, of course, that one could hold "any position at all" as long as one gives it the required nonstandard semantics, as Galloway (1989: n. 5, 27) asserts. A statement such as "Things arise from what is other than themselves" will be regarded as false by Nāgārjuna, independent of whether it is interpreted according to the standard or the non-standard semantics.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XVIII

आत्मपरीक्षा अष्टादशमं प्रकरणम्। ātmaparīkṣā nāmāṣṭadaśamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀法品第十八(十二偈) **zhōng lùn guān fǎ pǐn dì shí bā (shí èr jié;jì)**

།བདག་དང་ཆོས་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅོ་བརྒྱད་པའོ།། | bdag daṅ chos brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa bcwo [?] brgyad pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XVIII - Examination of the Bifurcated Self

JONES (Skt):
18. The Self

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Self

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
18. Analysis of the Self

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[18] Examination of the Soul (12 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Self and the Way Things Really Are

STRENG (Skt):
Section 18 - An Analysis of the Individual Self (the Self and Phenomena) In 12 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
18. the atman.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 18 Contemplation of Dharmas 12 Verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Self and Things

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XVIII - Analysis of Self and Phenomena

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XVIII: Examination of Self and Entities

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XVIII - Examination of the Self and Phenomena

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of Self

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 18: AN EXAMINATION OF SELF AND PHENOMENA

PINGALA COMMENTARY

18/0 Question: If dharmas are wholly and utterly empty, with no arising and no ceasing, and this is what is meant by 'the true character of dharmas', how can one penetrate it?

Reply: Through the extinction of attachment to 'I' and 'mine', the emptiness of all dharmas is attained. The insight of non-self constitutes penetration.

Question: How do you know that all dharmas are without self?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter XIV]

The problem

At this point someone may ask: If the basic afflictions, actions, personal existence, responsible agents and the fruits of action are all not the real way of things (*tattvam*) but rather, being like a fabled city and such things, precisely what is not real, merely appearing to the unenlightened in the guise of reality, what then for you is the way things are really (*tattvam*)? And how does one attain (*avatara*) to the way things are really?

We reply. It is the utter cessation of I-ing (*ahamkara*) and mine-ing (*mamakara*) in both personal and non-personal regard through ceasing to take anything whatsoever, whether personal or non-personal, as real in its particularity, that is for us the way things are really. Concerning how one attains to the way things really are the *Madhyamakavatara* should be consulted for details. To quote: 'The *yogi*, discerning in his wisdom that all basic afflictions and defects whatsoever arise from holding the view that the person is real (*satkayadrsti*) and having inseen that the self (*atman*) is the central concept of this view, does away with the self.'

Discerning that the cycle of birth and death springs from holding the view that the person is real, and discerning that the self is the basis of this view that the person is real, the *yogi*, through not taking the self as real, abandons the view that the person is real, and having abandoned this view, discerning that all the basic afflictions come to an end, he enquires into the self: what is this so-called self which is the intended object of the notion 'I' (*ahamkaravisaya*).

The self identical with personal existence

The intended object of the notion 'I' must be thought of either as being of the very nature (*svabhava*) of the factors of personal existence (*skandhas*) or as being wholly other (*vyatirikta*) than them. Because the other theses (see MMK X.14 & XXII.1): that the self is either the base of the factors of personal existence, or is based in them, or possesses them, are implicit in the alternatives that the self is either identical with or different from them, and because he wishes to express himself succinctly, Nagarjuna, with a view to commencing the invalidation of the self, refutes both views: that of identity and that of difference.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Eighteen Examination of Self (Atma-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XVIII Examination of Self and Entities

A good deal of the confusion Nāgārjuna diagnoses in the previous two chapters concerns the presupposition that the self, as an afflicted being capable of liberation from suffering, must be thought of as an inherently real entity. In this chapter, therefore, Nāgārjuna turns to an examination of the self, per se, apart from its relation to such things as. perception, action, suffering, affliction, and so forth, as he has examined it in prior chapters.

Kārikā XVIII.1

आत्मा स्कन्धा यदि भवेदुदयव्ययभाग्भवेत्।
स्कन्धेभ्योऽन्यो यदि भवेद्भवेदस्कन्धलक्षणः॥१॥

LVP 341,3-4 - LVP 381,12-13
ātmā skandhā yadi bhaved udayavyayabhāg bhavet |
skandhebhyo ’nyo yadi bhaved bhaved askandhalakṣaṇaḥ ||1||

若我是五陰 我即為生滅
若我異五陰 則非五陰相

T1564: vol 30, pg 23c15
ruò wǒ shì wǔ yīn wǒ jí wéi shēng miè
ruò wǒ yì wǔ yīn zé fēi wǔ yīn xiàng;xiāng

།གལ་ཏེ་ཕུང་པོ་བདག་ཡིན་ན།།སྐྱེ་དང་འཇིག་པ་ཅན་དུ་འགྱུར།
།གལ་ཏེ་ཕུང་པོ་རྣམས་ལས་གཞན།།ཕུང་པོའི་མཚན་ཉིད་མེད་པར་འགྱུར།།

Tg tsa 10b5-6 - Tg tsa 11a5
|| (6)gal te phuṅ po bdag yin na | | skye daṅ ’jig pa can du ’gyur |
| gal te phuṅ po rnams las gźan | | phuṅ po’i mtshan ñid med par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):

Verse 1 - If the bifurcated self (atman) is constitutive of skandhas, it will be endowed with the nature of origination and destruction. If it is other than the skandhas it will not be endowed with the latter's characteristics. - Note: The skandhas refer to the five constituents of being or existence, i.e., rupa (material form), vedana (feeling), samjna (awareness), samskara (mental conformation), and vijnana (conscious play).

JONES (Skt):

[1] If the self were the aggregates making up a person (the material form and the mental components), it would be subject to arising and ceasing. If the self were other than these aggregates, it would not have the characteristics of the aggregates.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):

If the self were to be identical with the aggregates, it will partake of uprising and ceasing. If it were to be different from the aggregates, it would have the characteristics of the non-aggregates.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):

If the self would be the *skandhas*, it would rise and pass away.
If It would be different from the *skandhas*, it would not have the characteristics of the *skandhas*.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):

1. If the Soul really exists as a part of the five kinds of aggregates,
The real facts of appearance, disappearance, and maintenance of the Soul, must exist theoretically.
And if there were any kind of different aggregate, which is different from the five kinds of aggregates,
It might be natural for the characteristic of something, which is different from the five kinds of aggregates, to exist.

SPRUNG (Skt):

1 If the self were identical with the factors of personal existence it would itself arise and perish; if it were other than them, it would not be characterizable in their terms.

STRENG (Skt):

1. If the individual self (atma) were identical to the "groups" (skandha), then it would partake of origination and destruction. If the individual self were different from the "groups," then it would be without the characteristics of the "groups."

BOCKING (Ch):

18v1 If self is the five skandhas,
That self will arise and cease.
If self is different from the five skandhas,
Then it will not have the characteristics of the five skandhas.

BATCHELOR (Tb):

If the aggregates were self, it would be possessed of arising and decaying. If it were other than the aggregates, it would not have the characteristics of the aggregates.

DOCTOR (Tb):

If the self were the aggregates,
It would arise and cease.
If it were different from the aggregates,
It would have none of their characteristics. [XVIII.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):

1. If the self were the aggregates,
It would have arising and ceasing (as properties).
If it were different from the aggregates,
It would not have the characteristics of the aggregates.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):

1. If the aggregates were the self,
It would have to arise and cease.
If it were different from the aggregates,
It would not have the characteristics of the aggregates.

HAGEN (paraphrase):

If the self were identical to the aggregates it would arise and cease; if it were not, it would not have such characteristics.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):

If the self were the aggregates,
It would be something that arises and ceases.
If the self were something other than the aggregates,
It would not have the aggregates' characteristics. (1)

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If you ask: How is it that in the Chapters on the Realized One, and Fire and Fuel five theses are given whereas here only two alternatives are? We reply: just because in those two chapters five views are expounded they are not expounded again here. Only the two views are taken up for the sake of brevity.

In this *kārikā*, if the self (*atman*) is conceived of as identical with the factors of personal existence, then, as it participates in arising and perishing, the self becomes something which arises and perishes because of its participation in the arising and perishing of the factors of personal existence. But the self is not so regarded because of the various faults which that would entail.

Nagarjuna will say later, 'Something which once did not exist cannot come into existence, because of the logical fault involved. The self would be either something created or it would come to be without any cause.'(MMK XXVII.12) 'The self is not identical with what it possesses (*upadana* The factors of personal existence, the skandhas.) because that both arises and perishes. How then can the self be the possessor of the possessed?' (MMK XXVII.6) Further: 'If the self is identical with the factors of personal existence, this would render the self multiple as these are multiple. If the self were like a real object, it could not, as such, have contradictory states.' (*Madhyamakavatara*, VI, 127, 128.) 'The self would necessarily perish in *nirvāṇa*; so it would perish and arise in the moments preceding *nirvāṇa*. If the responsible agent perishes there can be no consequences of his acts for himself; the accumulated consequences would fall to the lot of another.' This much from the *Madhyamakavatara*. My point of view can be comprehended from the investigation carried out there and I shall not enter into a lengthy exposition again here.

The self other than personal existence

So much for the self not being identical with the factors of personal existence; that it is wholly other than them does not make sense either. If the self were other than the factors of personal existence it could not be characterized in their terms (*askandhalaksana*). As a horse, being other than a cow, cannot have the character of a cow, so the self, if it is thought of as entirely other than the factors of personal existence, cannot be characterized in their terms. Now the factors of personal existence, being compounded, come into existence as a result of causes and conditions and it is their character to arise, exist and perish. If the self is not of the character of the factors of personal existence, then according to this thesis it could have no connection with the characteristics of arising, existing and perishing. Such a thing is not taken to be the meaning of self, either because it would not actually exist, like the flower in the sky, or would be uncompounded as *nirvāṇa* is uncompounded. But it does not make sense that it could be the object of the sense of 'I'. So it does not make sense that the self can be wholly other than the factors of personal existence.

But then another argument is possible. If the self were wholly other than the factors of personal existence it would not be definable in their terms. The five factors of personal existence are (1) bodily form, (2) experiencing, (3) seizing on the specific character of things, (4) shaping one's dispositions, (5) becoming aware of objects (fn 1 An interesting statement of the five skandhas.). The self conceived of as wholly other than the factors of personal existence, as consciousness is other than a physical object, would be of a character peculiar to itself. And this character would be understood as peculiar even as mind is peculiar in relation to body. But the self is not so understood. Therefore it is not wholly other than the factors of personal existence.

You may object that non-Buddhists believe that the self is entirely distinct from the factors of personal existence and propound a special definition so that for them your reasoning is no logical impediment. How the non-Buddhists propound a special definition of the self is dealt with in the *Madhyamakavatara* (VI, 142).

'Non-Buddhists think of the self as eternal, as non-agent, as the enjoyer, as beyond all attributes and as inactive (fn 2 This description fits the Samkhya.). Depending on the different conceptions of the self, non-Buddhists arrive at differing doctrines.'

We reply. It is true that non-Buddhists claim that the nature of the self is quite distinct from the factors of personal existence. But they do not propound their definition from a grasp of the true nature (*svarsipatah*) of the self. Rather, because not rightly understanding existential hypostatizations (*upadaya-prajnapti*), they do not understand, because of fear, that the self is merely a name (*namamatrakam eva*). Having gone astray even from everyday common sense, by erroneous reification (*mithyakalpana*) misled by simply a pseudo-inference, in their delusion they construct a theory of the self and define its nature. By giving the proof of the reciprocal dependence of self and the factors of personal existence in the Chapter 'The Agent Subject and his Doing', and elsewhere, the refutation of the non-Buddhists is offered even on the level of common sense. To quote: 'As the reflection of one's own face is seen depending upon a mirror, but does not exist in its own right; so the "1" is experienced depending on the factors of persona! existence but is not anything existing in its own right, like the image of one's own face. As, in the absence of a mirror, one's own face is not seen, so neither is the "I" in the absence of the factors of personal existence. From hearing this kind of statement the noble Ananda attained the eye of truth and spoke continuously of it to the other monks.'(*Ratnavali*, I, 31-4.)

We do not therefore undertake the exposition of the same point again. It is nothing but existential hypostatizing which is, in the mature view of those aspiring to freedom, the root of the obsession with self among those who, as a result of primal ignorance are in the grip of false belief. The five factors of personal existence appear to be what the self is founded on. Is it of the same nature as the factors of personal existence or is it not? Having examined this question from every aspect, those aspiring to freedom do not take the self to be a self- existent entity (*bhavasvabhavatah*).

If no self, no I or mine

For such,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The conception of an individual self (atman) was previously examined in a variety of contexts. The present analysis was occasioned by a need to explain the life-process as conditioned by human actions (karma), the subject matter of the preceding chapter.

The Buddha's analysis of the human personality into five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) was intended to show that underlying the empirical factors constituting the human personality there is no permanent and eternal self. The Buddha's view was that these five factors served as the basis for any conceptualization of a self or soul. Hence they are always referred to as aggregates of grasping (upadanakkhandha).

Nagarjuna begins his investigation into the conception of self by raising two questions pertaining to the nature of the self, especially in its relationship to the five aggregates. If the self and the aggregates were identical, then the self would have to partake of the characteristics of the aggregates. These latter being subject to arising and ceasing, the self cannot remain permanent and eternal. On the contrary, if the self and the aggregates were to be different, then the former could not have the same characteristics as the latter. Leaving the argument at that, Nagarjuna is allowing the readers to come to their own conclusions.

So far Nagarjuna has not given any indication that he recognizes a special intuitive faculty through which one can see beyond the world of change and impermanence. Indeed, all that he has admitted points to his recognition of sense experiences as the foundation of human knowledge. The impermanent aggregates constitute not only the human personality, but also its experiences. If the self is considered to be different from the aggregates, Nagarjuna is here implying that it is unknowable, not merely inconceivable, for it will not have any of the characteristics of the aggregates that are all that we know through sense experience.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. If there is an inherently existent self, it must either be identical to or different from the aggregates. The aggregates are the more basic components into which the individual divides upon analysis. In standard Buddhist analysis, they include the physical body, sensation, perception, dispositions, and consciousness or cognition. It is important to note, though, that this particular analysis has no deep philosophical significance. It reflects an essentially empirical psychological theory about the best explanatory framework to use in comprehending human behavior and the most useful way for a Buddhist practitioner to attend to his/her experience. As we have seen already, the aggregates are themselves empty, and as much Buddhist psychology emphasizes, they, too, are subject to further decomposition. But Nāgārjuna's argument proceeds independently of any particular decomposition. No matter how one analyzes the human being, if we are to posit over and above the components into which if divides an inherently existent self, that self must be either identical to or different from those components. (This argument, by the way, appears in virtually the same form in *On Man* by Sextus Empiricus.)

But if the self is identical to the aggregates, it will be constantly changing, constantly arising and ceasing, since the aggregates are constantly arising and ceasing. This is so whether one takes the self to be identical to some one of the aggregates or to the whole collection of the aggregates. If, on the other hand, one takes the self to be distinct from the aggregates, the relation between them becomes completely mysterious; the self becomes unknowable, and the fate of the aggregates becomes irrelevant to the fate of the self. This is because the only objects ever given to us in introspection are the aggregates (a familiar Humean insight), and the self we presumably care about is one we *know.* And it would be a bit bizarre to suggest that whatever happens to my mind, body, memory, sensory experience, and so forth, is independent of what happens to *me.*

One must, of course, keep in mind that this destructive dilemma depends upon the attempt to identify a single inherently existent self and does not undermine the possibility of a conventionally identified self posited on the basis of the aggregates. So what Nāgārjuna is emphatically *not* doing is arguing that there are no aggregates in any sense or that there are no persons, agents, subjects, and so forth. The hypothesis for reductio is that over and above (or below and beneath) any composite of phenomena collectively denoted by "I" or by a proper name, there is a single substantial entity that is the referent of such a term.

But, the proponent of the inherently existent self asks, what is the bearer of the self's properties and the thing that possesses those aggregates? The first half of XVIII: 2 raises this question. The second half begins Nāgārjuna's reply, which occupies the remainder of the chapter and constitutes a substantial portion of his positive view on the nature of self from the standpoint of ontology and soteriology:

Kārikā XVIII.2

आत्मन्यसति चात्मीयं कुत एव भविष्यति।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः शमादात्मात्मनीनयोः॥२॥

ātmany asati cātmīyaṃ kuta eva bhaviṣyati |
nirmamo nirahaṃkāraḥ śamād ātmātmanīnayoḥ ||2||

若無有我者 何得有我所
滅我我所故 名得無我智

ruò wú yǒu wǒ zhě hé dé;děi;de yǒu wǒ suǒ
miè wǒ wǒ suǒ gù míng dé;děi;de wú wǒ zhì

།བདག་ཉིད་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།བདག་གི་ཡོད་པ་ག་ལ་འགྱུར།
།བདག་དང་བདག་གི་ཞི་བའི་ཕྱིར།།ངར་འཛིན་ང་ཡིར་འཛིན་མེད་འགྱུར།།

| bdag ñid yod pa ma yin na | | bdag gi yod par ga la ’gyur |
| bdag daṅ bdag gi źi ba’i phyir | | ṅar ’dzin ṅa yir (7)’dzin med ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - Where the bifurcated self does not exist, how could there be a self-hood (atmiya)? From the fact that the bifurcated self and self-hood are (in their basic nature) quiescence, there is no self-identity (mama) or individuality (ahamkara).

JONES (Skt):
[2] When the self does not exist, how can there be anything belonging to the self? From the stilling of the sense of "self" and "belonging to a self," one is free of the ideas of "mind" and "I"

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
In the absence of a self, how can there be something that belongs to the self? From the appeasement of the modes of self and self-hood, one abstains from creating the notions of "mine" and "I."

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the self does not exist, what will be one's own?
There is no "I," no "mine" from the calming of what pertains to both senses of self.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. It is said that a person himself or herself exists with their Souls together,
But where is it possible to exist such fact even in future?
Not being egoistic suggests that they are perfectly free from the state of egoism.
Therefore the Soul, or co-existence of Souls, is similar to be as if they were fetters.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 If the self is non-existent how will anything be one's own? Free of I-ing and mine-ing because the self and what is of the self have come to an end.

STRENG (Skt):
2. If the individual self does not exist, how then will there be something which is "my own"? There is lack of possessiveness and no ego on account of the cessation of self and that which is "my own."

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XVIII.2a [Opponent] If there was no self, where would the self 's properties come from?

BOCKING (Ch):
18v2 If no 'I' exists,
How can there be 'mine'?
It is the extinction of I and mine,
That is called 'attaining the insight of non-self'.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the self did not exist, where could what is mine exist? In order to pacify self and what is mine, grasping I and grasping mine can exist no more.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When the self does not exist,
How could that which belongs to it?
Due to the pacification of self and that which belongs to it,
The belief in an "I" and a "mine" will cease. [XVIII.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. If there were no self,
Where would the self's (properties) be?
From the pacification of the self and what belongs to it,
One abstains from grasping onto "I" and "mine."

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. If the self does not exist
Where would being *being mine* be?
In virtue of the pacification of the self and *being mine*
There will be no grasping onto "I and mine."

HAGEN (paraphrase):
In the absence of a self, where would the self's properties be? From the pacification of the self and what belongs to it, one abstains from grasping onto notions of "I" and "mine."

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
If there is no "me" in the first place,
How could there be anything that belongs to me?
When "me" and "mine" are found to be peace,
Clinging to "me" and "mine" ceases. (2)

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

2ab *If the self is non-existent how will anything be one's own?*

Because they do not directly experience the self, even less do they directly experience the five factors of personal existence, on which the hypostatization of the self is based, as their own (*atimya*). Just as, when a chariot has been burned, one does not perceive its parts because they have been burned too, so those on the way (*yogis*), when they have realized that the self is not an entity, necessarily realize that their own factors of personal existence are not entities either.

To quote from the *Ratnavali*, 'The factors of personal existence arise from the sense of "I", but this "1" is, in truth, false. If the seed of something is false how can the resulting thing itself be true? Having seen that the factors of personal existence are unreal the sense of "I" is expelled. When the sense of "I" has been abandoned the factors of personal existence are no longer possible.'

The sun, at the end of a summer's day when it is throwing out fiery rays of light and just as it enters that part of the heavens where there is no cloud, emits slanting rays like elongated sparks from a blazing fire and warms the dry earth beneath. If one is in the vicinity of this dry area a visual illusion gives rise to a mirage which seems to be water. For those at a distance it seems to be clear blue water; but for those close by it does not give rise to a mirage.

Similarly, for those who are far removed from viewing the nature of self and own as they really are, who are caught in the cycle of birth and death, in the grip of the misbelief of primal ignorance, for such, a false thing the self as hypostatized on the basis of the factors of personal existence - manifests itself as real. But for those close by who see the truth of these matters, no such false thing manifests itself.

As Nagarjuna says: 'An object seen from afar is seen clearly by those close by. If a mirage is water why is it not taken to be so by those close by? The everyday world is not seen in the same way by those close to it as it is taken to be by those remote from it, but is without factual character (*animitta*), like a mirage. As a mirage, which looks like water, is not water, nor any real thing, so the factors of personal existence which are like a self, are not of the self nor of anything real.' (*Ratnavali*, I, 29-30.)

And so, because he in fact has no sense of self and what is of self, the one on the way, having seen the higher truth from close by, naturally becomes

2cd *Free of I-ing and mine-ing because the self and what is of the self have come to an end.*

'Of the self means what is in the interest of the self, that is, the fivefold factors of personal existence taken as mine. The *yogi* — the one on the way — becomes free of the I-ing and mine-ing by the coming to an end of the self — the object of the I-sense — and by the coming to an end of what is of interest to the self, that is the factors of personal existence taken as real — the object of the sense of 'mine'. These are not allowed to arise because he no longer has any sense of them (*anupalambha*).

You may object that the one who becomes in this way free of I-ing and mine-ing must by that fact exist, and if his existence is established so too are self and the factors of personal existence. But this is not so. Because

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If a permanent entity does not exist, one cannot assume the existence of anything that belongs to it. The denial of a permanent entity does not mean that Nagarjuna is committed to a rejection of self-awareness or selfconsciousness.

The rejection of the latter would undermine the very foundation of his epistemology. As mentioned earlier (see III. 17), Nagarjuna, following the Buddha, recognized consciousness (and this includes self-awareness), not as a pre-existent cogito, but as part of the human personality conditioned by factors such as the sense organs and the objects of perception. Self-awareness or self-instinct can be pursued to its extreme limit. The result is the "construction of a self" (aham + kara), which eventually leads to the belief in permanence. The other extreme is the complete rejecton of any form of self-awareness, which is tantamount to annihilation.

Without falling into these two extremes, Nagarjuna is here presenting the Buddha's own "middle way" philosophy when he speaks of the appeasement (sama), not the complete eradication, of the "self' (atman) and "whatever that pertains to a self" (atman). This is perfectly in accord

with the "appeasement of dispositions" (samskaropasama), the "appeasement of the object" (drastavyopasama), and the "appeasement of obsessions" (prapancopasama), discussed earlier (see commentary on V.8).

Through the appeasement of the self-instinct one eliminates the metaphysical notions of a self (atman), and through the appeasement of the object (drastavyopasama) one is able to realize the non-substantiality of phenomena and would not cling to them as "one's own" (atmani). These culminate in the absence of selfishness (nirmama) and the absence of egoism (nirahamkara).

The dual meaning of the term ahamkara is worth noting. Ahamkara (literally, "I-making") means both egocenteredness and pride. While the term ahamkara has come to be so popular in ordinary language, it is interesting to note that no such term is constructed with the plural of aham, namely, mayam, as mayamkara ("we-making") would have expressed an idea which is equally unacceptable to the Buddha and Nagarjuna, for they were not willing to eliminate the notion of oneself (aham) altogether in favor of an equally metaphysical notion of a "social self".

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. Nāgārjuna replies that once one stops trying to posit an independent self, the problem posed simply vanishes. That is, the worry about the possessor of the aggregates and properties of the self occurs only given that one conceives of them as properties and aggregates that are essentially *of* something. The insight is a bit abstract, but it is the same one that Hume was after in the Fig argument in the *Treatise*. (fn 92. See Hume (1975), pp. 235-39.) Much of the motivation for positing a substantial self is the intuition that since its properties and components exist, they must exist *somewhere* - that there must be a substratum in which they inhere. But once we give up that conception of what it is for a property or a component to exist (as Nāgārjuna has argued that we must in Chapters V, VI, and IX above), the drive to posit a substratum vanishes. And when the drive to posit the substratum vanishes, we simply, Nāgārjuna urges, think of the aggregates and properties as associated aggregates and properties, not as *my* aggregates and properties.

Kārikā XVIII.3

निर्ममो निरहंकारो यश्च सोऽपि न विद्यते।
निर्ममं निरहंकारं यः पश्यति न पश्यति॥३॥

得無我智者 是則名實觀
得無我智者 是人為希有

།ངར་འཛིན་ང་ཡིར་འཛིན་མེད་གང་།།དེ་ཡང་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།
།ངར་འཛིན་ང་ཡིར་འཛིན་མེད་པར།།གང་གིས་མཐོང་བས་མི་མཐོང་ངོ་།།

nirmamo nirahaṃkāro yaś ca so ’pi na vidyate |
nirmamaṃ nirahaṃkāraṃ yaḥ paśyati na paśyati ||3||

dé;dĕi;de wú wǒ zhì zhě shì zé míng shí guān
dé;dĕi;de wú wǒ zhì zhě shì rén wéi xī yǒu

| ṅar ’dzin ṅa yir ’dzin med gaṅ | | de yaṅ yod pa ma yin te |
| ṅar ’dzin ṅa yir ’dzin med par | | gaṅ gis mthoṅ bas mi mthoṅ ṅo |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - Any entity without individuality and self-identity does not exist. Whosoever sees (it with) non-individuality and non-self-identity cannot see or grasp (the truth).

JONES (Skt):
[3] One who is free of the ideas of “mine” and “I” is not found. In addition, one who sees someone as “free of mine” or “free of I” still does not see correctly.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whosoever is free from selfishness and egoism, he too is not evident. Whoever perceives someone as free from selfishness and egoism, he too does not perceive.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
He who has no “I” and no “mine” does not occur.
Who sees no “I” and no “mine” does not see.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Being not egoistic and being free from egoism,
Are both real together, but such kinds of situations are never always recognized well.
Not being egoistic is similar to being free from egoism.
Such situations can be seen sometimes, but can’t be seen sometimes.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 One who is free of I-ing and mine-ing does not exist factually. Anyone who thinks he sees one free of I-ing and mine-ing does not truly see.

STRENG (Skt):
3. He who is without possessiveness and who has no ego — He, also, does not exist. Whoever sees "he who is without possessiveness" or "he who has no ego" really does not see.

BOCKING (Ch):
18v3 Attaining the insight of non-self
Is termed 'viewing reality'
One who attains the insight of non-self;
Such a person is rarely found.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The one who does not grasp at me and mine likewise does not exist. Whoever sees the one who does not grasp at me and mine does not see.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The one who does not grasp at “I” or “mine”
Does not exist either.
The one who sees what lacks the grasping of “I” and “mine’,’
That one does not see. [XVIII.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. One who does not grasp onto "I" and "mine,
That one does not exist.
One who does not grasp onto "I" and "mine,"
He does not perceive.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. He who does not grasp “I” and “mine,”
Also does not exist.
Whoever sees he who does not grasp “I” and “mine,”
In virtue of that does not see.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
An entity without individuality and self-identity is not evident. Whoever sees such a person, does not *see* Reality.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
The ones who do not cling to “me” or “mine”
Do not exist either.
Those who do not cling to “me” or “mine” see accurately,
So they do not see a self. (3)

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If self and the factors of personal existence are not perceived at all as self-existent entities, how will there be a different entity distinct from them this one who is free of I-ing and mine-ing? And anyone who thinks he sees one free of I-ing and mine-ing — who does not exist at all as an entity he does not see things as they really are (*tattvam*).

As the illustrious one said, 'Regard everything personal as devoid of being, regard everything external as devoid of being. No one at all factually exists, not even the one regarding things as devoid of being.' And again, 'Whoever thinks the elements of existence are merely empty is foolish and walks a dangerous path. Imperishable are the empty elements and yet not imperishable are the imperishable elements said to be.'

'To think the elements of existence are at peace, utterly at peace, such a thought can never be true. The entire manifest world arises from discriminative thinking; the elements should be realized to be subtle and beyond the reach of thought.' Again: 'The factors of personal existence are devoid of self- existence and without being. Enlightenment is devoid of self-existence and without being. The one involved with both is devoid of self-existence. So think the wise but not the foolish.'

And so

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna approvingly spoke of the appeasement of the notion of serf and the consequent elimination of selfishness and egoism. However, knowing his contemporaries who were so prone to metaphysical speculations, he was not willing to rest satisfied with such a statement.

As a reminder to those who have not achieved the "appeasement of the notion of self," Nagarjuna points out that someone who is assumed to have gotten rid of egoism and pride is also not available. The constant attempt by the metaphysicians to reify things, entities, persons, etc. was kept in mind by Nagarjuna whenever he makes any positive assertion.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. These are corelative. When one stops grasping the aggregates and the self as independent entities or as the possessions of independent entities, one recognizes one's own lack of inherent existence. One also recognizes the lack of inherent existence of the aggregates, as in the case of perception. This is not to say that one ceases conventionally to exist or that one goes blind - rather it is that one comes to understand one's own existence and that of other entities in the context of emptiness and, hence, to regard that existence as necessarily relational and conventional. The relation between the second and third verses of this chapter is also important from the standpoint of the relation between theory and practice, philosophy and soteriology: Nāgārjuna emphasizes the two-way streets in this neighborhood. Understanding emptiness leads one to grasp less, to become more detached. Relaxing one's tendency to grasp leads to a realization of emptiness. Philosophy, meditation, and the practice of the moral virtues that issue in the relaxation of grasping are conceived from this vantage point as necessarily mutually supportive.

Kārikā XVIII.4

ममेत्यहमिति क्षीणे बहिर्धाध्यात्ममेव च।
निरुध्यत उपादानं तत्क्षयाज्जन्मनः क्षयः॥४॥

mamety aham iti kṣīṇe bahirdhādhyātmam eva ca |
nirudhyata upādānaṃ tatkṣayāj janmanaḥ kṣayaḥ ||4||

內外我我所 盡滅無有故
諸受即為滅 受滅則身滅

nèi wài wǒ wǒ suǒ jìn miè wú yǒu gù
zhū shòu jí wéi miè shòu miè zé shēn miè

|ནང་དང་ཕྱི་རོལ་ཉིད་དག་ལ།།བདག་དང་བདག་གི་སྙམ་ཟད་ན།
|ཉེ་བར་ལེན་པ་འགག་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།།དེ་ཟད་པས་ན་སྐྱེ་བ་ཟད།།

| naṅ daṅ phyi rol ñid dag la | | bdag daṅ bdag gi sñam zad na |
| ñe bar len pa ’gag ’gyur źiṅ | | de zad (11a1)pas na skye ba zad |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - Grasping ceases to be where, internally and externally, (the ideas of) individuality and self-identity are destroyed. From the cessation of grasping the cessation of birth also follows.

JONES (Skt):
[4] When “mine” and “I” are destroyed with respect to both outer and inner phenomena, the acquisition of a new rebirth is stopped; and from the stopping of such acquisition, future births are destroyed.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When views pertaining to “mine” and “I”, whether they are associated with the internal or the external, have waned, then grasping comes to cease. With the waning of that [grasping], there is waning of birth.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where “I” and “mine” are internally and externally destroyed,
grasping has ceased. From that destruction birth is destroyed.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. A title “my” or a title “I” has become very weak,
And avoiding God, the Soul is also in the same situation.
The self-regulation is just the action, which is useful for us,
Leaving from such area, and making our efforts to realize our whole mental functions, are our task.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 When I-ing and mine-ing have wasted away both inwardly and outwardly, possessive attachment comes to an end and from its cessation personal re-birth ceases.

STRENG (Skt):
4. When "I" and "mine" have stopped, then also there is not an outside nor an inner self. The "acquiring" of karma (upadana) is stopped; on account of that destruction, there is destruction of verse existence.

BOCKING (Ch):
18v4 When inner and outer, I and mine,
Entirely cease, with nothing existing,
All receiving is then extinct.
Reception ceasing, the body also ceases.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When one ceases thinking of inner and outer things as self and mine, clinging will come to a stop. Through that ceasing, birth will cease.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When the sense of “I” and “mine” that is based
On the inner and outer is exhausted,
Appropriation comes to an end.
As that is exhausted, so is birth. [XVIII.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. When views of "I" and "mine" are extinguished,
Whether with respect to the internal or external,
The appropriator ceases.
This having ceased, birth ceases.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. When the views of the self and *being mine* are extinguished,
With respect to the internal and the external,
Appropriation ceases.
Through this having been eliminated, birth is eliminated.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Grasping, whether internally or externally, ceases when views of “I” and “mine” cease. With the cessation of grasping comes the cessation of birth.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
When one stops thinking of the inner and outer aggregates as being “me” or “mine”
All wrong views disappear,
And once they have disappeared, birth in the cycle of existence stops. (4)

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

As the sutra says, 'The basic afflictions are rooted in the belief in the permanent self, arise from the belief in the permanent self and are caused by the belief in the permanent self.' This belief in the permanent self is brought to an end by no longer having a sense of self and of what belongs to self. From that sense coming to an end the fourfold possessive attachment — to sense pleasure, to dogmas, to moral pride and vows, and to belief in the permanent self — ceases. From the cessation of possessive attachment (*upadana*) personal existence understood as re-birth is ended. The sequence of stages in the cessation of personal existence is definitively given in this way:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The use of the iti formula as mama-iti and aham-iti in the present statement makes it significantly different from the former statement at XVIII.2. In the former statement, Nagarjuna spoke of atman (self) and atmiya (that which belongs to the self) and emphasized the need to appease such awareness or feeling. In the present verse, he refers to aham ("I") and mama ("mine") using the iti-formula and insists upon their complete elimination (ksaya). Thus, it is not the fact of self-awareness that causes problems for the human beings but the theorizing based upon such self-awareness. The cogito may thus turn out to be harmless, so long as it is considered to be a product of the sensory process (see III. 7), but ergo sum is what is dangerous, epistemologically as well as ethically.

When such theorizing has waned (ksine), then there is cessation of grasping (upadana-nirodha), which is freedom while living. The cessation of grasping eventually leads to the waning of rebirth (janmanah ksayah).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. When one completely relinquishes the view of entities and the self as inherently existent and when all habits of reification have been eliminated, Nāgārjuna urges, liberation from cyclic existence and suffering have been achieved. Nāgārjuna defers the precise characterization of nirvāṇa to the chapter devoted to its examination and that devoted to the examination of the status of the Tathāgata (XXV and XXII, respectively).

Kārikā XVIII.5

कर्मक्लेशक्षयान्मोक्षः कर्मक्लेशा विकल्पतः।
ते प्रपञ्चात्प्रपञ्चस्तु शून्यतायां निरुध्यते॥५॥

karmakleśakṣayān mokṣaḥ karmakleśā vikalpataḥ |
te prapañcāt prapañcas tu śūnyatāyāṃ nirudhyate ||5||

業煩惱滅故 名之為解脫
業煩惱非實 入空戲論滅

yè fán nǎo miè gù míng zhī wéi jiě tuō
yè fán nǎo fēi shí rù kōng xì lùn miè

|ལས་དང་ཉོན་མོངས་ཟད་པས་ཐར||ལས་དང་ཉོན་མོངས་རྣམ་རྟོག་ལས|
|དེ་དག་སྤྲོས་ལས་སྤྲོས་པ་ནི||སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་འགག་པར་འགྱུར||

| las daṅ ñon moṅs zad pas thar | | las daṅ ñon moṅs rnam rtog las |
| de dag spros las spros pa ni | | stoṅ pa ñid kyis ’gag par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - There is moksa (release or liberation) from the destruction of karmaic defilements which are but conceptualization. These arise from mere conceptual play (prapanca) which are in turn banished in sunyata.

JONES (Skt):
[5] From the destruction of the afflictions resulting from karmic actions, there is the liberation from rebirth. The afflictions arise from thoughts that make distinctions between entities. These thoughts come from projecting distinctions onto reality. But such conceptual projections cease through emptiness.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
On the waning of defilements of action, there is release. Defilements of action belong to one who discriminates, and these in turn result from obsession. Obsession, in its turn, ceases within the context of emptiness.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Because of the destruction of action and defilement, there is liberation. There are actions and defilements for one having false notions.
They must be constructed from false imagining and stopped by openness.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. To live in both Action and Delusion are just emancipations,
And it is true for Action and Delusion to manifest them reciprocally.
Both Action and Delusion are prone to develop themselves overcoming themselves,
And nowadays in the balance of the autonomic nervous system, some kinds of disturbance have begun.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 From the wasting away of the afflictions and karmic action there is freedom. The afflictions and karmic action arise from hypostatizing thought and this from the manifold of named things. Named things come to an end in the absence of being.

STRENG (Skt):
5. On account of the destruction of the pains (klesa) of action there is release for pains of action exist for him who constructs them. These pains result from phenomenal extension (prapanca); but this phenomenal extension comes to a stop by emptiness.

BOCKING (Ch):
18v5 When karma and afflictions are extinct,
We call it liberation.
Karma and afflictions are unreal
Penetrating emptiness, all sophistries cease.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Through the ceasing of action and affliction, there is freedom. Action and affliction [come] from thoughts and they from fixations. Fixations are stopped by emptiness.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Liberation follows from the exhaustion of action and affliction.
Action and affliction are due to thought,
And thoughts proliferate due to mental construction.
They are brought to an end by emptiness. [XVIII.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. Action and misery having ceased, there is nirvana.
Action and misery come from conceptual thought.
This comes from mental fabrication.
Fabrication ceases through emptiness.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. Through the elimination of karma and affliction there is nirvana.
Karma and affliction come from conceptual thought.
These come from mental fabrication.
Fabrication ceases through emptiness.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
With the cessation of afflictions there is liberation. Afflictions are mere mental constructions resulting from conceptual play. But all such fabrication ceases in light of Emptiness.

GOLDFIELD (Tb): When karmic actions and mental afflictions cease, that is liberation. (5a)

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Absence of self leads to freedom

5a *From the wasting away of the afflictions and karmic* (fn 3 Action proceeding from a belief in a permanent self; only such action has moral consequences.) *action there is freedom.*

Possessive attachment having wasted away, birth into personal existence, which depends on it, is no more. When personal existence has come to an end, how can there be the cycle of birth, old age and death? Nagarjuna puts it precisely: 'From the wasting away of karmic action and the afflictions there is freedom.' But, you may ask, from the wasting away of what do karmic action and the afflictions cease? The answer is:

5bcd *The afflictions and karmic action arise from hypostatizing thought and this from the manifold of named things. Named things come to an end in the absence of being.*

The afflictions arise in the unenlightened from groundlessly (*ayonisa*) hypostatizing (*vikalpayata*) external objects and the other factors of personal existence. Nagarjuna will say, 'Desire, aversion and delusion are said to spring from hypostatizing thought. They arise dependent on misbelief and on taking things to be good or bad.' As is said in the sutra: 'Oh desire, I know where you spring from: you are born of the mind. I will dwell on you no more and then for me you will be no more.'

Thus karmic action and the afflictions arise from hypostatizing thought. Hypostatizing thought springs from the manifold of named things (*prapanca*), i.e., from the beginninglessly recurring cycle of birth and death, which consists of knowledge and objects of knowledge, words and their meanings, agents and action, means and act, pot and cloth, diadem and chariots, objects and feelings, female and male, gain and loss, happiness and misery, beauty and ugliness, blame and praise (fn 4 This is the longest list of the fateful dualities Candrakīrti ever gives us.).

This world of named things (*laukikah prapana*) in its entirety finds its end in the absence of being, when there is immediate realization that all things are devoid of self-existence.

How is that to be understood? Once objects are taken to be real things, you have the entire world of named things as just described. However, if those thirsty with desire do not take the daughter of a sterile woman to be a beautiful young lady, that is to say if they do not take objects to be real, they will not bring the manifold of named things into existence with such things (fn 5 Knowledge and objects of knowledge, and so on.) as its objects. By not calling the manifold of named things into play they do not groundlessly bring hypostatizing thought into play with named things as its object. By not bringing hypostatizing thought into play they do not allow the afflictions to arise which are rooted in the belief in a permanent self, a belief which springs from obsession with the I and the mine. Because the afflictions, which are of the very essence of the belief in the permanent person, have not been allowed to arise they do not perform acts which can be distinguished as either good or bad. Because they do not perform good or bad acts they do not experience the jungle of birth and death which is one great network of being born and ageing and dying, of suffering, lamentation, misery and sadness. The wise, thus steadfastly seeing all things as devoid of a self-existent nature, do not take the personal factors, the sense fields or types of consciousness to have being in their particularity. Because they do not take these supposed elements to have being in their particularity, they do not bring the manifold of named things into play which would have such real particulars as its object. Because they do not bring the manifold of named things, having real particulars as its object, into play, they do not invoke hypostatizing thought, they do not allow the afflictions, which are rooted in the belief in the permanent person, to arise because of obsession with I and mine. Because they do not allow the afflictions which are rooted in the belief in a permanent person to arise, they perform no karmic acts. Because they perform no karmic acts they do not experience the cycle of life and death called birth, ageing and dying. Thus, having attained to the true way of things (*sunyata*) which is the serenity of the coming to rest of the manifold of all named things (*prapancopasamasiva*) there is an end to all named things as the base of hypostatizing thought. From named things being no more there is an end to hypostatizing thought, because hypostatizing is at an end all karmic action and afflictions are ended. Because karmic action and the

afflictions are ended there is an end to personal existence.

It follows that it is nothing other than the absence of being in particular things, understood as the repose (*nivrtti*) of the entire manifold of named things which is said to be *nirvāṇa*.

To quote from the *Catuhsataka*: 'The perfectly realized ones hold, in brief, that the Buddhist truth is harmless and that the absence of being in things is itself *nirvāṇa*. These are the only two truths for us.'

Bhavaviveka, however, not understanding the attainment of the absence of being in things by the disciples and the fully realized sages, as just explained, gives this account: The disciple, regarding the entire mass of experiences which perish momentarily and which are generated externally, as not self nor what belongs to self, and regarding the self and what belongs to it as not being real entities, develops the view that there are pure elements of existence (*dharma matra*) which are born and perish.

As against that we say that the self is the object of the I and as this does not exist neither does the self; because the self does not exist there is no reality which could be internal or external to self. And if the sense of mine is not functioning, one is free of I and mine and the I does not arise as a definitive entity, but is rather a conventional term for everyday purposes (fn 6 Candrakīrti gives, we might say, a phenomenological description of the way the self appears in experience. Bhavaviveka, according to Candrakīrti, gives a metaphysics of the self.). How much more this is true for the great Bodhisattvas who course in transcendent awareness without hypostatizing thought, and who regard all things as unborn. That is why Nagarjuna says, 'One free of I-ing and mine-ing does not exist in fact.'

Therefore, Bhavaviveka does not follow Nagarjuna in this matter, as I have shown in the *Madhyamakavatara*. 'In the seventh stage of the Bodhisattva's career transcendent awareness governs.' So I do not again make the effort to show the fault in Bhavaviveka's account.

The illustrious one says in the Eight Thousand Sutra: 'One who is hungry to learn, o Subhuti, the enlightenment of the disciple can learn from this sutra of transcendent awareness (*prajnaparamita*). One who is hungry to learn, o Subhuti, the enlightenment of the realized sage can learn from this sutra of transcendent awareness. One who is hungry to learn, o Subhuti, the unsurpassable perfect enlightenment of the great beings, he may learn from this sutra of transcendent awareness.'

And it is said further: 'Whoever desires to become a follower of the realized one or a realized one himself, or a monarch of the truth, without attaining this imperturbableness, will achieve nothing: a man who does not discern the banks of a river will not arrive either at this bank or the other.'

The Buddha's teaching concerning self

Someone may object: If, as you argue, the way things are really is the non-arising of the hypostatizations I and mine in either personal or non-personal regard by not taking anything, personal or non-personal to be real in its particularity, then what about the following sayings of the illustrious one?

'The self is master of the self. What other master could there be? The wise attain heaven by restraining the self. The self is master of the self. What other master could there be? The self is the witness of the self in both good and ill.' And so on. Surely this contradicts you.

We reply: Did the illustrious one not also say: 'In this world neither person nor self exists, because they are causally dependent things.' And again: 'The body is not the self, nor does the self possess the body, nor is the self in the body nor the body in the self. In the same vein consciousness is not the self, nor does the self possess consciousness nor is the self in consciousness nor consciousness in the self.' And again: 'All elements of existence are without self.'

How is it that these scriptures do not contradict the ones quoted earlier? Because the purpose of the illustrious one's teaching in the former scriptures has to be understood. It is the universal rule that a distinction between truth for the initiated (*nitartha*) and what is merely truth for beginners (*neyartha*) exists in the teaching of the illustrious Buddhas who are devoted to the awakening of the lotus-like mind of the entire creation which is to be guided, who are like a sun that never sets and who are great in the power of their insight, of their ducational wisdom and of their universal compassion'.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The fact that this statement of Nagarjuna immediately follows his criticism of theorizing relating to "mine" and "I," that is, speculation relating to subject and object, becomes very valuable in determining the meaning of the term vikalpa, a term that has caused much confusion and misunderstanding.

Vikalpa can mean two different types of discrimination. One is the type of discrimination made at the phenomenal level. It is the discrimination referred to at XVIII.2, a discrimination that is empirically grounded, but which should be kept under control (sama). The second is the type of discrimination made at a metaphysical level. It is the discrimination referred to at XVIII.4, which has gone far beyond the empirical level and thus become theoretical or speculative.

For Nagarjuna , the defilements of action follow from the latter, not from the former. It seems that this is the primary reason for his reference to and criticism of vikalpa at XVIII.5 rather than at XVIII. 3. Wrong actions (mithya-karmanta), i.e., actions that are defiled, emanate from wrong beliefs (mithya-drsti), which are the results of wrong thoughts or discriminations (mithya-samkalpa, mithya vikalpa). Obsessions are the inevitable results of such wrong discriminations. When such obsessions are appeased, then a person does not get involved either in a notion of a permanent self or in a theory of complete annihilation. The realization that self-awareness is dependently arisen (III.7) is a realization that it is empty of a permanent substance (svabhava-sunya). This latter is the middle path that avoids eternalism and annihilationism.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. The diagnosis, though, of the predicament of saṃsāra and the corresponding prescription are clear: Grasping, contaminated action, and suffering are rooted in delusion, and this delusion comes from cognitive error. The root delusion - the fundamental cognitive error - is the confusion of merely conventional existence with inherent existence. The realization of emptiness eliminates that fabrication of essence; which eliminates grasping, contaminated action, and its pernicious consequences.

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Kārikā XVIII.6

आत्मेत्यपि प्रज्ञपितमनात्मेत्यपि देशितम्।
बुद्धैर्नात्मा न चानात्मा कश्चिदित्यपि देशितम्॥६॥

ātmety api prajñapitam anātmety api deśitam |
buddhair nātmā na cānātmā kaścid ity api deśitam ||6||

諸佛或說我 或說於無我
諸法實相中 無我無非我

zhū fú;fó huò shuì wǒ huò shuì yū;yú;wū wú wǒ
zhū fǎ shí xiāng zhòng wú wǒ wú fēi wǒ

།བདག་གོ་ཞེས་ཀྱང་བཏགས་གྱུར་ཅིང༌། །བདག་མེད་ཅེས་ཀྱང་བསྟན་པར་འགྱུར། །སངས་རྒྱས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་བདག་དང་ནི། །བདག་མེད་འགའ་མེད་ཅེས་ཀྱང་བསྟན། །

| bdag go źes kyaṅ btags gyur ciṅ | | bdag med ces kyaṅ bstan (2)par gyur |
| saṅs rgyas rnams kyis bdag daṅ ni | | bdag med ’ga’ med ces kyaṅ bstan |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - The Buddhas have provisionally employed the term atman and instructed on the true idea of anatman. They have also taught that any (abstract) entity as atman or anatman does not exist,

JONES (Skt):
[6] The idea “There is a self’ has been disclosed. That “There is no self’ has been taught. But by the Buddha it has been taught “There is neither the self nor indeed what is not the self whatsoever.”

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The Buddhas have made known the conception of self and taught the doctrine of no-self. At the same time, they have not spoken of something as the self or as the non-self.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The term *“atman”* pointed out causes it to be distinct from the term *“anatman.”*
Neither a self nor a nonself are pointed out by the *buddhas*.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. The problem, which is related with the Soul, is just a kind of disclosing secrets,
And the teaching that the Soul does not exist is just the true teachings.
Relying upon many Buddhas' opinions, the Soul does not exists, but spirit is not deniable.
The insistence that "move it ahead!" might be just their teachings.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 Both ‘The self exists’ has been expounded and ‘The self does not exist’ has been taught too. And ‘Neither self nor non-self exist’ has been taught as well by the Buddhas.

STRENG (Skt):
[6] (missing?)

BOCKING (Ch):
18v6 The Buddhas may teach that there is a self,
Or teach that there is no self.
Within the true character of dharmas,
There is neither self, nor non-self.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is said that “there is a self,” but “non-self” too is taught. The buddhas also teach there is nothing which is “neither self nor non-self.”

DOCTOR (Tb):
“Self” is stated
And also “no self” is taught.
The Buddhas even teach that there is neither
Self nor absence of self. [XVIII.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. That there is a self has been taught,
And the doctrine of no-self,
By the buddhas, as well as the
Doctrine of neither self nor nonself.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. The Buddhas have designated a self;
And have taught that there is no self;
And also have taught that
There is neither self nor selflessness.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
There is teaching of self and teaching of no-self, but the Buddhas have never used such terms as though they actually applied to anything in particular.

The meaning is this. There are some' who, even though rooted in the world of everyday practice, do not correctly see everyday things though these are nothing but the objects which the person of normal vision sees; this is because the eye of their mind is completely covered as by a cataract simply by the erroneous view, arising from false belief, that the self does not exist. They are determined to accept as reality only the elements called earth, water, fire and air. They claim that mind arises solely from the gestation of the four elements, like a foetus; even as the gestation of various substances like roots, boiled rice and water results in intoxicating drink, anal wind and so on. So, actively denying a beginning and an end to life, they deny the self and future existence. This life (*loka*) is not real; the next life is not real; the matured fruits of good and ill deeds are not real; no individual creature is born, and so on. Because of denying all this, they turn their backs on the various endeavours like the rare and desirable goals of heaven and ultimate beatitude; they incessantly and forever perform ill deeds because of their innate disposition, and are headed for a mighty plunging into the hells.

In order to put an end to the belief of such people that the self does not exist, the illustrious Buddhas sometimes have maintained, for teaching purposes, that the self exists. They, adjusting to the realm of living beings in which there are 8,400 categories of creature, devoted to fulfilling their vow to rescue the entire realm of living beings and flowing with a great store of universal compassion, practical wisdom and ultimate insight, who are peerless, bonded to this one creation, physicians to the great malaise of the afflictions, masters of the art of healing, willed to show kindness to those needing guidance whether of the lowest, middle or highest level, they, in order to put an end to the ill acts of those of the lowest level, formulate their teaching in everyday terms.

The refutation of the theory that things can be without cause is given in the Chapter 'The Agent Subject and his Doing' of this treatise and in the verse 'or without cause' (fn 7 Materialists or naturalists.) and details may be found in the *Madhyamakavatara*. It is not necessary to refute that view again here.

However, there are some who, like birds, are tied by long and strong bonds of attachment to the I and the mine, bonds which arise from holding to the reality of the self. Such, though they have progressed far and commit no ill acts, are unable to go beyond being born into the three planes of existence and cannot reach the blissful city of *nirvāṇa* where there is neither old age nor death. Such are of the middle group of those who need guidance, and to them the illustrious Buddhas, in their desire to show favour to those who need guidance, have also taught the non-existence of self in order to weaken the attachment to the false view of the self and to awaken the longing for *nirvāṇa*.

And there are those who, thanks to their earlier discipline, have perfected their potential by adhering to the profound truth. To such superior followers, for whom *nirvāṇa* is near, who are free of attachment to a self, who are capable of penetrating to the hidden truth in the words of the foremost sage, the Buddhas, having seen the worthiness of these, have taught: 'No self whatsoever either exists or does not exist.' Even as the theory of self is not the truth of things, no more is the theory of non-self. That is why it is taught: 'There is no self whatsoever, nor is there any non-self whatsoever.'

As is said in the *Arvaratnakuta*: ' "There is a self', Kasyapa, is one dogma. "There is no self' is the opposing dogma. What avoids these two dogmas is said to be without a specific nature, beyond proof, not related, invisible, without an abode, not to be known conceptually. It is, Kasyapa, the middle way; it is the right way of regarding the true way of things.'

As is said in the *Aryaratnavali*: 'And so neither a self nor a non-self is perceived in the way things truly are. The great sage has eradicated false views stemming from self and non-self. What is seen and heard and otherwise perceived is not said by the sage to be either real or false. From one view would arise its opposite and neither would be true.'

As, in this way, the actual teaching of the truth by the illustrious Buddhas in repudiating self, not-self and both together, takes account of the various dispositions of those who are to be guided whether they are of the lesser, middle or superior category, therefore the Madhyamikas are not at variance with the authoritative texts.

This is why the master Aryadeva said, 'The one who knows how, in the beginning, to ward off ill deed and, later, how to ward off the self and, after that, how to keep all things under control, he has achieved wisdom.' And Nagarjuna said, 'Even as the grammarian would teach language, even so Buddha

taught the Truth according to the capacity of those who were to be guided. To some he taught the Truth in order to lead them from ill deeds; to some for the sake of good deeds; to some for the sake of both. And, beyond both, he taught the hidden Truth, terrifying to the timid, concealed in the absence of being and universal compassion; and to yet others he taught the realization of enlightenment.' (*Ratnavali* IV, 94-6)

There is another interpretation of the *kārikā*, The Sarhkhya school and others, after accepting the lack of a necessary connection between an act and its consequences in compound elements which are in constant flux, still talk about a self. And the naturalists (*lokayatikas*), not seeing, in rigorous perception, a transmigrating self, talk about a non-self. They say, 'A person is absolutely nothing more than what is within the sense fields. O blessed one, what the learned talk about is but a faulty inference.'

Even as those not suffering from eye disease do not see the hairs and mosquitoes and such things which are perceived by those with eye disease, so the Buddhas in no way whatsoever see self and non-self as self-existing realities in the way ordinary people imagine them. ' "Neither self nor non-self exist" has been taught as well by the Buddhas.'

The limitation of language

Someone may object: If the illustrious Buddhas taught neither that the self exists nor that the self does not exist, what then did they teach? The reply is:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If the distinctions made in XVIII.2 and 4 are not recognized, it is natural for the interpreters of Nagarjuna to run into difficulties in explaining the contents of this verse. Here agin we have the use of the iti-formula, this time used with the terms atman and anatman, as atma-iti and anatma-iti. However, the difference between the Buddha's speculations and those of the metaphysicians in this regard is that the Buddha does not speculate on any entity (kascid) as atman or as anatman. In other words, he does not reify either atman or anatman. Reifying atman one ends up in eternalism, reifying anatman one is led to annihilationism. Without resorting to such reification, the Buddha has indicated the meaning of atman (atmeti prajnapitam) and has spoken of the implications of anatman (anatmeti desitam). Both atman and anatman are explained by the Buddha in terms of dependent arising (pratityasamutpada). This doctrine of dependent arising eliminates the need for postulating either permanence or annihilation. As such, the distinction that Inada attempts to make between prajnapitam as "provisionally employed" and desitam as "instructed" becomes untenable. If "provisional explanation" is to be achieved by the use of words, it could not be different from "instruction." Both need the use of language. Just as much as the Buddha could instruct on the "true idea of anatman," he could have instructed on the true idea of atman, without falling into metaphysics in either case. If the use of the empirical terms can be utilized in one case, there is no reason to assume any difficulty in using them in the other. The problem then is not with regard to language as such, but only in regard to the way in which it is used.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. There are many discussions of the way to think about the self in the Buddhist canon. For those who are nihilistic about the self (such as contemporary eliminative materialists or classical Indian Carvakas), it is important to explain the conventional reality of the self. For those who tend to reify the self, the doctrine of no-self is taught, that is, the doctrine of the emptiness of the self. But, Nāgārjuna claims, as a preamble to the next verse, there is a deeper view of the matter - a doctrine of neither self nor nonself. That doctrine is closely tied to that of the emptiness of emptiness. Both the terms "self" and "no-self" together with any conceptions that can be associated with them, Nāgārjuna claims, are conventional designations. They may each be soteriologically and analytically useful antidotes to extreme metaphysical views and to the disturbances those views occasion. But to neither corresponds an entity - neither a thing that we could ever find on analysis and identify with the self, nor a thing or state that we could identify with no-self. The terms and the properties they designate are themselves empty, despite the fact that they are used to designate emptiness. To say neither self nor no-self is, from this perspective, not to shrug one's shoulders in indecision but to recognize that while each of these is a useful characterization of the situation for some purposes, neither can be understood as correctly ascribing a property to an independently existent entity. And if they cannot be understood in this way, what are we really saying?

Kārikā XVIII.7

निवृत्तमभिधातव्यं निवृत्ते चित्तगोचरे।
अनुत्पन्नानिरुद्धा हि निर्वाणमिव धर्मता॥७॥

nivṛttam abhidhātavyaṃ nivṛttaś cittagocaraḥ |
anutpannāniruddhā hi nirvāṇam iva dharmatā ||7||

諸法實相者 心行言語斷
無生亦無滅 寂滅如涅槃

zhū fǎ shí xiàng;xiāng zhě xīn xíng;háng;xìng yán yǔ duàn
wú shēng yì wú miè jì miè rú niè pán

|བརྗོད་པར་བྱ་བ་ལྡོག་པ་སྟེ||སེམས་ཀྱི་སྤྱོད་ཡུལ་ལྡོག་པས་སོ|
|མ་སྐྱེས་པ་དང་མ་འགགས་པ||ཆོས་ཉིད་མྱ་ངན་འདས་དང་མཚུངས||

| brjod par bya ba ldog pa ste | | sems kyi spyod yul ldog pas so |
| ma skyes pa daṅ ma ’gags pa | | chos ñid mya ṅan ’das daṅ mtshuṅs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - Where mind's functional realm ceases, the realm of words also ceases. For, indeed, the essence of existence (dharmata) is like nirvana, without origination and destruction.

JONES (Skt):
[7] When the domain of thought has ceased, then what can be named has ceased. The nature of all things is, like nirvana, unarisen and unceased.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When the sphere of though[t] has ceased, that which is to be designated also has ceased. Like freedom, the nature of things is non-arisen and non-ceased.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where the range of thought is renounced, that which can be stated has ceased to be valid.
Indeed, the nature of events is like liberation, nonarising and nonceasing.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. The abstract world is the world, which has been described with words.
Therefore the abstract world is very similar to a pasture, where thoughts can be wandering like cows at random.
Because what hasn't been produced can never be governed by any thing,
The balanced autonomic nervous system is just the substance of the Universe.

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 When the object of thought is no more there is nothing for language to refer to. The true nature of things neither arises nor perishes, as *nirvāṇa* does not.

STRENG (Skt):
7. When the domain of thought has been dissipated, "that which can be stated" is dissipated. Those things which are un-originated and not terminated, like nirvana, constitute the Truth (dharmata).

ROBINSON (Skt):
When the sphere of thought has ceased, the nameable ceases; Dharma-nature Is like nirvana, unarising and unceasing.

BOCKING (Ch):
18v7 The true character of dharmas,
Is severance of mind, actions and speech.
With no production and no cessation
Calm extinction, like nirvana.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
That to which language refers is denied, because an object experienced by the mind is denied. The unborn and unceasing nature of reality is comparable to nirvana.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The expressible is annulled
Because the domain of the mind is annulled.
The intrinsic nature, unarisen and unceasing,
Equals the transcendence of suffering. [XVIII.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. What language expresses is nonexistent.
The sphere of thought is nonexistent.
Unarisen and unceased, like nirvana
Is the nature of things.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. What language expresses is repudiated because
The domain of thought is repudiated.
Unarisen and unceased:
Reality is just like nirvana.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When the object of thought has ceased there is nothing for language to refer to. Like Nirvana, the true nature of things neither arises nor ceases.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

This means that if there were something real (*vastu*) for language to refer to there could be didactic argument (*desyeta*). When, however, what language refers to is no more, when there is no object (*visaya*) for utterances to refer to, then there is no didactic argument by the Buddhas whatever. Why does Nagarjuna say there is nothing for language to refer to? Because 'The object of thought is no more.' Object of thought means what thought (*citta*) has as its object (*gocara*). Object means the object grasped in thought. If there were such an object of thought, then, by imputing a specific character (*nimitta*) to it, speech would be able to function. When, however, no object of thought exists, how can specific character be imputed by which speech would function? How it is that there is no object of thought Nagarjuna explains when he says: 'The true nature of things (*dharmata*) neither arises nor perishes, as *nirvāṇa* does not.'

As the true nature of things, understood as their inherent, self-existent nature, their ur-nature, does not arise nor perish, like *nirvāṇa*, so discursive thought cannot function with respect to it. And if thought does not function "how can specific character be imputed to things? And if this is wanting how can speech function? That the illustrious Buddhas have didactically argued nothing whatever is therefore established beyond question (fn 8 An incisive, if brief, essay on the naturallimits of metaphysics.). That is why Nagarjuna will say later, 'Beatitude is the coming to an end of taking things in their particularity, the coming to an end of the manifold of named things. No doctrine about anything at all has been taught by Buddha at any time.' (MMK XXV.24)

Let it be so, you may say, but what of the earlier statement 'The manifold of named things comes to an end in the absence of being.' How can there be an end to named things in the absence of being (*sunyata*)? The reply is, 'because what language refers to has come to an end'; this should be understood here as it was earlier.

Well but what about the earlier statement 'It is the utter cessation of I-ing and mine-ing in both personal and non- personal regard through ceasing to take anything whatsoever, whether personal or non-personal, as real in its particularity that is for us the way things are really'? Is it possible to say more precisely what the way things are really (*tattvam*) is?

To the line 'When the object of thought is no more there is nothing for language to refer to' should be added 'and that is the way things are really' (*tattvatah*).

And if, further, you ask: What is the reason why, in that real way of things, what language refers to is no more when the object of thought is no more? Nagarjuna says 'because the true nature of things neither arises nor perishes, as *nirvāṇa* does not'. The exposition given earlier fits here precisely.

As is said in the *Tathagataguhva Sutra*: 'O Santamati, in the night when the Tathagata [Buddha] became perfectly enlightened with the unsurpassable perfection of illumination, during the night when he attained perfect freedom, during this time the Tathagata neither uttered nor enunciated even one syllable. The illustrious one taught the message in different ways to all beings who are to be guided, to gods, demons, men, Kinnaras, the saints, Vidhvadharas and serpents. By the utterance of one momentary cry he banishes the darkness from men's minds, he awakens the lotus of enlightenment in its many forms, he dries up the ocean of old age and death and he confounds the multitudinous rays of the seven suns which shine at the end of a cosmic age.' And from the *Samadhirajasutra*: 'When Buddha, the sage, the king of truth, the revealer of all truths appears, the refrain is sounded from grass and bush and tree and plants, from the rocks and the mountains: all elements of existence are without being.'

'Howsoever far mere words reach in the world realm, all are without being, none is real; and so far resounds the call of the realized one, the guide and teacher of all men.'

Madhyamika is not nihilism

At this point some will insist that the Madhyamikas are indistinguishable from nihilists (*nastika*) because they hold that good and ill acts, responsible agents, the fruits of action and the entire world of personal existence are without self-existence. And the nihilists as well hold that 'Things have no permanent existence.' Therefore Madhyamikas are indistinguishable from nihilists.

It is not so. Why? Because Madhyamikas are exponents of the view that all things arise in dependence. Having grasped the significance of causal conditions they argue that everything in this life and in the next is lacking self-existent nature because it arises

in dependence. The nihilists are naive realists and do not understand the non-existence of the next life and the other things as due to lack of self-existent nature in things because they arise in dependence. Rather, even though they take the things of this world to have self-existent natures, as they do not admit that one is born into this life from another or into another life from this, they deny that things such as are experienced in this life exist elsewhere.

You may say: But, as they hold that nothing exists as real in itself there is, in this respect, an identity of view. It is not so. Why? As Madhyamikas accept things as real for purposes of the everyday world, the two views are not comparable. But are they not comparable in essentials? Even though comparable in the essential point of the unrealness of things they are not comparable because those putting the views into practice differ.

Suppose a man has committed a crime. Someone, who did not recognize the criminal beyond a doubt, urged by an enemy of the criminal, falsely gives witness that the crime was committed by a certain man. Someone else, an eye-witness of the crime, accuses the same man. Now, even though there is no difference in objective content, none the less, because of the difference between the two witnesses, the one is said to speak falsely and the other to speak the truth. When the facts come to light the first one is worthy of disgrace and demerit, but not the other one.

So it is in this case. There is no identity of insight or of explanation between the Madhyamikas who have fully realized the real nature of things as it is (*vastusvarupa*) and who expound that, and the nihilists who have not fully realized the real nature of things as it is, even though there is no difference in their theory of the nature of things.

Just as, though a certain imperturbability is common to the ordinary man who has not achieved a tranquil mind and to the saint who has, there is a great difference; and just as, though there is something in common between a man blind from birth and one who can see, if both are lost in a difficult and precipitous region, there is a great difference; so there will be a great difference between the nihilists and the Madhyamikas. Thus the teachers of earlier times. But enough of these arguments. We will continue our exposition.

The nature of the teaching of the Buddhas

You may object that, even though 'The true nature of things neither arises nor perishes, as *nirvāṇa* does not', and that there can be no assertive use of speech (*vac*) nor any discursive thought (*citta*) with respect to it, none the less this truth can certainly not be known if it is not didactically argued. In bringing this truth to those who need guidance there must necessarily be recourse at times to a graduated (*anupurvi*) teaching given in terms of everyday, unenlightened experience and so the truth will be expounded.

We reply. It should be realized that this graduated teaching of the illustrious Buddhas which penetrates to the way things are eternally is simply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

"Whereof thought has ceased, thereof speech also has come to cease." Abhidhatavya means "that which is to be designated." It refers to the world of objects. It is the same as abhidheya which, if we follow Nagarjuna's method of exposition, is mutually related to abhidhana, "designation." Both abhidheya and abhidhana would thus cease to be along with the cessation of the sphere of thought (citta-gocara). "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."

It is possible for the interpreters of Nagarjuna to assume that here is the identification of the "unspeakable" with "emptiness" (sunyata), generally referred to in negative terms as "non-arisen, non-ceased" (anutpanniruddha), which is then identified with both "true nature" (dharmata) and freedom (nirvana). This is the easy route to the belief in the so-called "non-conceptual" (nir-vikalpa) ultimate reality (paramartha, tattva).

However, the first line of Nagarjuna's statement should prevent anyone from reaching such a conclusion. Nowhere has Nagarjuna asserted any form of knowledge that transcends the six senses. For him, what is perceivable is also conceivable. He may, reflecting upon the conceptualization of the metaphysicians, admit that what is not perceivable is also conceivable. Yet, it would be improper to assume that he will recognize the non-conceptual (nir-vikalpa) as being perceivable. Conceptualizing and conceiving are not two different activities. Hence his statement: "When the realm of thought has ceased, that which is to be designated also has ceased."

As pointed out in the introduction, a similar statement was made by the Buddha in relation to a tathagata who has passed away, and the present context, in which the metaphysical notion of serf (atman) is discussed, is no more different from that in which the Buddha made that statement.

So far as Nagarjuna's analysis is concerned, it has become clear that his negations pertained primarily to metaphysics, whether it be the notion of a permanent and eternal serf (atman) or a substance (svabhava). Along with the negation of a permanent and eternal self, Nagarjuna also rejected absolute "otherness" (parabhava). Existence and non-existence, in this metaphysical sense, were rejected by him. As pointed out in the analysis of the Dedicatory Verses, the "non-arising" (anutpada) and "non-ceasing" (anirodha) were intended as criticisms of such metaphysics. If one recognizes a substance, Nagarjuna would say it is non-ceasing; if one recognizes annihilation, Nagarjuna would characterize is as non-arising. In other words, if absolute arising and absolute ceasing were to be accepted, these would negate empirical arising and ceasing which is the basis of "dependent arising" (pratityasamutpada). When both "the way of phenomena" (dharmata) and freedom (nirvana), which are explained in terms of "dependent arising" (pratityasamutpada), are referred to as "nonarisen and non-ceasing", it is more appropriate to assume that here they are to be distinguished from absolute arising and absolute ceasing. Arising and ceasing in an absolute sense represent inappropriate conceptualizations. Neither the nature of phenomena nor freedom should be the subject of such inappropriate conceptualizations.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. This insight is developed further in this verse. Here Nāgārjuna begins to move towards his famous and surprising identification of nirvāṇa with saṃsāra, and of emptiness with conventional reality. This identification of what in earlier Buddhism were regarded as wholly different from one another and this characterization of the mundane in terms heretofore reserved for the putatively transcendent are among Nāgārjuna’s most radical and original moves and are central to the development of a distinctively Mahayana outlook. In the first two lines, he reiterates that there are no actual convention independent entities that correspond to the ostensible referring terms or predicates in our language. But, he argues, from the emptiness of things, it follows that they never either arise or cease. This does not mean that they are permanent, of course. Rather it means that while arising and ceasing and consequent impermanence are features of all conventional phenomena and are among the features that make them empty, from the ultimate point of view, as was argued in Chapter VII, there is no ultimate basis for arising and ceasing. But if nirvāṇa is liberation from cyclic existence and hence from arising and ceasing, it follows that, from the ultimate standpoint, all things in saṃsāra are actually just as they are in nirvāṇa.

Kārikā XVIII.8

सर्वं तथ्यं न वा तथ्यं तथ्यं चातथ्यमेव च।
नैवातथ्यं नैव तथ्यमेतद्बुद्धानुशासनम्॥८॥

sarvaṃ tathyaṃ na vā tathyaṃ tathyaṃ cātathyam eva ca |
naivātathyaṃ naiva tathyam etad buddhānuśāsanam ||8||

一切實非實 亦實亦非實
非實非非實 是名諸佛法

yī qiè shí fēi shí yì shí yì fēi shí
fēi shí fēi fēi shí shì míng zhū fó fǎ

|ཐམས་ཅད་ཡང་དག་ཡང་དག་མིན། །ཡང་དག་ཡང་དག་མ་ཡིན་ཉིད། །ཡང་དག་མིན་མིན་ཡང་དག་མིན། །དེ་ནི་སངས་རྒྱས་རྗེས་བསྟན་པའོ། །

| thams cad (3)yaṅ dag yaṅ dag min | | yaṅ dag yaṅ dag ma yin ñid |
| yaṅ dag min min yaṅ dag min | | de ni saṅs rgyas rjes bstan pa'o |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - Everything is suchness (tathyam), not suchness, both suchness and not suchness, and neither suchness nor not suchness. This is the Buddha's teaching.

JONES (Skt):
[8] The buddhas' teaching is this: everything is real, and everything is not real; everything is both real and not real; everything is neither real nor not real.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Everything is such, not such, both such and not such, and neither such and not such: this is the Buddha's admonition.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Everything is factual, nonfactual, both factual and nonfactual,
neither factual nor nonfactual. This is the instruction of the Buddha.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. All kinds of Real Entity can be thought as if it were not Real Entity too.
Real Entity and non-Real Entity can be thought as if they were the same.
They were never non-Reality, but they were never Reality.
This World is just Gautama Buddha's teachings themselves.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 Everything in this world can be taken as real or not real; or both real and not real; or neither real nor not real. This is the Buddha's teaching.

STRENG (Skt):
8. Everything is "actual" (tathyam) or "not-actual," or both "acts actual-and-not-actual," Or "neither-actual-nor-not-actual": This is the teaching of the Buddha.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XVIII.8 All is so, or all is not so, both so and not so, neither so nor not so. This is the Buddha's teaching.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Everything is either true, or not true, or both true and not true, or neither true nor not true; this is the adapted instruction of the Buddhas.

BOCKING (Ch):
18v8 All (things) are real, unreal,
Both real and unreal, and
Neither unreal nor not unreal,
This is called the Buddha's Dharma.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Everything is real, not real; both real and not real; neither not real nor real: this is the teaching of the Buddha.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Everything is real and unreal,
Real and indeed not real,
Not unreal and not real—
That is the thorough teaching of the Buddha. [XVIII.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. Everything is real and is not real,
Both real and not real,
Neither real nor not real.
This is Lord Buddha's teaching.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Everything is real; and is not real;
Both real and unreal;
Neither unreal nor real.
This is the Lord Buddha's teaching.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Everything is such, not such, both such and not such, neither such nor not such. This is the Buddha's teaching.

To quote: 'Whatever is most familiar to one is most effective for him naturally. If one is bewildered how can one receive the truth? As it is not possible to make a foreigner understand by a language not his own, so the unenlightened person (*loka*) cannot be made to comprehend except by means of the everyday.' (fn 9 Or, the World cannot be made to comprehend except in its own way.)

As the illustrious one said: 'The unenlightened person is at variance with me; I am not at variance with the unenlightened person. What is accepted by the unenlightened is accepted by me; what is not accepted by the unenlightened is not accepted by me.' Thus the scripture. The illustrious one always treated the elements of personal existence, the senses and their objects, and the types of consciousness as 'real' (*tathyam*). These are thought to be real when perceived by those who are to be guided - those suffering from the optical defect of primal ignorance — in whom has been aroused the desire to learn about the various natures of the things generally accepted as real. And this with an eye on the higher truth and with a view to arousing the faith of the ordinary man in himself.

'This holy man is aware of every last happening in the world, he is omniscient and all-seeing; he possesses the knowledge of the inanimate world from the infinity of space to the coursing of the winds and he knows the uttermost limits of the world of beings; he knows incontrovertibly the many kinds of origin, existence and end, what is cause, what is effect, what is pleasurable, what is painful.'

So, after those who are to be guided have realized the omniscience of the illustrious one, at a later time it is explained that everything is not real (*na tathyam*) as naively taken. At this point what is real is what does not change. But all compounded things change in fact because they perish by the moment. Therefore, because of this fact of change, they are not real either. The word 'or' means 'and'; it is to be taken as joining the two views. That is: 'Everything in this world can be taken as real and as not real.'

For some it is explained that everything in the world is both real and not real at the same time. For the unenlightened everything in the world is real; for those who have started on the way everything is false because not perceived in its naive reality (*evam anupalambha*).

There arc those however who, from long practice, see things the way they really are, who have eradicated the obstructions (*avarana*) virtually completely like the roots of a tree; for them it is explained that everything in the world is neither real nor not real. In order to remove what remains of the obstructions, both alternatives are rejected even as one rejects predicates like black and white for the son of a barren woman.

This is the teaching of the illustrious Buddhas. It leads men from byways and establishes them on the right way. In the interests of gradual instruction and of adapting to those who are to be led, the teaching is flexible.

All the teachings of the illustrious Buddhas, who are possessed of universal compassion, ultimate insight and practical wisdom, are intended to be a means of penetrating (*avatara*) to the eternal way of things (*tattvamrta*). The perfectly realized ones have not uttered one word which was not in fact a means of penetrating to the eternal way of things. They administer medicine suited to the illness. They have the urge to succour those who need guidance and they teach the truth accordingly. To quote from the Four Hundred Verses: 'Things are real, things are not real, things are both real and not real: all this is said variously. Indeed all cures as such are cures for a specific desire.'

The true way of things

But, you ask, what is the nature of 'the way things really are' which the teachings of the revered ones are intended to penetrate to? This is explained in the verse 'When the object of thought is no more, there is nothing for language to refer to.' When this obtains what further questions can there be? Though this is so, none the less the way things are really must be spoken of. This is done by speaking in a second sense (*samaropatah*). One accepts the everyday (*laukika*) terms 'real', 'not real' and so on which are drawn from the world of transactional discourse (*vyavaharasatya*).

Nagarjuna expresses it this way.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

On the basis of this statement, Inada, following his predecessors in the interpretation of Nagarjuna , reached the conclusion that "truth is non-relational, non-descriptive, non-differential. . .. it is thatness or thusness," (p. 113). Referring specifically to XVIII.8, he says that here "Nagarjuna" introduces the famed Four-cornered Logic, . . . i.e., the possible conditions of is, is not, both is and is not, and neither is nor is not, in order to exhibit the fact that final truth transcends all these possibilities; it is sunyata per se" (ibid.) So far, our analysis of Nagarjuna's statements has failed to reveal any form of four-cornered logic that he used to establish an ultimate truth. Whenever he utilized it, he did so in order to reject metaphysical assumptions, rather than to establish something or some theory.

After stating the fact that metaphysical views, especially those relating to a tathagata after death, take us beyond the sphere of thought (citta-gocara)(XVIII.7), Nagarjuna is here expanding the discussion to include one of the most persistent problems of metaphysics, namely, "everything" (sarvam). It is the problem that led the Sarvastivadins to uphold the view that "everything exists" (sarvam asti) in the form of substance (svabhava). Nagarjuna is simply allowing that metaphysical question to be settled by the use of the fourfold propositions that negate each other.

Indeed, this is not presented as the "teaching" or "message" (sasana) of the Buddha, as Inada seems to understand. Quite on the contrary, it is an "admonition" or "advice" (anusana) in regard to the manner in which speculation about "everything" can be resolved, namely, by demonstrating the inevitable self-contradictions. In other words, he is stating that the question regarding "everything" cannot be settled by any form of discussion, a view clearly expressed by the Buddha in his famous "Discourse on Everything" (Sabba-sutta, see commentary on IX.3), which Nagarjuna was probably conversant with.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. This is the positive tetralemma regarding existence. Everything is conventionally real. Everything is ultimately unreal (that is, not unreal in just any sense, but unreal when seen from the ultimate standpoint). Everything has both characteristics - that is, everything is both conventionally real and ultimately unreal. Nothing is ultimately real or completely nonexistent. That is, everything is neither real in one sense nor not-real in another sense. (fn 93. My reading contrasts with that of Inada (1970, p. 113), who argues that here Nāgārjuna intends to deny these four possibilities. See also Sprung (1979) and Wood (1994) for interpretations that fail to appreciate completely the positive tetralemma and its role in Nāgārjuna's enterprise (though to be sure Wood takes note of the positive mood of this instance). Ruegg (1977) interprets this verse as suggesting gradations of progressively more sophisticated teachings progressing from a mundane analysis of existence to a teaching of emptiness, to a teaching of their compatibility, to an indication of the inability of predication. Ng (1993), pp. 93-97, agrees. While such a purport would be something with which Nāgārjuna would agree, it seems out of place in this discussion. Wood, on the other hand, takes this verse to indicate that straightforward contradictions (existence and nonexistence) follow from the supposition that anything exists at all, in any way, and, hence, to form part of a nihilistic analysis. While such a reading would make sense if one only attended to this chapter, taken in the context of the work as a whole, and especially Chapter XXIV, that nihilistic reading is very hard to sustain.) (fn 94. That is, of course, everything that is conventionally real in the first place. Santa Claus is not among the objects of analysis here.)

Interestingly, the tetralemma can also be asserted in a negative form with some of the same force: Nothing is real (ultimately). Nothing is not-real (everything has a kind of reality). Nothing is both real and not-real (in the same sense - that would be contradictory). Nothing is neither real nor not-real (the law of the excluded middle). Both forms of the tetralemma are found in this text. See XXII: 11. (fn 95. It is interesting to note - and we will return to this point in XXII below that Nāgārjuna typically resorts to positive forms of the tetralemma when emphasizing claims about conventional phenomena and to negative forms when emphasizing the impossibility of the literal assertion of ultimate truths. Ng (1993), pp. 99-105, notices this point as well.)

(fn 96. Here I take issue with philosophers such as Sprung (1979), who argue that the tetralemma is insignificant for Madhyamika thought. Indeed, as I indicate in several places in this commentary, it is, both in its positive and negative moods, often an indispensable analytic tool. It is indeed "used as a means of investigation" (p. 7) here and elsewhere in the text. And as I argue here and below it is often quite useful. Sprung may be led to this conclusion by the fact that he overlooks the contrast between positive and negative tetralemmas, focusing exclusively on the latter. Moreover, he confuses its logical structure. See Ruegg (1977) and Matilal (1977) for divergent but each interesting and helpful investigations into the structure of the tetralemma, as well as Wood (1994) for what I regard as a serious misunderstanding of the tetralemma and of its deployment in Madhyamika philosophy (see esp. pp. 64-77).)

Kārikā XVIII.9

अपरप्रत्ययं शान्तं प्रपञ्चैरप्रपञ्चितम्।
निर्विकल्पमनानार्थमेतत्तत्त्वस्य लक्षणम्॥९॥

aparapratyayaṃ śāntaṃ prapañcair aprapañcitam |
nirvikalpam anānārtham etat tattvasya lakṣaṇam ||9||

自知不隨他 寂滅無戲論
無異無分別 是則名實相

zì zhī bù suí tā jì miè wú xì lùn
wú yì wú fēn bié shì zé míng shí xiàng;xiāng

།གཞན་ལས་ཤེས་མིན་ཞི་བ་དང༌།།སྤྲོས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་མ་སྤྲོས་པ།
།རྣམ་རྟོག་མེད་དོན་ཐ་དད་མིན།།དེ་ནི་དེ་ཉིད་མཚན་ཉིད་དོ།།

| gźan las śes min źi ba daṅ | | spros pa rnams kyis ma spros pa |
| rnam rtog med don tha dad med | | de ni de ñid (4)mtshan ñid do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - Non-conditionally related to any entity, quiescent, non-conceptualized by conceptual play, non-discriminative, and non-differentiated. These are the characteristics of reality (i.e., descriptive of one who has gained the Buddhist truth)

JONES (Skt):
[9] The characteristic of what is actually real is this: not dependent upon another, peaceful, free of being projected upon by conceptual projections, free of thoughts that make distinctions, and without multiplicity.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Independently realized, peaceful, unobsessed by obsessions, without discriminations and a variety of meanings: such is the characteristic of truth.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Unconditioned by another, peaceful, not constructed by means of false imaginings,
free from false discriminations and without purpose, this is the mark of reality.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. Nothing can overcome, and nothing can follow up. The Truth is just the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system.
Relying upon miscellaneous kinds of expansion, there is some possibility for any expansion not to exist.
The state without any doubt is different from having another aim,
And this World is just characteristics, which belongs to the concrete fact.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 Not dependent on anything other than itself, at peace, not manifested as named things, beyond thought construction, not of varying form thus the way things are really is spoken of.

STRENG (Skt):
9. "Not caused by something else," "peaceful," "not elaborated by discursive thought," "Indeterminate," "undifferentiated": such are the characteristics of true reality (tattva).

BOCKING (Ch):
18v9 To know for oneself, not following others,
Calm extinction, without sophistries,
No differences and no distinctions;
This is termed the 'true character'.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Not known through others, peaceful, not fixed by fixations, without conceptual thought, without differentiation: these are the characteristics of suchness.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Not known by anything else, peace,
Not constructed through constructs,
Absence of concepts, and absence of a different meaning—
These are the characteristics of reality. [XVIII.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. Not dependent on another, peaceful and
Not fabricated by mental fabrication,
Not thought, without distinctions,
That is the character of reality (that-ness)

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. Not dependent on another, peaceful and
Not fabricated by fabrications,
Not conceptualized, without distinctions:
That is the characteristic of things as they really are.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Not dependent on other, peaceful, not mentally constructed or variegated, and without meaning—such is the character of Truth.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Unknowable by analogy; peace;
Not of the fabric of fabrications;
Nonconceptual; free of distinctions—
These are the characteristics of the precise nature. (9)

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

'Not dependent on anything other than itself' (*aparapratyaya*) means that in the way things really are one is not dependent on anything; it is to be attained without mediation and not by the instruction of another. Those with an optical defect see hairs, gnats, bees and so on which do not exist. Even though instructed by those of sound vision they are incapable of realizing the true nature of the illusory hair as it is, that is, they are not capable of not seeing it even as those of sound vision do not see it. Rather they understand theoretically, from the instruction of those with sound vision, merely that such things are optical illusions. When, however, those suffering from the defect become people with the eye of wisdom, cured by the balm of unmediated seeing that such things are irrefragably without substance, then they realize directly and for themselves that it is the true nature of such things not to be seen at all. So much for the phrase 'Not dependent on anything other than itself.' The true nature of things (*svarupa*) is the way things are truly (*tattvam*).

The true nature of 'at peace' (*santa*) is to be entirely without self-existence like the illusory hairs not seen by those of sound vision.

And then the expression 'not manifested as named thing' (fn 10 *prapancair aprapancita*. 'Inexpressible in verbal language' would be an alternate translation.). 'Named thing' means that language gives rise to things with meanings. 'Not manifested as named thing' means inexpressible by verbal utterance.

'Beyond thought construction' (*nirvikalpa*). Thought construction is the innate activity of mind. To be free of that is the way things are beyond thought construction. As the sutra says: 'What is the higher truth? Where nothing is happening, not even knowledge, how could there be any utterance of words?' This is what 'beyond thought construction' means.

Something which is said to be 'of varying form' has different forms. This means that what is not of varying form (*ananartha*) is invariable, does not have multiple, differing forms.

As is said in the *Satyadvayavatara Sutra*: 'Manjusri explained to Devaputra: In higher truth, all the putative elements of existence are of the same nature because in not being produced, in not being born in any sense at all, they are the same nature. Why is that? Because, in higher truth, all the elements of existence become undifferentiated in *nirvāṇa* from not really arising in any sense at all. Even as, Devaputra, the space in a clay jar is the same as the space in a bejewelled jar, both being of the nature of space, in higher truth undifferentiated; similarly, Devaputra. afflicted existence, in higher truth, does not arise in any sense; nor does purification arise in any sense. The birth-death cycle itself is, in higher truth, one with non-arising. Even *nirvāṇa* is in higher truth absolutely the same as non-arising; in it in higher truth, there is no differcntiable factor. Why is that? Because, in higher truth, all elements of existence are absolutely undifferentiable.'

In this sense is invariableness to be understood as a characterization of the way things really are. It is because the absence of a self-existent nature is essentially one in all things. Further such exposition can be had from the same source. So much for the way those wise ones, who have vanquished the cycle of birth, old age and death, speak of the way things really are.

The truth in the world of cause and effect

Concerning the characterization of the way things are in the world of everyday Nagarjuna says:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is one of the most important statements of Nagarjuna, quoted often by his classical as well as modern interpreters. The most recent translation and interpretation comes from Inada and, as such, it could be considered a digest of the existing views. Hence, it is appropriate to quote Inada's rendering of this verse in full. It reads as follows: Non-conditionally related to any entity, quiscent, non-conceptualized by conceptual play, nondiscriminative and non-differentiated. These are the characteristics of reality (i.e., descriptive of one who has gained the Buddhist truth) ().

The term apara-pratyaya is here taken to mean a special kind of relation that transcends any form of empirical conditionality. Santa signifies "quiescence," a quiescence resulting from the avoidance of any conceptuality, probably the sort of peace and quiet experienced by one who has

temporarily stopped the functioning of the six sense faculties by reaching the state of cessation (nirodha-samapatti, or sanna-vedayita-nirodha). It is where the dichotomy of subject and object is completely dissolved (nir-vikalpa) and where the variegated experiences of the world, the variety of meanings or fruits (nanartha), is eliminated. Truth, in such a context, cannot be very different from that of either the Upanisads or the Vedanta. It is the flushing out of all conceptual thinking (citta-vrtti-nirodha), thereby transforming the empirical experience into one of absolute, ultimate truth or reality.

However, a glance at the "Discourse to Katyayana," the primary source for Nagarjuna's formulation of the "middle way," will reveal the untenability of such an explanation.

Even though the verse seems to describe the characteristics of truth or reality (tattvasya laksanam), every preceding statement points to the means by which a conception of truth is arrived at. Hence, it is one of the most important statements on epistemology. The most salient features of this epistemolgoy are already clearly embodied in the Buddha's discourse to Katyayana, presented in the form of an answer to the question as to what "right view" (samma-ditthi) is. The contents of the verse can be analysed in the light of this discourse in the following manner.

The term apara-pratyaya does not refer to a truth that is non-conditionally related to any entity. Rather, it explains the manner in which knowledge (nana) is attained by one who has "right view" (samma-ditthi). After rejecting the metaphysical views pertaining to permanent existence (atthita) as well as the belief in a permanent and substantial personal entity (atta . . . me), a belief that will require the testimony of some other person who claims to know the absolute beginning of things, the empiricist Buddha claimed that knowledge (of one who has fight view) occurs without having to depend upon another person (apara-paccaya nanam evassa ettha hoti, S 2.17). It is knowledge for which one does not have to depend upon another, primarily because it pertains to arising and ceasing of empirical phenomena. It involves personal verification, a verification that can be accomplished by someone before one begins to formulate any right view.

Man's search for a permanent entity, while he is equipped with limited epistemological resources, leaves him with unresolved questions. He continues to doubt. He is constantly perplexed and troubled. Looking for permanence, he misses the empirically given. The search for the unseen "beauty queen" (janapada-kalyani , D 1.193; M 2.40) makes him forget the immediatley relevant questions (M 2.40). As such, he has no peace of mind. However, if he were to direct his attention to what is immediately given, and understand the human predicament in its context without being inquisitive about metaphysical entities (dukkham eva uppajjamanam uppajjati dukkham nirujjhamanam nirujjhatiti na kankhati na vicikicchati, ibid.), his mind would be peaceful (santam). The Buddha, in one of his very famous statements, insisted that when a reflecting person understands the arising and ceasing of phenomena, all his doubts disappear (Ud 1). Such peace of mind is achieved, not by ignoring what is relevant in the human context, but by ignoring the irrelevant and irresolvable metaphysical issues.

Such a state of peace (santi) cannot be achieved so long as one is bound by one's prejudices (upayupadanabhinivesa-vinibandho, ibid.,) This is the "obsession" (prapañca) that Nagarjuna is referring to in the present context. The discourse to Katyayana has no reference to any conceptual proliferation. How such obsessions have further strengthened and encouraged the search for ultimate truths, contributing to indiscriminate discriminations, such as those of existence and non-existence (bhava-abhava) or self-nature and other-nature (svabhava-parabhava), has already been explained by Nagarjuna. These are the discriminations that are to be avoided in the search for truth. Nir-vikalpa refers to the absence of such discriminations.

A pluralistic view of the world is not incompatible with dependent arising (pratityasamutpada). Pluralism in the context of dependent arising does not imply the existence of self-contradictory truths. It need not necessarily lead to a notion of an Absolute that transcends such self-contradictory truths. The criterion for deciding what is true in the context of dependent arising is consequence or fruit (artha). When the Buddha maintained that "truth is one; there is no second" (ekam hi saccam na dutiyam atthi, Sn 884), he was certainly referring to this pragmatic criterion of truth based upon the notion of dependent arising, not an absolute truth that transcends all forms of duality and plurality. Nagarjuna's characterization of truth as "not having a variety of meanings" (ananartham) reflects more the Buddha's own conception of truth. To summarize, the conception of truth and the epistemological means on the basis of which it is formulated all point to the fact that the truth under con- sideration is the "dependently arisen" (pratityasamutpanna). The principle of dependent arising (pratityasamutpada) is merely the expression of the manner in which "dependently arisen" phenomena are explained. They are two sides of the same coin.

Yet, as reiterated before, the greatest misunderstandings created by the metaphysicians were in regard to "dependently arisen phenomena"

(pratityasamutpanna-dharma). Therefore, after examining the epistemological means by which the conception of truth "as dependently arisen" is arrived at, Nagarjuna, in the verse that follows immediately, takes up the metaphysical interpretations of the concept of dependence.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. That is, independent of conceptual imputation there are no objects, no identities, and so, no distinctions. But of course, as Kant would agree, there is no way that we can think such a reality. Nonetheless, Nāgārjuna argues (and Kant still agrees), we must see that that is the ultimate truth about things, though it might in its nature be inexpressible and inconceivable.

(fn 97. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in oral remarks (Columbia University, 1994), notes that "whenever we examine physical, mental, or abstract entities, we find as a result of a reductive analysis nothing but their unfindability. So you can't really speak coherently of identity or of entities. This is the fundamental teaching of Madhyamika." See also Nagao (1989), pp. 67-68, for useful remarks on XVIII: 79. But this interpretation can be carried too far, with the consequence that Nāgārjuna is seen as a thoroughgoing Kantian absolutist, regarding the ultimate truth. Murti (1985) endorses just such a view:

Origination, decay, etc ... are imagined by the uninformed; they are speculations indulged in by the ignorant. The real is utterly devoid *(tanya)* of these and other conceptual constructions; it is transcendent to thought and can be realised only in nondual knowledge - prajna or Intuition, which is the Absolute itself The distinction between two truths, *Paramartha* and *Samvrtti,* is emphasised.

. . . It is generally accepted [by Nāgārjuna and his followers] that the real is Absolute, at once Transcendent of Empirical Determinations and Immanent [in] Phenomena as the innermost essence. (p. xi [capitalization in original])

Kalupahana (1986) adopts another extreme reading, arguing that this verse in fact says nothing about the character of reality, but rather "the means by which a conception of truth is arrived at." He argues that it merely admonishes one to be independent in one's thinking, unbiased and calm in one's philosophical inquiry. It is hard to see how this reading could be justified apart from a strong antecedent commitment to seeing Nāgārjuna as a pragmatist.)

Kārikā XVIII.10

प्रतीत्य यद्यद्भवति न हि तावत्तदेव तत्।
न चान्यदपि तत्तस्मान्नोच्छिन्नं नापि शाश्वतम्॥१०॥

若法從緣生 不即不異因
是故名實相 不斷亦不常

།གང་ལ་བརྟེན་ཏེ་གང་འབྱུང་བ། །དེ་ནི་རེ་ཞིག་དེ་ཉིད་མིན།
།དེ་ལས་གཞན་པའང་མ་ཡིན་ཕྱིར། །དེ་ཕྱིར་ཆད་མིན་རྟག་མ་ཡིན། །

pratītya yad yad bhavati na hi tāvat tad eva tat |
na cānyad api tat tasmān nocchinnaṃ nāpi śāśvatam ||10||

ruò fǎ cóng yuán shēng bù jí bù yì yīn
shì gù míng shí xiàng;xiāng bù duàn yì bù cháng

| gaṅ la brten te gaṅ 'byuṅ ba | | de ni re źig de ñid min |
| de las gźan pa'aṅ ma yin phyir | | de phyir chad min rtag ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - Any existence which is relational is indeed neither identical to nor different from the related object. Therefore, it is neither interruption nor constancy.

JONES (Skt):
[10] Whatever arises dependently upon another thing is not that thing, nor is it different from that thing. Therefore, it is neither annihilated nor eternal.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever that arises depending upon whatever, that is not identical nor different from it. Therefore, it is neither annihilated nor external.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
First off, what arises depending on that is neither identical to nor different from that.
Therefore that is neither disrupted nor permanent [neither annihilated nor eternal].

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. Each thing clearly exists one by one,
Because similarity between one thing and another is not so similar to each other,
The gap between one thing and another, is never so wide.
It is not cut with each other, but it is never eternal.

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 What comes into existence dependent on something else cannot be that very thing; nor can it be wholly other either; therefore things neither perish completely nor are they everlasting.

STRENG (Skt):
10. Whatever exists, being dependent on something else, is certainly not identical to that other thing, Nor is a thing different from that; therefore, it is neither destroyed nor eternal.

ROBINSON (Skt):
An "A" that comes into being dependent on "B" Is not identical with "B" and not other than "B"; thus it is non-annulled and non-eternal.

BOCKING (Ch):
18v10 If dharmas arise from conditions,
They neither are, nor differ from, their conditions.
This is why we call the real character
Not cut-off and not permanent.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Whatever arises dependent on something else is at that time neither that very thing nor other than it. Hence it is neither severed nor permanent.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which arises in dependence on something else
Is not identical with it,
Nor is it something other.
Hence, it is neither annihilated nor permanent. [XVIII.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. Whatever comes into being dependent on another
Is not identical to that thing.
Nor is it different from it.
Therefore it is neither nonexistent in time nor permanent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. Whatever comes into being dependent on another
Is neither identical to that thing
Nor different from it.
Therefore it is neither annihilated nor permanent.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Whatever arises dependent on another is neither identical nor different from the other. Therefore it is neither perishable nor permanent.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Anything dependent on a cause comes to be as an effect. A rice sprout, for example, comes into existence in dependence on a rice seed and a complex of conditions like the soil, etc. But it cannot be said that the sprout is precisely the same thing as the seed, nor that the seed is precisely the same thing as the sprout because of the absurd consequence that what is born and what gives birth would be one and the same: that father and son would be identical. If there is no difference one would take the seed to exist in the sprout phase, i.e. as sprout, and one would take the sprout as the seed. The seed would thus be eternal because imperishable. Because this entails the doctrine of eternalism it would result in a mass of grievous faults; it would follow that action and its consequences were not real. Therefore, it does not make sense to say that the seed is identical with the sprout. Nor is the one entirely other than the other; the sprout cannot be entirely other than the seed or it would follow that the sprout could sprout even apart from the seed. As Nagarjuna says: 'If what is "other" is entirely other than "the other" it would be other without anything other.' It would follow if the seed persists in the sprout that the seed would be imperishable. This would entail the logical fault of holding that the effect pre-exists in the cause. And so, to say 'Anything dependent on a cause comes to be as an effect' does not mean 'the cause becomes the effect'. Nor again is the effect wholly other than the cause. Therefore, it is possible to conclude 'the cause is neither perishable nor eternal'.

As Aryadeva says (*Catuhsataka*, X, 25.): 'From the fact that things function they are not nothing; from the fact that things cease functioning they are not eternal.' It is said in the *Lalitavistara*: 'If there is a seed there is a sprout, though the seed is not the sprout, nor is it wholly other. This is why the nature of things is neither perishable nor eternal.'

Immortality of the Buddhist teaching So, in accordance with the account given:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Whatever is arisen dependent upon (pratitya) another, that is, the dependently arisen (pratityatamutpanna), is not appropriately explained in terms of identity or difference. As empahsized so often by Nagarjuna, absolute identity involves permanence and absolute difference implies annihilation. Dependent arising is the middle way adopted by the Buddha in elucidating change and causation.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. Here Nāgārjuna recapitulates a brief analysis of what it is for a phenomenon to be dependently arisen. But in the context of the deeper understanding of emptiness and of the relation between the ultimate and the conventional developed in this chapter, a deeper reading of this verse is in order: Our attention is called to the fact that the analysis of dependency developed here - and consequently of the conventional reality and ultimate nonexistence of the dependent - is at the same time a correct conventional characterization of the nature of phenomena and an ostention of the fact that it is only a conventional designation of a nature that must remain uncharacterizable. (fn 98. Kalupahana (1986) reads these final verses very differently, as having nothing to do with the ultimate truth, but rather as suggesting that freedom from suffering "does not necessarily mean the absence of a subject-object discrimination. It means the absence of any discrimination based upon one's likes and dislikes, one's obsessions" (p. 59). It is, however, very hard to square this reading of XVIII: 10, 11 with any defensible reading of XVIII: 8,9.)

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Kārikā XVIII.11

अनेकार्थमनानार्थमनुच्छेदमशाश्वतम्।
एतत्तल्लोकनाथानां बुद्धानां शासनामृतम्॥११॥

anekārtham anānārtham anucchedam aśāśvatam |
etat tal lokanāthānāṃ buddhānāṃ śāsanāmṛtam ||11||

不一亦不異 不常亦不斷
是名諸世尊 教化甘露味

bù yī yì bù yì bù cháng yì bù duàn
shì míng zhū shì zūn jiào huà gān lù wèi

།སངས་རྒྱས་འཇིག་རྟེན་མགོན་རྣམས་ཀྱི།།བསྟན་པ་བདུད་རྩིར་གྱུར་པ་དེ།
།དོན་གཅིག་མ་ཡིན་ཐ་དད་མིན།།ཆད་པ་མ་ཡིན་རྟག་མ་ཡིན།།

| saṅs rgyas ’jig rten mgon rnams kyi | | bstan pa bdud rtsir gyur pa de |
| don gcig ma yin tha dad min | (5)chad pa ma yin rtag ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - "Non-identity, non-differentiation, non-interruption and non-continuity." These are the immortal teachings of the world's patron Buddhas.

JONES (Skt):
[11] Not one, not diverse, not annihilated, not eternal - this is the immortal teaching of the buddhas, the guides of the world.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
That is without a variety of meanings or one single meaning, it is not annihilation nor is it eternal. Such, it is reminisced, is the immortal message of the Buddhas, the patrons of the world.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Nondifferentiated, nonidentical, nonmomentary, nonpermanent,
this is the immortal teaching of the *buddhas*, lords of all the worlds.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. Not only for one aim, but neither having any aim,
Not being instantaneous, but neither being eternal,
The spot here is just the name of Gautama Buddha.
Belonging to many Buddhas, it is just the Universal Law, or Truth itself.

SPRUNG (Skt):
11 Not of one form nor of various forms, not perishable nor eternal: such is the immortal teaching of the Buddhas, the lords of the world.

STRENG (Skt):
11. The immortal essence of the teaching of the Buddhas, the lords of the world, is Without singleness or multiplicity; it is not destroyed nor is it eternal.

BOCKING (Ch):
18v11 Not one and not different,
Not permanent and not cut off;
This is the flavor
Of the sweet nectar of the Buddha's teachings.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
That ambrosial teaching of the buddhas, those guardians of the world, is neither the same nor different, neither severed nor permanent.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The Buddhas, protectors of the world,
Grant the elixir of teaching
Without sameness or difference of meaning,
Without annihilation and without permanence. [XVIII.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. By the buddhas, patrons of the world,
This immortal truth is taught:
Without identity, without distinction;
Not nonexistent in time, not permanent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. This is nectar—the doctrine of
The Buddhas, patrons of the world.
Without identity, without distinction,
Not annihilated, not permanent.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Neither with identity nor distinction, neither permanent nor perishable: such is the True teaching of the Buddhas.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

As the *Catuhsataka* says, 'Even if one who has comprehended the real nature of things does not attain nin'ana in this life, he will achieve it necessarily, without further effort, in a future life as the just fruit of his acts.' (VIII, 22)

More precisely:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The metaphysics of identity or of difference, of one or of many, of permanence or of annihilation, may be proved or not proved. So far the evidence has not been found that would provide justification for any such notions. The only known evidence points to the fact that things are changing and are dependently arisen. Such change and dependent arising do not fall within the duality of one or many, of annihilation or permanence. Dependent arising is what has been known so far. Unless a radical change occurs in the constitution of things, this dependent arising will continue to be. Such is the immortal teaching of the Buddha. This, again, is Nagarjuna's reflection on the epistemology of dependent arising.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. That is, this doctrine itself is also empty. It is conventionally real, ultimately nonexistent, dependent, impermanent, and has a nature in itself that can never be characterized. The final verse is an admonishment to meditate seriously on this argument. For by understanding clearly the nature of the self and of the entities to which it is related, Nāgārjuna believes that one can attain buddhahood. That is why he emphasizes that with a correct view, even without a teacher or a buddha to instruct one, a patient meditator can attain his/her own awakening.

Kārikā XVIII.12

संबुद्धानामनुत्पादे श्रावकाणां पुनः क्षये।
ज्ञानं प्रत्येकबुद्धानामसंसर्गात्प्रवर्तते॥१२॥

saṃbuddhānām anutpāde śrāvakāṇāṃ punaḥ kṣaye |
jñānaṃ pratyekabuddhānām asaṃsargāt pravartate ||12||

若佛不出世 佛法已滅盡
諸辟支佛智 從於遠離生

ruò fú;fó bù chū shì fó fǎ yǐ miè jìn
zhū pì;bì zhī fú;fó zhì cóng yū;yú;wū yuǎn lí shēng

|རྫོགས་སངས་རྒྱས་རྣམས་མ་བྱུང་ཞིང༌། །ཉན་ཐོས་རྣམས་ནི་ཟད་གྱུར་ཀྱང༌། །
|རང་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ནི། །སྟོན་པ་མེད་ལས་རབ་ཏུ་སྐྱེ། །

| rdzogs saṅs rgyas rnams ma byuṅ źiṅ | | ñan thos rnams ni zad gyur kyaṅ |
| raṅ saṅs rgyas kyi ye śes ni | | ston pa med las rab tu skye |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - Where the accomplished Buddhas do not appear and the Sravakas cease to be, the enlightened mind of the Pratyeka-buddhas conies forth from independent disengagement (of the bifurcated self). - Note: This verse subtly shows that human beings are all potential Pratyekabuddhas who independently could attain a higher form of knowledge or realize the truth of things (tattva).

JONES (Skt):
[12] When the fully-enlightened buddhas no longer appear, and when the disciples have disappeared, the knowledge of the solitary buddhas will come forth without a teacher.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When the fully enlightened ones do not appear; on the waning of disciples; the wisdom of the self-enlightened ones proceeds without association.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
When accomplished *buddhas* do not arise and *Sravakas* cease to be
pratyekabuddhas with independent knowledge come forth.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. Even though ideas of the Soul do not have any influence to people called Buddhas,
People called Sravakas, who are diligent to study Buddhism theoretically, are not so positive to the ideas of the Soul.
Among people called Pratyeka-buddhas, who revere natural circumstances, the knowledge of the Soul might be increasing their learning,
But people, who do not enter to the organization, only begin the practice.

SPRUNG (Skt):
12 If the fully enlightened are no longer born, and the disciples have vanished; Insight of those who attain *nirvāṇa* for themselves is realized without help from others.

STRENG (Skt):
12. If fully-developed Buddhas do not arise in the world and the disciples of the Buddha disappear, Then, independently, the knowledge of the self-produced enlightened ones (Pratyekabuddha) is produced.

BOCKING (Ch):
18v12 If the Buddha had not emerged in the world,
And the Buddha-dharma had utterly ceased.
The insight of the Pratyekabuddhas
Would have arisen quite separately.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When perfect buddhas do not appear, and when their disciples have died out, the wisdom of the self-awakened ones will vividly arise without reliance.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Where a perfect Buddha has not appeared
And the listeners have disappeared,
The wakefulness of self realized buddhas
Will, in the absence of a teacher, arise in full. [XVIII.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. When the fully enlightened ones do not appear,
And when the disciples have disappeared,
The wisdom of the self-enlightened ones
Will arise completely without a teacher.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. When the fully enlightened buddhas do not appear,
And when the śrāvakas have disappeared,
The wisdom of the pratyekabuddhas
Will arise completely without a teacher.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When the fully enlightened ones do not appear, and the *sravakas* disappear, the wisdom of the *pratyekabuddhas* will come forth from the dropping of the notion of an independent self.

18/12 Some people teach that there is a soul, in which case it must be of two kinds. Either the five skandhas are themselves the soul, or the soul exists apart from the five skandhas.

If the five skandhas are the soul, then the soul will have the characteristics of arising and ceasing. Thus it says in the verse 'if the soul is the five skandhas it will have the characteristics of arising and ceasing', and why? Because once arisen, it will perish. Because they have the characteristics of arising and ceasing, the five skandhas have no permanence, and just as the five skandhas have no permanence, the two dharmas of arising and ceasing likewise have no permanence. Why is this? Because arising and ceasing also perish after they have arisen and hence are impermanent. If the soul were the five skandhas, then, since the five skandhas are impermanent, the soul would also be impermanent and would have the characteristics of arising and ceasing, but this is not correct.

(24a21) If the soul existed apart from the five skandhas, the soul would not have the characteristics of the five skandhas. As it says in the verse: 'if the soul is different from the five skandhas, then it will not have the characteristics of the five skandhas'. Yet no other dharma exists apart from the five skandhas. If there were any such dharma apart from the five skandhas, by virtue of what characteristics, or what dharmas, would it exist?

(24a25) If you say that the soul is like empty space, separate from the five skandhas yet existent, this is also wrong, and why? We have already refuted empty space in the chapter on refuting the six elements. No dharma called 'empty space' exists.

(24a27) If you assert that a soul exists because belief in it exists, this is not correct, and why? Belief is of four kinds; the first is belief in a manifest thing, the second is belief in something known through this (manifest thing) (= inferential belief) as when seeing smoke, we know that there is a fire. The third is belief by analogy as when, in a country with no copper, one uses the example of it being like gold. The fourth is belief in what is taught by saints and sages, as when they say that there are hells, heavens and (the continent of) uttara-kuru. Without seeing anything, we believe the words of the holy men and thus know about them.

(24b3) Such a 'soul' cannot be found amongst these beliefs. It is not found in belief in manifest things, nor in inferential belief, and why? Inferential knowledge means that having previously seen something, you thenceforth know (about) this kind of thing, as for example a man who has previously seen that where there is fire there is smoke, subsequently, seeing

(24b7) (24b15) only smoke, knows that there is fire. The concept of 'soul' is not like this, for who could first have seen the soul in the combination of the five skandhas, such that afterwards, seeing the five skandhas, he knows that there is a soul? Suppose you say that there are three kinds of inferential knowledge, the first being 'like the original', the second being 'like the remainder', the third 'seeing together'. 'Like the original' means previously having seen that fire has smoke, seeing smoke now, you know that it is like the original which had fire. 'Like the remainder' means, for example, that when one grain of rice is cooked, you know that the remaining ones are all cooked. 'Seeing together' means, for example, that when you see with your eyes a person going from here to another place, you also see his going. The sun is like this. It emerges from the east and goes to the west. Although you do not see it going, because a man has the characteristic of going, you know that the sun also has going. In the same way suffering, pleasure, hate, desire, perception and insight, etc. must also have whatever goes with them. For example, seeing subjects you know that they must rely on some king. why? But these are all incorrect, and In belief through the characteristic of together-ness, having first seen a person combined with a dharma of 'going' who reaches some other place, when you subsequently see the sun reach another place you know that there is the dharma of 'going'. But there is no prior seeing of the five skandhas combined with a soul, such that subsequently seeing the five skandhas you know that there is a soul. Therefore, no existence of a soul can be established by inferential knowledge of 'together-ness'.

(24b18) There is no soul to be found within the teachings of the saints either, and why? In the teaching of the saints, what they first see with their eyes, they subsequently expound. And since the saints teach other things which can be believed, we should know that when they speak of the hells, etc., these can be believed in, but it is not so with the soul, for there is no-one who, having previously seen a soul, subsequently speaks of it.

(24b 22) Therefore, you may seek for a soul within all beliefs such as these four types of belief, but you will not be able to find it. Since you cannot find a soul even though you seek for it, no distinct soul exists separate from the five skandhas.

(24b24) Further, because of the refutation of seeing, seer and seen in the chapter refuting the (six sense-) faculties, the soul is to be refuted in the same way. For if even an eye

seeing coarse dharmas cannot be found, how much less can we find a soul by empty delusions, imagination and so forth? For these reasons, we know that there is no self.

(24b26) 'Mine' exists because 'I' exists. If there is no I, then there is no mine. Through putting into practice the holy eight-fold path265 and extinguishing the causes of I and mine, one attains the firm insight266 of no I and no mine.

(24b29) In the ultimate sense no I and no mine are also untenable. With no I and no mine, one can truly see all dharmas. Since the eye of insight in an unenlightened person is veiled by I and mine, he cannot see reality. Now, since the saints have no I or mine, their afflictions are also extinguished. Because their afflictions are extinct, they are able to see the true character of all dharmas. When both inner and outer, I and mine cease, all reception ceases too, and when all reception ceases, the innumerable future bodies also cease, and this is termed 'nirvana without residue'.

(24c5) Question: What of nirvana with residue?

Reply: When all the afflictions and karma have ceased, this is called 'the mind attaining liberation'. All these afflictions and actions arise wholly from conceptualized discriminations and have no reality. Such conceptual discriminations arise wholly from vain thoughts. If one attains to utter emptiness, the true character of all dharmas, then vain thoughts cease, and this is termed 'nirvana with residue'.

(24c10) The true character of dharmas is like this. Because the Buddhas view all living things with omniscience they teach them in various ways, teaching both that there is a self, and that there is no self. If there is a person whose mind is as yet unprepared, who has no inkling of nirvana and knows no fear of punishment, to such a one they teach that there is a self. Also, if someone has attained the Way, perceived the emptiness of all dharmas, and merely uses 'self' as a conventional ' designation, there is nothing wrong in speaking of a self to such a one as this.

(24c14) There are those who practice the blessed virtues of almsgiving, holding to the precepts, etc., detest and distance themselves from samsara and suffering but fear nirvana as lasting extinction. For the sake of these, the Buddhas teach that there is no self. All dharmas are merely the combination of causes and conditions; when they arise, they arise empty, when they cease, they cease empty. Therefore they teach that there is no self, 'and that self is said to exist only as a conventional designation. Again, someone who has attained the Way knows that there is no self, and will not fall into the nihilism, so there is no error in his teaching that there is no self. This is why it says in the verse (18v6) 'The Buddhas teach that there is a self, and they teach that there is no self, but in reality they do not teach either self or non-self'. (24c20) Question: Even though non-self is the truth, what is wrong with teaching, merely as a convention, that there is a self?

Reply: Non-self exists by virtue of the negation of the dharma of self. No fixed self can be found, so how could there be non-self? If there were a fixed non-self, then annihilation of if would give rise to attachment and craving. As it says in the Prajnaparamita, if a bodhisattva has a self, he cannot act, and if he has no self, he cannot act.

(24c25) Question: If it teaches neither self nor non-self, neither emptiness nor non-emptiness, what does the Buddha-dharma teach?

Reply: The Buddha teaches the true character of all dharmas, and within that true character there is no path for verbal expressions, for it extinguishes all mental activity. Mind arises because of the characteristic of grasping, exists because of the rewards and retribution of karma in a previous world, and cannot therefore see the reality of dharmas. teaches the cessation of mental activities. This is why he

(24c28) Question: Even though an unenlightened person's mind cannot see the reality, surely a saint's mind can see the reality? Why does he teach the cessation of all mental activities?

Reply: The true character of dharmas is nirvana, and cessation means nirvana. It is in order to point towards nirvana, that cessation is also termed cessation. If one's mind. were real, what use would be such ways to liberation as emptiness, etc? Why, amongst all the samadhis would the samadhi of cessation (nirodha-samapatti) be regarded as the highest, and why ultimately reach nirvana without residue? Therefore we should know that all mental activities are empty deceptions, and as empty deceptions, should cease. The true character of all dharmas surpasses all dharmas of mental phenomena, has no arising and no ceasing, and has the characteristic of calm extinction, like nirvana.

(25a7) Question: In the sutras it says that all dharmas, having from the beginning the characteristic of calm extinction are themselves nirvana. Why do you say that they are like nirvana?

(25a8) Reply: Those who are attached to dharmas classify dharmas into two kinds, some being worldly, some being of nirvana. They say that the nirvana (-dharmas) are calm and extinct, but do not say that the worldly dharmas

are calm and extinct. In this treatise it is taught that all dharmas are empty in nature and have the characteristic of calm extinction. Since those who are attached to dharmas do not understand this, nirvana is used as an example. Just as with your assertion that the characteristic of nirvana is emptiness, with no characteristics, calm extinction, and no vain thoughts, so it is with all worldly dharmas.

(25a14) Question: If the Buddhas do not teach self, non-self, and the cessation of all mental activities and the cutting-off of ways of verbal expression, how do they make people understand the real character of dharmas?

(25a15) Reply: All the Buddhas have unlimited powers of skillful means, and dharmas have no fixed characteristics. In order to save all living beings, they may teach that everything is real, or they may teach that everything is unreal, or that everything is both real and unreal, or that everything is neither unreal nor not unreal.

(25a18) 'Everything is real'. If you search for a real nature of dharmas, (you will find that) they all enter into the ultimate meaning and become equal, with identical characteristics, which is to say no characteristics, just like streams of different color and different taste entering into a great ocean of one color and one taste.

(25a21) 'Everything is unreal'. At the time when one has not yet penetrated into the true character of dharmas, each one can be contemplated separately. They are all unreal, existing merely by the combination of conditions.

(25a22) 'Everything is both real and unreal'. There are three levels of living beings; superior, average and inferior. The superior person sees that the characteristic of dharmas is that they are neither real nor unreal. The average person sees the characteristics of dharmas as either all real, or all unreal. The inferior man, since his powers of perception are limited, sees the characteristics of dharmas as a little real, and a little unreal, regarding nirvana, because it is an inactive dharma and does not perish as real, and regarding samsara, because it is an active dharma, empty and false, as unreal.

(25a27) 'Neither real nor unreal'. Neither unreal nor not unreal is taught in order to negate 'both real and unreal'.

(25a28) Question: The Buddha in other places says 'separate from neither existence nor nonexistence'. In view of this, how can you say that 'neither existence nor non-existence' is what the Buddha teaches?

(25a29) Reply: In those other contexts he is discoursing in order to refute the four kinds of craving attachment, but if there is no useless arguing about these four theses, and if you listen to what the Buddha teaches you, you will attain the Way. This is why we say 'neither real nor unreal'.

(25b2) Question: We know that the Buddha is discoursing on account of these four theses, but as for attaining the true character of dharmas, by what characteristic can it be known? And, what is the true character?

Reply: 'If you are able not to follow others'. One who does not follow others, means one who, when non-Buddhists, even though they display supernatural powers and teach that this is the way and this is not the way, has faith in himself and in his own mind and does not follow them. Even if they transform the-r bodies so that he does not know that they are not the Buddha, his mind cannot be diverted because he well understands the true character. Since there is within this (true character) no dharma to be grasped or relinquished, it is called the characteristic of calm extinction. Since it is the characteristic of calm extinction it cannot be vainly argued with sophistries. Sophistries are of two kinds; one is argument from desire, the other is argument from opinion. Within (calm extinction), these two types of sophistries do not exist, and since these two kinds of sophistry do not exist, there is no conceptual discriminating. Lack of any characteristics of distinction and difference is termed the true character.

(25b11) Question: If all dharmas are utterly empty, does this not fall into the error of annihilation? And does no-arising and no-ceasing not fall into the error of permanence?

(25b13) Reply: Not so. Earlier we stated that the true character has no sophistries, that the characteristic of mind is calm extinction and that it cuts off any ways of verbal expression. You in your attachment are now grasping this characteristic, and seeing errors of severance and permanence in the doctrine (dharma) of the true character.

Those who attain the true character teach that all dharmas arise from conditions. They are neither the same as their causes, nor different from their causes, and consequently there is neither severance nor permanence. When the effect is different from its cause, this is severance. If it is not different from its cause, this is permanence.

(25b17) (25b23) Question: What advantage is there in explaining things in this way?

Reply: If one who is travelling on the path is able to penetrate the meaning of this way, then (for him) all dharmas will be neither identical nor different, neither cut off nor permanent. If he is able to do this, he will achieve the cessation of all afflictions and sophistries, and attain lasting bliss and nirvana. This is why it is said that the

Buddha's teaching has the flavor of sweet nectar, just as in worldly terms we say that one who obtains the divine elixir will not grow old, fall ill or die, or experience any degeneracy or distress. This dharma of the true character is the true taste of sweet nectar. The true character taught by the Buddha is threefold. To attain the true character of all dharmas and end all the afflictions is termed the sravaka-dharma. To produce great compassion and arouse the unexcelled mind is called the great vehicle Mahayana. If a Buddha does not enter the world and there is a time when there is no Buddha-dharma, pratyekabuddhas because of their isolation develop insight independently, for even if a Buddha after, saving living beings enters nirvana without residue, and the dharma he completely dies out, if there are any who from a previous world are supposed to attain the Way, then if they meditate a little on the causes for despising and leaving samsara and go alone into the mountains and forests remote from any bustle and confusion, they will attain the way. These are called pratyekabuddhas.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

12ab *If the fully enlightened are no longer born, and the disciples have vanished;*

there would be no realization of the eternal way of the Buddhist truth because of the lack of a beneficent friend to demonstrate the true and exalted path. None the less, from the force of hearing the truth of things in a previous life, in this world and without ordinary instruction, depending solely on recourse to complete solitude, the self-validating

12cd *Insight of those who attain nirvāṇa for themselves is realized without help from others.*

'Without help from others' means solitude in body and mind or not seeking out a beneficent friend. So it is that because ultimate insight is solitary, those seeking enlightenment for themselves even in an unenlightened age, can attain to the way of the Buddhist truth. This proves the effectiveness of the cure the eternal way of the truth of truths (*saddharmatvamrta*) — as administered by the great masters of healing, the fully enlightened ones.

This being so it is possible for the man of wisdom to turn his back on the everyday world and to go in search of the way of the truth of truths.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Buddha's teachings were perpetuated by a long line of disciples (sravaka). If that lineage were to be interrupted, still it is possible for his teachings to reappear. Nagarjuna was probably aware of the metaphor of the "ancient city" (nagara) whose discovery is compared to the discovery of "dependent arising" by the historical Buddha himself (S 2.104-107; Tsa 12.5 [Taisho 2.80b]). Therefore, contradicting many a tradition that depended heavily on an unbroken continuity as the primary source of the knowledge of the Buddha's teaching, Nagarjuna is here maintaining that such widsom (jnana) can occur even without any contact or association (asamsargat) through the self-enlightened ones (pratyeka-buddha).

࿂

Chapter XIX

कालपरीक्षा एकोनविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀時品第十九(六偈)

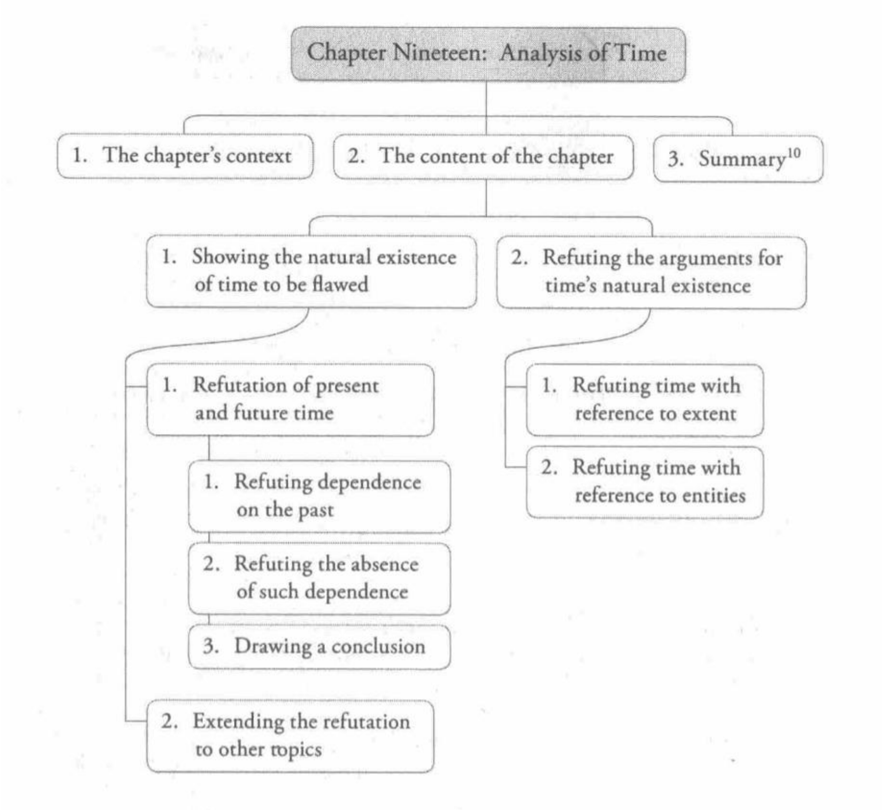
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kālaparīkṣā nāmaikonaviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XIX: Examination of Time

Chapter XIX

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We have now completed the third part of the section on the two selflessnesses, the mode of positing selflessness of things as they really are. We are about to begin the fourth section—the presentation of the essential emptiness of time. It has two parts: the refutation of the inherent existence of time and the refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of time. This chapter constitutes the first of those two parts.

EXPLANATION:

Here someone might say, "Things inherently have essence because things are the causes of imputation in the three temporal periods." In this context, the three temporal periods are presented in sutras, and they are based on things because it is said that the nature of things that have already arisen and ceased is to be in the past; and that of things that have arisen and not ceased is to be in the present; and of that which has not yet come to be is to be in the future. The refutation of this has three parts: the general refutation of the essential existence of the three temporal periods, the individual refutations of the views of the Buddhist and non-Buddhist schools, and the way to set out the three temporal periods conventionally.

SUMMARY:

It is not at all possible for the three temporal periods to exist through their own characteristics: neither that which has arisen earlier and ceased, nor that which has not yet arisen; nor that which has arisen, earlier and not yet ceased. Nonetheless, one should confirm one's ascertainment of the two truths through thinking that it is absolutely tenable that they are essenceless—that is, empty of their own characteristics.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XIX - Examination of Time

This relatively short chapter strikes at the core of the matter of temporal moments in existence. Since the analysis made in Chapter II on the Examination or gala, agata, and gamyamana is presupposed, the discussion here is necessarily simplified and brief. Nagarjuna omits the fine analysis of the three temporal moments and almost immediately argues for the non-existence of the time-concept from the temporal as well as existential standpoints.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

19. *Time (kala*). In the discussion of the notion of imperishable action (*avi-pranasa-karma*) discussed above, two more conditions relevant to the fruitioning of karma were mentioned, namely, time (*kala*) and harmony (*samagri*).

These two topics constitute the subject matter of the next two chapters.

Time was conceived in a more empirical way in the early discourses. Impermanence (*aniccata*) was explained there in terms of the temporality of events. As mentioned in the analysis of the conditioned (VII), such temporality was understood as arising (*uppada*), ceasing (*vyaya*), and change of what endures (*thitassa aññathatta).* However, the problems created by the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas by their analysis of time and temporality have already been alluded to (see the discussion of the "Conditioned" above). There, the focus was more on the substantiality of events (conceived as *bhava*) and the difficulties that arise as a result of attempting to place such "existents" (*bhava*) in the context of temporality. The present chapter is devoted to the conception of time itself, especially time as analysed by the metaphysicians into discrete moments (*ksana*). Nagarjuna's analysis brings out the disastrous implications of such a notion of time and could appropriately be compared with an analysis provided by E. R. Clay and enthusiastically adopted by William James in Western philosophy. Examining the ordinary notion of time, Clay says:

The relation of experience to time has not been profoundly studied. Its objects are given as being of the present, but the part of time referred to by the datum is a very different thing from the conterminous of the past and future which philosophy denotes by the name Present. The present to which the datum refers is really a part of the pasta recent pastdelusively given as being a time that intervenes between the past and the future. Let it be named the specious present, and let the past, that is given as being the past, be known as the obvious past. All the notes of a bar of a song seem to the listener to be contained in the present. All the changes of place of meteor seem to the beholder to be contained in the present. At the instance of the termination of such a series, no part of the time measured by them seems to be past. Time, then, considered relative to human apprehension, consists of four parts, viz., the obvious past, the specious present, the real present and the future. Omitting the specious present, it consists of three… nonentitiesthe past, which does not exist, the future which does not exist, and their conterminous, the present; the faculty from which it proceeds lies to us in the fiction of the specious present.109

Nagarjuna's analysis indicates, in a similar way, how a metaphysical notion of time would lead to the abolition of the very notion of time as "specious." Furthermore, the metaphysical notion of time, as propounded by the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas, also involved the conception of substantial existence (*bhava*), the denial of which would result in the denial of that particular conception of time.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Time

If I had a past,
What is now and yet to come
Would have already happened.
Were there no now and future then,
How could now and future
Ever have a past?

Without a past
There is no now and future;
What is now and still to come
Would never happen.

Past, present, future
Are like bottom, middle, top
And one, two, three.

You can't grasp time
And times you can
Are never time itself.
Why configure time you cannot grasp?

If time depends on things,
How could I ever have
Time apart from things?
Without things how can time persist?

JONES (COMMENTARY)

19. Time

Nagarjuna's argument in verse 1 is about the impossibility of the dependence of the present and future on the past if they do not all exist at the same time. In the metaphysics Nagarjuna ascribes to his opponent, all three divisions of time are distinct entities that must all be present at the same time if dependency is to be involved. (Verse 2 does not actually claim that the present and future do not exist in the past, but that is necessary for the argument to proceed.) That is, if the present and future are dependent upon the past, they must have already been in the past - and if they were present in the past, why didn't they arise back then?

From verse 5: a time that is constantly changing cannot be grasped (only what is fixed can be grasped), and so there is no thing to grasp; and even if time could in principle be grasped, we cannot find a time that is unchanging; time is constantly flowing and never static, and so we still cannot grasp it. Thus, there is no real entity "time" that we can grasp. And, in verse 6 Nagarjuna applies his standard analysis: if time is dependent upon entities that truly exist (i.e., have self-existence), it could not exist without such entities; and since no such entities in fact exist, time cannot exist. Time is measured by the changes entities undergo; and so to Nagarjuna, if there are no real entities, there is no real change and hence no time. In Nagarjuna's emptiness metaphysics, the past, present, and future are not self-existent and thus not real because they exist only in relation to each other (SS 29). This is not a relativity of frameworks as in physics but is only an everyday observation about the interconnection of concepts. Thus, to translate any of the Buddhist terms as "*relativity*" in order to make Buddhism sound scientific is in error.

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

19

An Examination of Time

In the Sutras of the Mother, the Buddha taught:

The past is imperceptible, the future is imperceptible, and the present is imperceptible. . . . The three times are equality.

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE are not perceived by the eye of wisdom. We conceive of them, but they are nowhere to be found. Similarly, the present does not abide for even an instant, so it is not perceptible either.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter as a response to people who claimed that things exist because the three times exist. The designations of past, present, and future, they argued, are possible only because of the existence of composite things: In dependence upon there being things that have ceased, we designate the past; in dependence upon there being things that exist now, we designate the present; and in dependence upon there being things that have yet to arise, we designate the future. Since these three times exist, and they definitely do because the Buddha spoke of them, then the things that are their causes must also exist. This was their argument.

In fact, the three times have no perceptible existence; they are just conceptual imputations. This is something that one can understand quite easily by looking at the first verse of the chapter:

If the present and the future depended on the past,
The present and the future would exist in the past.

We can also change this verse to cover the other possible permutations:

If the past and the future depended on the present,
The past and the future would exist in the present.

If the past and the present depended on the future,
The past and the present would exist in the future.

If the three times exist, they must either exist in dependence upon each other or independent of each other. If the first were the case, then, for example, if the present and the future existed in dependence upon the past, then the absurd consequence would be that the present and the future would have to exist in the past. This is the case because in order for one thing to depend upon another, the two have to meet. If only one exists at a time, it has nothing to depend upon, and there would be nothing there to depend upon it.

If they existed independent of each other, the absurd consequence of that would be that the present would exist independent of any notion of the past or the future, and the past and the future would exist independent of any notion of the present. If that were the case, then we would have to conclude that the present is not really the present after all, because it is something that does not depend upon the past and the future. The fact is that if we have a notion of the present, the only way we can do so is if we have some idea of past and future. Even if something is called the present, if it does not depend on past and future, it cannot actually be the present.

If the present exists in dependence upon the past and the future, however, then the present would exist both in the past and in the future, because it would have to coexist with the thing that it depends upon for its existence. So the present would have to exist in the past in order to depend on the past—it would have to exist in the future in order to depend on the future.

Analyzing in this way makes it clear that the three times do not truly exist, that time is just a creation of our thoughts.

When we are enjoying ourselves, for example, time seems to pass very quickly. When we are suffering, it seems to pass excruciatingly slowly. Finally, when we are in deep sleep, we have no concept of time at all—time simply does not exist for us in that state. So how does time really pass after all? Does it pass quickly, slowly, or not at all? There is no way to answer that question objectively.

These days, it is also easy to gain direct experience of the unreality of time—just call a friend of yours in another country and ask what time it is! Your friend might say, "It is twelve noon," and you might say, "No, it is ten o'clock at night." Who would win that debate? That people in different places in the world can have different ideas of what time it is shows that time is just a mere appearance arisen due to the coming together of causes and conditions. It is merely an imputation of thoughts.

If time really existed, we would be able to perceive it independent of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations. It would exist on its own, and we would be able to perceive it. The fact is, however, that time can exist only in dependence upon there being something to which we can relate the notion of time. For example, if nothing had ceased, we could have no notion of the past; if there were nothing here, we could have no notion of the present; and if we did not anticipate anything happening, we could have no notion of the future. Since time can exist only in dependence upon these things, it cannot truly exist.

In Chandrakirti's text Entering the Middle Way, he explains, "The present does not abide; the past and the future do not exist." Out of the sixteen emptinesses, the emptiness of time is "the emptiness of the imperceptible." When we look for time directly, this is what we find—time is imperceptible. Try it now—look at your watch. When you look at your watch to see what time it is, do you see time? No, you just see some small sticks moving around! When you look for it, you can never see time, because time is imperceptible. Time is emptiness.

Realizing the emptiness of time is important to our practice for several reasons. First of all, in the Mahamudra tradition, attachment to the three times as being real is called a wrong view. If we do not reverse our thought that time is real, we will not be able to realize equality.

Furthermore, realizing the true nature of time prevents us from getting attached to the length of time that we practice as being real. Some people think that they need to meditate for long periods of time or else it is not really Dharma practice. Others feel proud because they think they have been practicing Dharma for a certain number of years and are advanced practitioners as a result. Others get disappointed because they think they have been practicing for a long time and do not see any improvement in their situation—they might get so disappointed that they abandon Dharma practice altogether. Still others are in a big hurry and think that they have to achieve enlightenment as soon as possible. Realizing that time is not truly existent and that long and short periods of time are equality frees us from all of these types of attachment and the mental agitation that they cause. This freedom from attachment is open, spacious, and relaxed.

Realizing the true nature of time is particularly important for bodhisattvas, who vow to liberate every single one of the infinite number of sentient beings from samsara, no matter how many aeons that might take. Since they are free from attachment to long or short periods of time as being real, however, they can make that commitment quite eagerly and happily. As the Buddha taught, "an aeon and an instant are equality," and knowing this, bodhisattvas are able to remain in samsara and continuously perform deeds that benefit sentient beings without ever getting tired or discouraged.

All these reasons show why it is so important to realize that time is of the nature of appearance-emptiness, and the way we can do so is to use the logical reasonings presented in this chapter. Once we gain certainty in the emptiness of time, remembering it again and again will cause our certainty to become more and more stable, and then eventually we will realize the true nature of time directly. That is how the process works.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XIX

कालपरीक्षा एकोनविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

kālaparīkṣā nāmaikonaviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀時品第十九(六偈)

zhōng lùn guān shí pǐn dì shí jiǔ(liù jié;jì)

|དུས་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་བཅུ་དགུ་པའོ||

| dus brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa bcu dgu pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XIX - Examination of Time

JONES (Skt):
19. Time

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Time

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
19. Analysis of Time

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[19] Examination of Time (6 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Time

STRENG (Skt):
Section 19 - An Analysis of Time (Time) In 6 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
19. time.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 19 Contemplation of Time 6 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Time

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XIX - Analysis of Time

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XIX: Examination of Time

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XIX - Examination of Time

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 19: AN EXAMINATION OF TIME

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Nineteen - Examination of Time

PINGALA COMMENTARY

19/0 Question: Surely time exists, established through causal dependence? Because past time exists, future and present time exist. Because of present time, past and future time exist. Because of future time, past and present time exist. The dharmas of above, middle and below, same and different, and so forth also exist through reciprocal causal dependence.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter XV]

Some hold that the self-existence of things is a fact because it is the basis for our conceiving of time as three-phased (*kalatraya*). In this way of thinking the three time phases, as explained by the illustrious one, are (a) what is past (*atita*); (b) what is not yet realized (*anagata*) [the future]; (c) what is arising here and now (pratyutpanna) [the present]; and these have their basis in things. That is, a self-existent thing which has arisen and perished is said to be past; what has arisen but has not perished is existent; something which has not yet attained self-existence is said to be not yet realized, i.e. future. The three phases of time are explained in this way as dependent on the self-existence of things and are held to be real. It follows that what they are dependent on - the self-existence of things - is also real.

Past, present and future interdependent and so unreal

We reply that there would be self-existence of things, by reason of which we can conceive of the three phases of time, if these as conceived by you were themselves real. But they are not. How they are not real Nagarjuna expounds in this way:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Nineteen Examination of Time (Kala-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XIX Examination of Time

Another response to the attack on the reality of action and its consequences might to be argue that, nonetheless, the time in which action and its consequences are realized must be real. Nāgārjuna in this chapter argues that· time cannot be conceived of as an entity existing independently of temporal phenomena, but must itself be regarded as a set of relations among them. His arguments are closely akin to those of Zeno, Sextus, and McTaggart.

Kārikā XIX.1

प्रत्युत्पन्नोऽनागतश्च यद्यतीतमपेक्ष्य हि।
प्रत्युत्पन्नोऽनागतश्च कालेऽतीते भविष्यतः॥१॥

LVP 382,10-11 - LVP 389,7-8
pratyutpanno ’nāgataś ca yady atītam apekṣya hi |
pratyutpanno ’nāgataś ca kāle ’tīte bhaviṣyataḥ ||1||

若因過去時 有未來現在
未來及現在 應在過去時

T1564: vol 30, pg 25c1
ruò yīn guò qù shí yǒu wèi lái xiàn zài
wèi lái jí xiàn zài yīng zài guò qù shí

།ད་ལྟར་བྱུང་དང་མ་འོངས་པ། །གལ་ཏེ་འདས་ལ་ལྟོས་གྱུར་ན། །
།ད་ལྟར་བྱུང་དང་མ་འོངས་པ། །འདས་པའི་དུས་ན་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར། །

Tg tsa 11a5-6 - Tg tsa 11b2
|| da (6)ltar byuṅ daṅ ma ’oṅs pa | | gal te ’das la ltos gyur na |
| da ltar byuṅ daṅ ma ’oṅs pa | | ’das pa’i dus na yod par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - If, indeed, the present and future are contingently related to the past, they should exist in the past moment.

JONES (Skt):
[1] If the present and the future are dependent upon the past, then the present and the future would have existed in the past.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the present and the future exist contingent upon the past, then the present and the future would be in the past time.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the present and the future are to be dependent on the past, the present and future will be in past time.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. The existence just at the present moment is the state that everything has never arrived at yet.
And at that time past is just the object of consideration mentally,
The existence just at the present moment is the state that everything has never arrived at.
Therefore the past in time will exist in future actually.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 If what is arising here and now and what is not yet realized are dependent on what is past, what is arising here and now and what is not yet realized will be in past time.3

STRENG (Skt):
1. If "the present" and "future" exist presupposing "the past," "The present" and "future" will exist in "the past."

ROBINSON (Skt):
If present and future exist in relation to the past, then present and future should exist in past time;.

BOCKING (Ch):
19v1 If, on account of past time,
Future and present exist,
Future and present
Should be in the past.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the present and the future were contingent on the past, then the present and the future would have existed in the past.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the present and the future
Depend on the past,
The present and the future
Exist in the past. [XIX.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. If the present and the future
Depend on the past,
Then the present and the future
Would have existed in the past.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. If the present and the future
Depended on the past,
Then the present and the future
Would have existed in the past.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
If the present and the future depended on the past,
The present and the future would exist in the past. (1)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
19.1 If the present and the future depend on the past, then they'd be in the past.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

19/1 If future and present time exist on account of past time, then future and present time should exist within past time, and why? If dharmas are established according to their place of origin, this place should be the dharma. It is like light which is established on account of the lamp, the light existing according to where the lamp is. The same goes for past time. If it establishes future and present time, then future and present time must exist within past time, and if future and present time do exist within past time, then the three periods should all be called 'past time'. Why is this? Because future and present time would be in the past.

(25c15) If all times were entirely in the past, then there would be no future and present times, because it would be entirely the past. But if there were no future and present times, then there would be no past time either, and why? Because past time is only called past time because of future and present time. Just as future and present time are established on account of past time, so also is past time established on account of future and present time. Now without future and present time, there could be no past time. This is why your earlier statement (v1) that future and present time are established on account of past time is not correct.

(25c21) If you say that future and, present time do not exist within past time, but that future and present time are nevertheless established on account of past time, this is incorrect,. and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

(fn 1 Paraphrase: If present and future are dependent on the past, present and future will be in the past.)

The thinking here is that if there were the existent (*vartamana*) and the not yet realized they would be either dependent (*apeksya*) on past time or they would not be (*anapeksya*). In the first case, if their dependence on the past is established, they will necessarily be in past time. However, there can be no dependence of something on that which is non-existent. This would be like progeny issuing from a barren woman, or a flower from a garland in the sky, or sesame oil from a grain of sand. It will not do to argue that the dependence is reciprocal even as light depends on darkness — which is non-existent - and darkness depends on light, because this is a vitiated circle (*sadhyasamatva*). In this case if the existent and the not yet realized are considered to be in past time for the purpose of establishing their dependence in this way, these two would be past as well because they exist in a real past time and are of the essence of the past. It follows that there would be no past either. Hence, as the past is what has passed beyond the existing state, the not yet realized cannot be realized. So long, however, as both the existent and the not yet realized are entirely impossible how could there be a past of anything whatsoever? It follows that there is no past either.

Now, wishing to avoid this faulty consequence:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. Nāgārjuna's method is to divide time into the past, the present, and the future and then to argue that none of these can be said to inherently exist. In these first two verses, he considers one horn of an implicit dilemma: The present and the future either depend upon the past or they do not. In these two verses he considers the possibility that they do depend upon the past. But if they depend upon it in any sense that could plausibly guarantee their inherent existence, they must somehow emerge from it as a basis. If so, he argues, they must have existed in the past. For if they did not, then we would have the situation where when the time on which they ostensibly depend exists they do not exist, or a situation where at the time they exist that on which they ostensibly depend does not exist. We would then either have the situation in which the ostensibly dependent exists, but in the absence of that on which it depends, or in which the necessary condition exists, but without that of which it is the condition.

This raises two difficulties, one general and one specific to the case at hand: First, by the arguments developed concerning the temporal relations between causes and their effects in Chapters I and VII, we have two incoherent situations from the standpoint of anyone who considers the causal relation or its relata to be inherently existent. There must be a real relation between the cause and the effect in which the effect is contained potentially in the cause, and this would unfortunately entail the past existence of the present and the future. But second, there is a little regress to be developed. For if the present and the future depend upon the past, they must succeed or be simultaneous with it. But they must succeed or be simultaneous with it in time. That requires a super-time in which the parts of time are related, and so on, ad infinitum.

Kārikā XIX.2

प्रत्युत्पन्नोऽनागतश्च न स्तस्तत्र पुनर्यदि।
प्रत्युत्पन्नोऽनागतश्च स्यातां कथमपेक्ष्य तम्॥२॥

pratyutpanno ’nāgataś ca na stas tatra punar yadi |
pratyutpanno ’nāgataś ca syātāṃ katham apekṣya tam ||2||

若過去時中 無未來現在
未來現在時 云何因過去

ruò guò qù shí zhōng wú wèi lái xiàn zài
wèi lái xiàn zài shí yún hé yīn guò qù

།ད་ལྟར་བྱུང་དང་མ་འོངས་པ།།གལ་ཏེ་དེ་ན་མེད་གྱུར་ན།
།ད་ལྟར་བྱུང་དང་མ་འོངས་པ།།ཇི་ལྟར་དེ་ལ་ལྟོས་པར་འགྱུར།།

| da ltar byuṅ daṅ ma ’oṅs pa | | gal te de na med gyur na |
| da ltar byuṅ daṅ ma ’oṅs pa | | ji ltar de la ltos par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - If, again, the present and future do not exist there (i.e., in the past), how could they be contingently related?

JONES (Skt):
[2] If the present and the future did not exist in the past, how could they be dependent upon the past?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Again, if the present and the future were not to exist therein [i.e., in the past], how could the present and the future be contingent upon that?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, if the present and the future do not exist there,
how would the present and the future depend on it?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. The existence just at the present moment is the state that everything has never arrived at yet,
The situations there might never exist once more again at all.
The existence just at the present moment is the state that everything has never arrived at yet,
Perhaps, aha, what kind of consideration, does it belong?

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 If, on the other hand, arising here and now and being not yet realized are not based in the past how could arising here and now and being not yet realized be related to the past?

STRENG (Skt):
2. If "the present" and "future" did not exist there in "the past", How could "the present" and "future" exist presupposing that "past?

ROBINSON (Skt):
if present and future do not exist in it, how can present and future exist in relation to it?

BOCKING (Ch):
19v2 If, within past time
Future and present do not exist,
How can future and present time
Depend on the past?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the present and future did not exist there, then how could the present and the future be contingent on it?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the present and the future
Do not exist in the past,
How can the present and future
Be dependent on it? [XIX.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. If the present and the future
Did not exist there,
How could the present and the future
Be dependent upon it?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. If the present and future
Did not exist there,
How could the present and the
Future be dependent on it?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
19.2 If the present and the future were not in the past how could they depend on it?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

19/2 If future and present time are not within past time, how can future and present time be established on account of past time? Why is this? If each of the three times had different characteristics, then they could not be established by mutual interdependence. They would be like objects such as pots and cloth etc., each of which is separately established in itself, not depending upon each other. But in fact future and present time are not established independently of past time, past and future time are not established independently of present time, and past and present time are not established independently of future time.

(26a2) Earlier you said that although future and present time do not exist within past time, nevertheless future and present time are established on account of past time. This is not correct.

Question: What is wrong (in saying that) even though future and present time are not established on account of past time, they nevertheless exist?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If it is imagined that the time phases of the existing and the not yet realized are not based in past time, then in this case as well, they cannot be related to the past because like the lotus blossom in the sky they do not exist in the past.

It may be further urged that for the proponents of time, time exists as fact (*vidvata eva*); what is the importance of dependence on the past? We reply, even here

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As mentioned at XVII.14, the conception of time was an important factor in the explanation of the fruits of action (karma-phala). All actions do not bear fruit immediately. Indeed, the problems were magnified by the Buddha's recognition of the possibility of the survival of the human personality through countless lives. The Abhidharma lists four categories of karma in terms of their fruitioning, all of which can be traced back to the discourses themselves. The four categories are as follows: (i) karma that fruitions immediately or in the present life (dittha-dhamma-vedaniya); (ii) karma that fruitions in the next life (upapajja-vedaniya); (iii) karma that fruitions in some after life (aparapariya-vedaniya); and (iv) karma that produces no fruitioning (ahosikamma)(Vism). The use of the metaphor of "the imperishable promissory note" by Nagarjuna was necessitated by the fact that some karmas produce consequences on a subsequent occasion. Thus, the conception of time becomes invariably bound up with the notion of karma. As such, whatever metaphysical speculations that emerged with the doctrine of karma, such as those mentioned at XVII.7-10, also came to be associated with the conception of time. Analysing time as a separate entity, the metaphysicians assumed that if there were to be any mutual relationship between the present and the future on the one hand and the past on the other, then, since they are distinct entities, the present and the future will have to be inherent in the past. In other words, the past produces the present and future from within itself. This is the identity version of causation (svatotpatti). A further implication of this is that if one knows the past, one also knows with absolute certainty what the present and the future would be. These, indeed, represent some of the basic speculations of the Sarvastivadins.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. That is, if we deny that the present and the future existed potentially in the past and were somehow coexistent with it, there is no way to understand the mechanics of the dependency relation. By the time the present comes around, the past isn't around to give rise to it. And when the past was around, the present didn't occur.

Kārikā XIX.3

अनपेक्ष्य पुनः सिद्धिर्नातीतं विद्यते तयोः।
प्रत्युत्पन्नोऽनागतश्च तस्मात्कालो न विद्यते॥३॥

anapekṣya punaḥ siddhir nātītaṃ vidyate tayoḥ |
pratyutpanno ’nāgataś ca tasmāt kālo na vidyate ||3||

不因過去時 則無未來時
亦無現在時 是故無二時

bù yīn guò qù shí zé wú wèi lái shí
yì wú xiàn zài shí shì gù wú èr shí

|འདས་པ་ལ་ནི་མ་ལྟོས་པར། །དེ་གཉིས་གྲུབ་པ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན། །
དེ་ཕྱིར་ད་ལྟར་བྱུང་བ་དང་། །མ་འོངས་དུས་ཀྱང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན། །

| ’das (7)pa la ni ma ltos par | | de gñis grub pa yod ma yin |
| de phyir da ltar byuṅ ba daṅ | | ma ’oṅs dus kyaṅ yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - Again, it is not possible for both (present and future) to establish themselves without being contingent on a past Therefore, there is no justification for the existence of a present and a future time.

JONES (Skt):
[3] Without being dependent upon the past, neither the present nor the future can be established. Therefore, the present and the future do not exist.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Moreover, non-contingent upon the past, their [i.e. of the present and future] establishment is not evident. Therefore, neither a present nor a future time is evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, no demonstrated past occurs independent of both.
Therefore, present and future time do not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. An accomplishment is not so esteemed.
Past is not so recognized also.
Existing at the present moment hasn’t arrived at yet actually,
Therefore Time is not recognized yet.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 The reality of these two cannot be established independently of the past; the time phases arising here and now and being not yet realized are, therefore, not real.

STRENG (Skt):
3. Without presupposing "the past" the two things "the present" and "future" cannot be proved to exist. Therefore neither present nor future time exist.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XIX.3a In turn the past is not found established independent of the two [present and future].

ROBINSON (Skt):
The establishment of the two does not occur without relation to the past; therefore present and future time do not exist.

BOCKING (Ch):
19v3 Independent of past time
There is no future time,
Nor is there present time.
Therefore the two times do not exist.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Without being contingent on the past neither can be established. Hence the present and the future times also do not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the two do not depend on the past,
Then they are not established, the present and future
Therefore, do not exist. [XIX.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. If they are not dependent upon the past,
Neither of the two would be established.
Therefore neither the present
Nor the future would exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. Without depending on the past,
Neither of the two could be established.
Therefore neither the present nor
The future could exist.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
19.3 Yet if they're not dependent on the past then the establishment of neither is evident Therefore neither a present nor a future time is evident

PINGALA COMMENTARY

19/3 Future and present time are not established independently of past time, and why? If present time did exist independently of past time, in what place would present time exist? It is the same with future time; in what place would future time exist? Therefore, there is no future or present time independent of past time. Because of such mutually dependent existence, in reality there is no time.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Because they are unrelated to the past, what is arising here and now and the not yet realized, like the horns of a donkey, are without reality (*asattva*). This is the way it is with what is arising here and now and the not yet realized. It should be understood that it follows that time is not real (*na vidyate*).

In so far as, in the way shown, what is arising here and now and the not yet realized cannot be proved either in relation to the past or without relation to it, in the same way the dependence or non-dependence of what is past and what is not yet realized on what is arising here and now cannot be shown, and the dependence or non-dependence of what is arising here and now and what is past on what is not yet realized cannot be shown. In precisely this sense, by the same proof used in the case of the dependence or non-dependence of what is arising here and now and what is not yet realized on what is past, Nagarjuna points out exactly the same vitiating fault:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The present verse embodies Nagarjuna's criticism of the notion of time referred to in XIX.1-2. Taken away from that context, this will appear to be a complete rejection of the very notion of time. However, Nagarjuna's criticism pertains only to the contingence (apeksa) understood in the light of a theory of inherence. On a previous occasion (X.8-12), Nagarjuna has convincingly demonstrated the difficulties involved in explaining contingence or relativity in the context of theories of identity (which is also implied in inherence) and difference.

Nagarjuna's argument seems to read as follows:

- 1. Major premiss:

The present and the future are not seen to be established non-contingent upon the past.

- 2. Middle term:

Contingence of the present and the future on the past implies the substantial existence of the present and the future in the past, which is not evident.

- 3. Conclusion:

Therefore, the present and the future, as substantial entities, do not exist.

Ignoring the middle term, so dearly defined at XIX.1-2, Nagarjuna's conclusion will appear to be an absolute rejection of time. It would then read as follows:

- 1. First premiss:

The present and the future are not contingent upon the past.

- 2. Second premiss:

The present and the future are not non-contingent upon the past.

- 3. Minor premiss:

The present and the future cannot be both contingent and non-contingent upon the past.

- 4. Conclusion:

The present and the future do not exist.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. If, on the other hand, one argued that the parts of time are independent, there would be no sense in which they would be determinately ordered and in which they would be part of the same time. Time is by definition an ordering of events in which moments stand in determinate relations to one another, in virtue of which the location of any moment depends on the location of all of the others. The present is the present only because it is poised within the past and the future. If it were not, it would not be the present. So either the present is in the past, in which case it is nonexistent, or it is independent of the past and the future, in which case it is nonexistent.

Kārikā XIX.4

एतेनैवावशिष्टौ द्वौ क्रमेण परिवर्तकौ।
उत्तमाधममध्यादीनेकत्वादींश्च लक्षयेत्॥४॥

etenaivāvaśiṣṭau dvau krameṇa parivartakau |
uttamādhamamadhyādīn ekatvādīṃś ca lakṣayet ||4||

以如是義故 則知餘二時
上中下一異 是等法皆無

yǐ rú shì yì gù zé zhī yú èr shí
shàng zhōng xià yī yì shì děng fǎ jiē wú

།རིམ་པའི་ཚུལ་ནི་འདི་ཉིད་ཀྱིས།།ལྷག་མ་གཉིས་པོ་བསྣོར་བ་དང་།
།མཆོག་དང་ཐ་མ་འབྲིང་ལ་སོགས།།གཅིག་ལ་སོགས་པའང་ཤེས་པར་བྱ།།

| rim pa'i tshul ni 'di ñid kyis | | lhag ma gñis po bsnor ba daṅ |
| mchog daṅ tha ma 'briṅ la sogs | | gcig la sogs pa'aṅ (11b1)śes par bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):

Verse 4 - It follows from the above analysis that the remainder of the two periods likewise can be taken up and that concepts such as above, below, middle, etc. or identity, etc. can be similarly described or treated. - Note: This means that the analysis can be made similarly by using the present and the future in turn as a base and relating each to the other two temporal periods. Similar analysis holds true for the other concepts mentioned.

JONES (Skt):

[4] This analysis characterizes the other two relationships (i.e., the past and future are not dependent upon the present, and the past and present are not dependent upon the future). In addition, this analysis applies to “higher, lower, and middle” and” unity and multiplicity,” and so forth.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):

Following the same method, the remaining two periods of [time] as well as related concepts such as the highest, the lowest and the middle, and also identity, etc. should be characterized.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):

By this method, neither of the two remainders are concluded [to exist]:
and [the same conclusion concerning] above, below, middle, etc., identity, etc., would be drawn.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):

4. Utilizing just this place what have been left are two,
The one is relying upon going on ahead, and the other one is relying upon accomplishment.
Among the highest, the lowest, and the middle,
Selecting only one might be desirable actually.

SPRUNG (Skt):

4 Precisely the same procedure applies to the remaining two divisions of time. It could be applied to such distinctions as high, low and middle as well as to unity, duality, and so on.

STRENG (Skt):

4. In this way the remaining two times can be inverted. Thus one would regard "highest," "lowest" and "middle," etc., as oneness and difference. (or "after," "before" and "middle", or "right," "left" and "middle" ...)

ROBINSON (Skt):

By this method the remaining two [times] are to be treated mutatis mutandis. One should examine the top, bottom, and middle, etc., and the unity, etc.

BOCKING (Ch):

19v4 Through this interpretation
We know that the other two times,
Above, middle, below, same and different
And other such dharmas, are all nonexistent.

BATCHELOR (Tb):

These very stages can be applied to the other two. Superior, inferior, middling etc., singularity and so on can also be understood [thus].

DOCTOR (Tb):

By these very same steps, the other two,
The supreme, the middling, and the inferior, and so forth;
As well as singularity and so on
Can also be understood. [XIX.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):

4. By the same method,
The other two divisions - past and future,
Upper, lower, middle, etc.,
Unity, etc., should be understood.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):

4. By this very method, with substitution,
The remaining two; as well as. . . .
Superior, inferior, average, etc.; and
Unity, etc., should be understood.

HAGEN (paraphrase):

19.4 By the same method, past and future, as well as above, below, middle, etc., and identity, etc. should be understood.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

19/4 Through this interpretation we should know that the other future and past times are also non-existent, and all dharmas such as above, middle and below, same and different etc., are all nonexistent. Since middle and below exist on account of above, if there is no above there will be no middle and below. If there were middle and below apart from above then they would not be interdependent. Difference depends on sameness, and sameness depends on difference. If sameness existed as a reality it would exist independently of difference, and if difference existed as a reality it would exist independently of sameness. All such dharmas as these may be negated in the same way.

(26a20) Question: Since there are such varied divisions as year, month, day, minute etc., we know that time exists. Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

It could be done this way: If what is past and what is not yet realized are dependent on what is arising here and now, the times of past and the future will be based in what is arising here and now. If, on the other hand, past and future time are not based in what is arising here and now, how would past and future times be dependent on it? Again, these two cannot be established (*siddhi*) independently of what is arising here and now, hence what is called past and future time are not real. This much for the one division of time.

And for the second division of time: If what is past and what exists are dependent on what has not yet arisen, what is past and what exists will be based in the time of what has not yet arisen. If on the other hand what is past and what exists are not based in what has not yet arisen how could what is past and what exists be dependent on it? Again if these two are not dependent on what has not yet arisen they cannot be established. It follows that past time and present time are not real.

These were supplementary verses. The two divisions of time are to be understood in this way.

It follows, after this kind of investigation, that the three phases of time do not exist (*nasti*). Time therefore, is not real (*na vidyate*); and because time is non-existent there is no true existence of things either. This is now established. And as the three phases of time have been investigated, in the same way 'It could be applied to high, low, middle and such distinctions, as well as to unity and so on.'

To be understood by the expression 'and such distinctions' in the line beginning 'high, low, middle' are all such triadic conceptualizations as good, not good, indefinable; arisal, existence, decay; beginning, end, middle; the realms of desire, of form, of the formless; correct, incorrect, neither correct nor incorrect. By the expression 'unity, duality and so on' should be understood unity, duality and plurality. It should be realized that by the exposition of the three phases of time, high, low and so on, as well as unity, plurality and so on have been expressly dealt with.

Time incomprehensible either as lived or as unchanging

One may object that time is real because it is measurable (*parimanavattva*). The thought here is that what is not, cannot in fact be measurable as the horns of a donkey cannot be, whereas time is measurable: in virtue of the distinctions of moment, minute, hour, night, day and night, fortnight, month, year and so on. It follows that because it is measurable time is real.

We reply that if there were something called time it would be measurable. But there is not.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna is insisting that the same argument be applied to the concept of the present in relation to the past and future, and to the future in relation to the past and present. In addition, he maintains that this analysis can be extended to similar concepts like the highest, the lowest, the middle, etc. In all these cases, the metaphysical issues emerge as a result of the absolute distinctions that are being made. Such absolute distinctions are being often made in logical analyses, and are not supported by empirical evidence. Time, as experienced, cannot be analysed into three water-tight compartments as past, present, and future. (See Introduction, for an explanation of the experienced time by a modern psychologist.)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. That is, we can generalize this argument about the dependency of the future and present, whose narrow purpose is to demonstrate the nonexistence of the present, to demonstrate the nonexistence of the past and future as inherently existent entities. Moreover, Nāgārjuna notes, this argument applies, mutatis mutandis, to spatial relations.

Kārikā XIX.5

नास्थितो गृह्यते कालः स्थितः कालो न विद्यते।
यो गृह्येतागृहीतश्च कालः प्रज्ञप्यते कथम्॥५॥

nāsthito gṛhyate kālaḥ sthitaḥ kālo na vidyate |
yo gṛhyetāgṛhītaś ca kālaḥ prajñapyate katham ||5||

時住不可得 時去亦叵得
時若不可得 云何說時相

shí zhù bù kě dé;děi;de shí qù yì pǒ dé;děi;de
shí ruò bù kě dé;děi;de yún hé shuì shí xiàng;xiāng

|མི་གནས་དུས་ནི་འཛིན་མི་བྱེད|| གང་ཞིག་གཟུང་བར་བྱ་བའི་དུས|
|གནས་པ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་པས|| མ་བཟུང་དུས་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་གདགས||

| mi gnas dus ni ’dzin mi byed | | gaṅ źig gzuṅ bar bya ba’i dus |
| gnas pa yod pa ma yin pas | | ma bzuṅ dus ni ji ltar gdags |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - A non-enduring time cannot be manipulated. But an enduring time, although manipulatable, does not exist. How could a non-manipulatable time be grasped (i.e., conceptualized)?

JONES (Skt):
[5] A time that is not static cannot be grasped. A time that is static is not seen. And how could an ungrasped time be made known?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A non-static time is not observed. A static time is not evident. Even if the unobserved time were to be observed, how can it be made known?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What does not endure is not grasped by time and enduring time does not occur.
And how is time caused to be known by what is not grasped by grasping?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Time can be grasped relying upon the fact that it does never stop.
Time, which has stopped, can never be found anywhere at all.
If Time is something, which has been caught, but at the same time hasn't been caught,
How is it possible for Time to be recognized at all?

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 Time cannot be comprehended as variable; there is no unchanging time which can be comprehended; how speak sensibly about a time which is incomprehensible?

STRENG (Skt):
5. A non-stationary "time" cannot be "grasped"; and a stationary "time" which can be grasped does not exist. How, then, can one perceive time if it is not "grasped"?

BOCKING (Ch):
19v5 Time standing still cannot be found
Moving time cannot be found.
If time cannot be found,
How can one speak of characteristics of time?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Non-dwelling time cannot be apprehended. Since time which can be apprehended, does not exist as something which dwells, how can one talk of unapprehendable time?

DOCTOR (Tb):
A time that does not endure is not apprehended.
Since a time apprehended as enduring
Does not exist, How can one speak
Of a time that is not apprehended? [XIX.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. A nonstatic time is not grasped.
Nothing one could grasp as
Stationary time exists.
If time is not grasped, how is it known?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. A nonenduring time is not grasped.
Nothing one could grasp as time
Could exist as enduring.
If time is not grasped, how it is known?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
19.5 A non-static time cannot be grasped. A graspable static time is not evident. How, then, can ungraspable time be comprehended?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The reasoning here is that if what we call time were invariable (*avasthita*), quite different from periods of time such as moments, minutes and so on, it could be understood as being measurable into such periods. But there is no such thing as invariable, unchanging time which could be understood in terms of periods such as moments and minutes. Hence variable (*asthita*) time cannot be understood; that is to say, it cannot be understood in its variableness.

It might be urged that what is called time is in its invariable essence imperishable but manifests (*abhivyajyate*) itself in time periods such as moments. It is said: 'Time transmutes the elements; time sustains being; time cares for the sleeping; time is insurmountable.' So in this sense the distinguishing characteristic of time is the essence of invariableness itself.

We reply that in this sense as well there is no invariable time which could be conceived of as manifesting itself in time periods such as moments and minutes. If you ask again why this means that time cannot be invariable, it is because time cannot be conceived of as something distinct from periods of time such as moments and minutes.

Furthermore, time will exist as either compounded or un- compounded by nature. Both alternatives are repudiated in the Chapter 'The Compounded' in the *kārikā* if origination, existence and perishing are not established there can be no compounded. If the compounded is not established how will the uncompounded be grounded?' So, in this way, there is no invariable time which could be comprehended.

Now to consider the time which cannot be comprehended because it is its essential nature to be spoken of in terms of variableness; it is inconceivable how it can be spoken of sensibly in terms of time periods such as moments. As Nagarjuna puts it, 'How speak sensibly about a time which is incomprehensible?' It follows that time simply is not.

Time is not merely an aspect of things

One might counter, saying that it is true that there is nothing called time which is imperishable, which is unrelated to objects and the other factors of personal existence and which has an essence of its own. None the less there is a time which in a practical way is conceived of (*prajnapta*) as resting on (*upadaya*) the factors of personal existence and on compound things and is spoken of in terms of time periods such as moments. So there is no fault in this.

We reply: Again,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

A non-static time is a temporal flux. It is what the interpreters of the Abhidharma referred to as the "flowing present" (santati paccuppanna, DhsA 421), where the future continues to flow into the past through the present. Any attempt to grasp it would be futile, for by the time the attempt is made the present has disappeared into the past. In order to grasp it one has to stop the flow. Hence the metaphysicians recognized a static moment (sthitiksana). Nagarjuna has already analysed the implications of such theories in Chapter VII. Thus, time understood in terms of distinct momentary entities could not account for experience. This metaphysical theory viewed the present as the momentary present (khana-paccuppanna, loc.cit.). Even if the non-graspable time were to be grasped, Nagarjuna's question is: "How can it be made known?" The empiricist is, therefore, left with a specious time (probably an addha-paccuppanna). It is specious because, when any attempt is made to grasp it independent of temporal events, it vanishes like a mirage. It cannot be made known by any means. Absolute time makes no sense for Nagarjuna.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. This is a second destructive dilemma: Time, if it exists as an entity, is either stationary or changing. To say that it is changing is incoherent; we would need to posit a super-time in which that change occurs. But to say that it is static is incoherent as well. That suggests that past, present, and future coexist. So there is no coherent conception of time as an entity.

———

Kārikā XIX.6

भावं प्रतीत्य कालश्चेत्कालो भावादृते कुतः।
न च कश्चन भावोऽस्ति कुतः कालो भविष्यति॥६॥

因物故有時 離物何有時
物尚無所有 何況當有時

།གལ་ཏེ་དུས་ནི་དངོས་བརྟེན་ཏེ།།དངོས་མེད་དུས་ནི་ག་ལ་ཡོད།
།དངོས་པོ་འགའ་ཡང་ཡོད་མིན་ན།།དུས་ལྟ་ཡོད་པར་ག་ལ་འགྱུར།།

bhāvaṃ pratītya kālaś cet kālo bhāvād ṛte kutaḥ |
na ca kaś cana bhāvo ’sti kutaḥ kālo bhaviṣyati ||6||

yīn wù gù yǒu shí lí wù hé yǒu shí
wù shàng wú suǒ yǒu hé kuàng dāng yǒu shí

| gal te dus ni dṅos brten te | | dṅos med dus ni ga la yod |
| dṅos po ’ga’ yaṅ yod min na | | dus lta yod (2)par ga la ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - If time exists in virtue of the relational existential structure, where can it be without the structure ? As any existential structure does not exist, where can time be?

JONES (Skt):
[6] If time is dependent upon entities, how could time exist without such entities? And no such entities in fact exist at all - so where will there be time?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is assumed that time exists depending upon an existent, how can there be time without an existent? No existent whatsoever is found to exist. Where can time be?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If time depends on a being, where is there time without a being?
Not any being exists, so where will time exist?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. Even though it is clear for Time to exist really,
In the case that Time really exists, where does it move actually?
If there were no existence of Time at all,
Where is it possible for time to exist really even in future at all?

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 If time is dependent on things how can time be separate from things? But no thing whatsoever is real. How can there be time?

STRENG (Skt):
6. Since time is dependent on a thing (bhava), how can time exist without a thing? There is not any thing which exists; how, then, will time become something?

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XIX.6 If time existed dependent on an object, from where should it come without this object? Since there is not any object, from where does time come?

ROBINSON (Skt):
If time depends on an entity, then where is there time without the entity? Since there is no entity, where would time exist?

BOCKING (Ch):
19v6 Time exists because of objects.
Apart from objects, how can there be time?
If there are not even objects which exist,
How much less can there be time?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If time depended on things, where would time which is a non-thing exist? If there were no things at all, where would a view of time exist?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If time is based on entities,
And there are none, how could there be time?
When there are no entities at all,
How could there be any time? [XIX.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If time depends on an entity,
Then without an entity how could time exist?
There is no existent entity.
So how can time exist?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If time depends on an entity
Then without an entity how could time exist?
Since there are no entities at all,
How can time exist?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
19.6 If time depends upon an existent, then without an existent how can there be time? Since no existent whatsoever is evident, how can there be time?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

19/6 If time does not stay still then it cannot be found, yet if it were still, it would be non-existent. If time cannot be found, how can one expound the characteristics of time? And if there are no characteristics of time, then there is no time. It is because of the arising of objects that we refer to time, and apart from objects there is no time. In what has gone before we have refuted all objects on various grounds. Since objects do not exist, how can time exist?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

6ab *If time is dependent on things how can time be separate from things?*

If, that is, one defines time as 'dependent on things' then in so far as things are not real, time, being based on them, is necessarily not real either. Nagarjuna explains:

6c *But no thing whatsoever is real.*

This follows both from the arguments given earlier and from the refutations yet to be given. So long as, thus, it is the case that no thing whatsoever is real, then

6d *How can there be time?*

And because there is no time, there are no divisions of time such as moments, seconds and hours which are measurements of it. How therefore can time be grounded in its being measurable? From this it follows that things are definitely not self-existent.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

An existent (bhava), since it represents a metaphysical entity having its own nature (svabhava), has already been rejected by Nagarjuna. Time (kala) denied by him is an absolute time. It is time that is real as momentary entities (ksana) or something that is fleeting (santart) on its own. In the present verse, Nagarjuna is maintaining that two independent entitiesan existent (bhava) and time (kala)cannot be dependent upon one another. If they are dependent upon one another (bhavam pratitya kalas cet), then there cannot be time independent of an existent. An existent as such is non-existent. Whence can there be time? This is a rejection not of temporal phenomena, but only of time and phenomena as well as their mutual dependence so long as they are perceived as independent entities.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. Finally, Nāgārjuna argues, we cannot suppose that time exists as, one entity dependent on some other as its ground if we want time to exist inherently. This is because, in the previous arguments in the text, we have already argued that none of the entities that exist in time. are inherently existent. So none would form a suitable ontological basis for an inherently existent time.

But this final verse is double-edged, and its positive reading contains Nāgārjuna's positive account of the nature of time. Nāgārjuna points out that with no entities to be temporally related, there is no time. That is, the only mode of existence that time has is as a set of relations among empirical phenomena. Apart from those phenomena and those relations, there is no time. (fn 99. This insight is foundational for Dogen's later analysis of *Uji,* or being-time.) But that means that, given the lack of inherent existence of phenomena, there can be no inherent existence of time. Time is thus merely a dependent set of relations, not an entity in its own right, and certainly not the inherently existent vessel of existence it might appear to be.

Chapter XX

सामग्रीपरीक्षा विंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀因果品第二十(二十四偈)

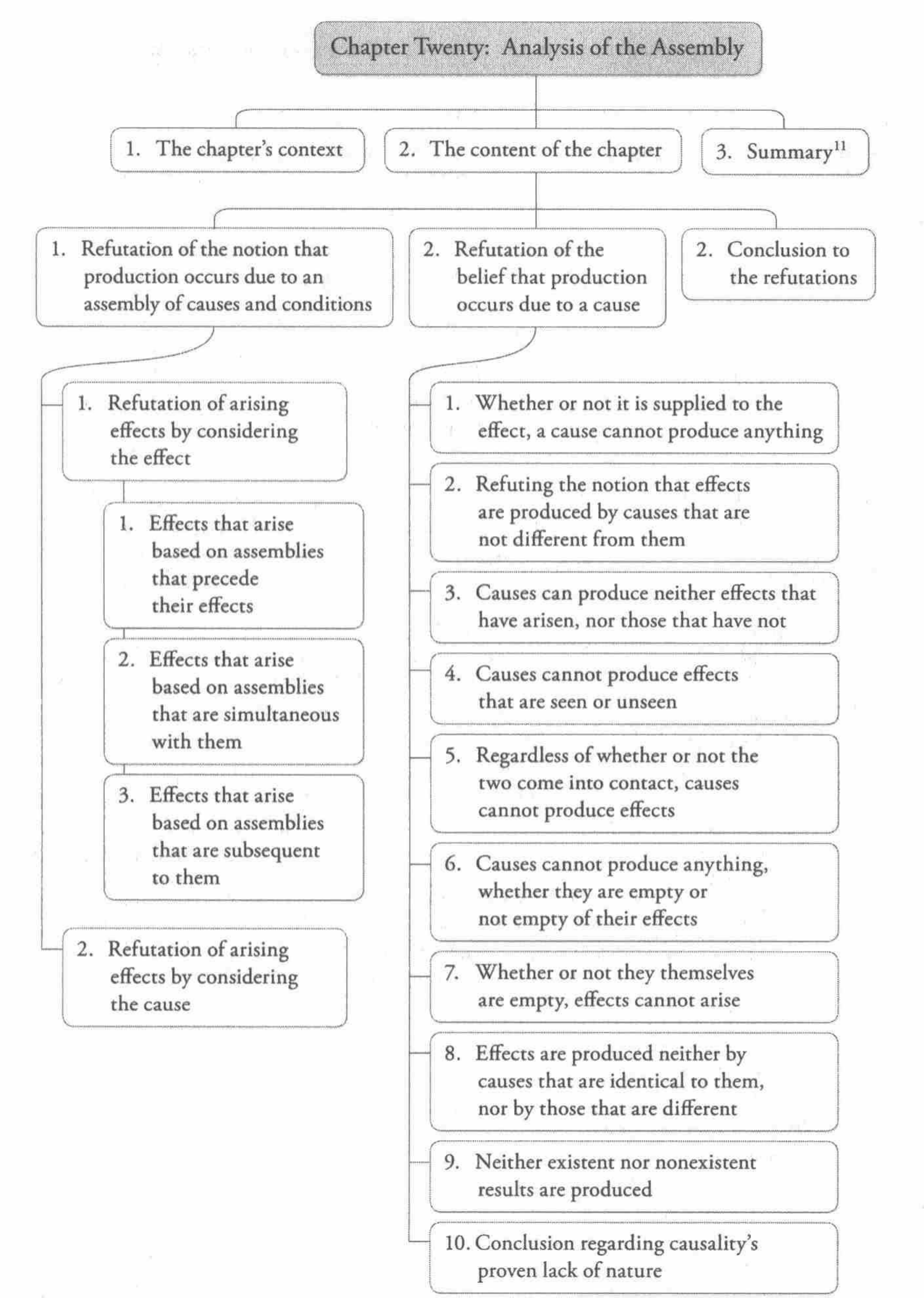
།ཚོགས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་པའོ།།

sāmagrīparīkṣā nāma vimśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XX: Examination of Combination

Chapter XX

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the fourth section of the extensive explanation of selflessness— the presentation of the essential emptiness of time. We have completed the first of its two parts: the refutation of the inherent existence of time. **[345:11]** We now begin the second part: the refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of time. This section has two parts: the refutation of time as the supporting condition of the arising of the effect and the refutation of time as the cause of the arising and cessation of the effect. This chapter constitutes the first of those two parts.

EXPLANATION:

Here someone might say, "Time exists essentially because it is the supporting condition of the arising of effects. Although conditions such as the seed, the soil, and the water are assembled, until the right moment occurs, the effect does not arise; when the right moment occurs, it does arise; just as it is in the case of external phenomena, so it is for internal phenomena as the Buddha says:

When the assemblage is complete, and the time is right The fruit will ripen. [*Vinaya, ksudra-varga, Phran tshegs* ta 153a, 156a, 157a, and *Vinaya Vibhanga, 'Dul ba* cha 177a]

So it is said that the arising of the effect depends on time." The refutation of this has three parts: the refutation of arising from the assemblage of causes and conditions, the refutation of arising just from causation, and the presentation of further reasons for the refutation of arising from the assemblage of causes and conditions.

SUMMARY:

In the *Buddhapalita* it says,

"If neither time nor cause and effect nor their assemblage exist, what else could exist?" is an assertion of nihilism. But we respond: This is not the case, because the way you have conceptually constructed such things as time as inherently existent is simply not tenable; instead they exist as dependent designations. [255b]

One should thus understand that while the inherent existence of cause and effect and the assemblage of causes and conditions maintained by the reificationists is refuted, the existence of dependently originated phenomena, originated in dependence on causes and conditions, is not refuted.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XX - Examination of Assemblage

The Tibetan and Chinese versions both have their titles as the Examination of Cause and Effect. The content of the chapter certainly reveals the relationship between these two concepts but it also treats the concept of assemblage. It would seem, however, that Nagarjuna's treatment places greater emphasis on the idea of assemblage where various relational conditions (pratyaya), cause, and effect come together or exist in concomitance. He naturally utilizes the other concepts in order to show the impossibility of attaching any subsisting nature to any one of them, i.e., hinting at all times that existence or being per se is beyond descriptive manipulation. Therefore, he goes through all the possible combinations of cause and effect (Verses 12, 13, 14) in their temporal moments in order to demonstrate the inconceivability of both being together within an assemblage. The question of void (sunya) is then introduced but again he shows that any conceptualization of it falls into error. Consequently, nothing can be asserted of either cause or effect in assemblage or of assemblage without cause and effect. The ideas expressed here are closely related to those found in Chapters I & XIV

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

20. *Harmony (samagri)*. The analysis of the causal process in terms of discrete momentary events eliminated the possibility of explaining harmony as part and parcel of the events that combine to produce the effect. With such discrete events harmony becomes an attribute. Such a problem was not faced by the Buddha when he explained dependence of events because such events were recognized as related events rather than discrete ones. Thus, the Buddhist metaphysicians were compelled either to accept an immediately contiguous cause (*samanantara-pratyaya*) where each event is caused by an immediately preceding event, or make harmony an attribute of such discrete events so that their assemblage could provide a rationale for the production of the effect. The problem of causation received the foremost attention of Nagarjuna, as is evident from Chapter I. The difficulties involved in explaining the arising of the fruit or effect (*phala*) on the basis of a metaphysical notion of harmony are further elaborated here. Once again, what is denied is not the arising of the fruit or effect, for that was the central philosophy of Buddhism, but only the manner in which such arising is described by the metaphysicians. Hence Nagarjuna's conclusion: The effect is not made by the harmony, nor is it made by a non-harmony. "Where can there be harmony without an effect?" (XX.24).

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Combination

If fruits are in the seed,
Why would they have to grow
From a combination
Of seed and earth,
Water, heat and air?
Were they not in their causes,
How could they originate
From a duster of causes?

If fruits are in the seed,
You should be able to find them there.
If they are not there,
How does mango seed
Differ from plantain seed?

If seed stopped the moment it bore fruit,
It would he schizoid seed:
Halting and starting.
If it stopped before fruition,
Its mangos would be unoriginated.

If mangos appear
When causes combine,
Creator and created would be one.
If mangos precede the combining,
They would need no cause.

If, when causes stop,
They are transferred to their fruits,
Seeds created before
Would be created again.

How can mangos appear
From the vanishing of their seed?
How can they appear
While their seed is present?
How can they appear
Unconnected to seed?

Seeds neither witness nor do not witness
Mangos they create:
Without connecting with mangos,
How can seed create them?
Through connecting with mangos,
How can it create them?

How can seed, empty of mangos,
Create mangos?
How can seed, not empty of mangos,
Create mangos?

How can seed create empty mangos?
How would they stop?
Empty and unempty mangos
Are uncreatable and unstoppable.

If mangos were real,
What could their seed create?
If mangos were unreal,
What could their seed create?

An uncreating cause
Is not a cause.
With no cause,
Whose fruit would mangos be?

If a cluster of causes
Cannot create itself,
How can it create mangos?
Mangos arc not created
By their combination
Or their uncombination.
What combination of conditions?
There are no mangos.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

20. The Combination of Causes and Conditions

Here, unlike in Chapter 1, Nagarjuna specifically addresses "causes *(hetus).*" But he does not discuss the Western problems with causation (e.g., what is responsible for the regularity of a cause and its effect) that gave rise to David Hume's questioning of causation. Rather, the background for his argument is the Indic scheme of causation involving the issue of *origins* whether an effect is *in* the cause or is *independent* of it. It is not a matter of one billiard ball causing another to move, but of how butter arises from milk. Those who assert that the effect is in the cause *(sat-karya-vadins)* argue that the effect is either a transformation of the cause (Samkhyins) or only an appearance (the Advaita Vedantins who came after Nagarjuna); Buddhists are among those who argue that the effect exists ontologically independent of the cause *(a-sat-karya-vadins).* But Buddhists also argued among themselves about whether the various conditions must be independent of what is conditioned or of a different nature. Both theories give Nagarjuna an opening: if the effect is *in* the

causes and conditions, why do we not see it there? If butter is in milk, why do we not see it there? But if the effect is *distinct* from the causes and conditions, the discontinuity presents an issue: are they really the causes and conditions at all? Nagarjuna is not denying causation but denying that it would work if things existed by self-existence. According to him, the world works only if we reject both that the effect is *different* from the cause and that it is the *same* as the cause.

The chapter starts with an application of his general argument: if an effect is in the combination of causes and conditions, we should be able to grasp it there, but we do not; but if it is not there, it exists independently of them and so the alleged causes and conditions would not really be its causes and conditions at all (w. 1-4).

Verse 5 involves the status of an entity *after* it has acted as a cause: if we still think of it as a cause after the effect has arisen, then there are two things the entity acting as a cause and the entity not acting as a cause. Thus, if – we think in terms of self-existence, there are two distinct entities, which obviously is not the case. But if the cause is self-existent and it expires before the effect occurs, then the effect would be without a cause (v. 6).

Nagarjuna then proceeds to show that, because self-existent entities can only be either identical or absolutely different, a self-existent cause cannot produce an effect either in conjunction with the conditions or without them – thus, there cannot be a real cause, a real act of causation, or a real effect. Therefore, nothing actually real arises or ceases: neither a non-empty effect can arise or cease (since it is self-existent and hence changeless), nor can an empty effect (since it is not "real" in the sense of being self-existent); thus, nothing real arises or ceases (w. 17-18). In sum, if the effect is real, it cannot be produced; and if is not real, then there is nothing to be produced and no real production. (Note that the opponent speaks here only of being "empty of *effects,"* not of self-existence, but Nagarjuna replies in terms of being "empty of *self-existence.")* Thus, whether there is *svabhava* or only *shunyata,* there is no real arising or ceasing. In fact, the world of *svabhava* and the world of *shunyata* end up being described the same way - unarisen, unchanging, unceasing (e.g., 24.37 versus 25.3) - even though the metaphysics and the reasons why the world is so described are very different.

Verse 20.16 has been rendered here with the opponents raising an objection in the first two lines and Nagarjuna responding in the last two lines. But it can also be read as Nagarjuna speaking all four lines.

With the metaphysics Nagarjuna ascribes to the Abhidharmists, a cause and effect must be either identical or different, and if they are different then the cause cannot bring about a real effect (vv. 19-21): if the cause and effect are identical, then no real causation is involved; and if the effect is different from the cause, it cannot be dependent on it in any way if it is real; a cause cannot cause a real effect (if the effect is real, it is not dependent on a cause) or unreal effect (it cannot produce what is not real). Note that to Nagarjuna, something not actively producing an effect at the moment is not causally effective at all (v. 22). (This will be discussed in the Essay.)

Verse 23 means that the combination of causes and conditions is not itself a self-existent reality that could produce an effect (since it is compounded per Chapter 13).

20

An Examination of Collections

In the sutras, the Buddha taught:

All the many things in the universe
Are appearances of collections.
Therefore, things themselves do not exist
And collections of things do not exist either.

A FOREST, A HEAD OF HAIR, a woven tent, a garland of beads, and an army—these are all examples of collections. Collections are not real, because although the parts that compose the collection are there, the entity of the collection itself does not exist. When we look at a forest, for example, there really is no "forest;" there are just the trees. Whatever thing it might be in samsara or nirvana, it is also just a collection of smaller things that are its parts, and the thing itself that is said to possess the collection of parts, like the forest, does not exist.

It is good to apply this analysis to the body. The body is a collection of parts and is called the possessor of its parts. When we look, however, we see only the parts; no entity of the "body," the possessor of the parts, can be found. For this reason, the body does not truly exist. We should examine the parts too—let us take the hand, for example. The hand is a collection of joints. Since, however, no possessor of the collection of joints exists, the hand does not have any inherent nature. The finger can be analyzed in the same way, as can its components, down to the most subtle particles of matter. They are all merely collections, and therefore they all lack inherent existence.

People also come together in groups all the time, but these groups are constantly prone to change and decay. This is because whatever group it is, the entity of the group itself has no inherent existence.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to those people who said to him, "Your refutations aside, time does in fact exist because it is one part of the collection of conditions that cause the arising of a result. For example, when a seed, the five elements, and time all come together, a sprout can arise. As the Buddha taught, 'When the collection of causes gathers and the time is right, the precise result will occur.' Therefore, since collections of causes exist, and this collection includes time, then time must also exist."

Thus, it was necessary for Nagarjuna to demonstrate with logical reasoning why collections do not truly exist. He could have just asked these people nicely, "Please do not believe in the true existence of collections," but that would not have been enough. On the other hand, it is the case in general that if one can logically prove something to someone else, if they are intelligent and open-minded, they will accept it.

Taking a look at the above argument, it is certainly the case that in order for a flower to arise, all of the causes and conditions of that flower have to come together in a collection. There have to be the seed, soil, fertilizer, water, heat, oxygen, and space—all of these have to come together for the flower to arise. However, apart from these individual elements, nothing we could call "the collection" exists. This is because, apart from the individual elements, nothing else is visible. No entity of the collection can be seen. Therefore, the flower that appears to be the result of this collection of causes and conditions does not truly exist either, because the collection itself does not truly exist in the first place.

The nineteenth verse in the chapter examines causes and results from a different perspective, showing that causes and results cannot be the same thing nor can they be different things, and therefore they cannot genuinely exist:

If cause and result were one,
Then producer and produced would be the same thing.
If cause and result were different,
Then causes and noncauses would be equivalent.

Here we have to consider causes and results in a way that we are not used to doing. We will not consider the continuum of the cause to be just one thing and the continuum of the result to be one thing, because that would be mere conceptual imputation. For example, it is just a concept that takes the whole continuum of individual moments of a seed and turns it into one undifferentiated seed, or the whole continuum of distinct moments of a sprout and turns it into just one sprout. Here we will analyze in a more subtle way than our thoughts ordinarily do, by looking at the very last instant of the seed and the very first instant of the sprout that arises from it.

If the last moment of the seed and the first moment of the sprout were the same thing, then cause and result would be one thing. The cause would be the result; the result would be the cause. "Producer and produced would be the same thing," as Nagarjuna describes.

That would not make sense, however, because from our own direct experience we know that cause and result are not the same thing. When the sprout exists, for example, the seed is nowhere to be found. If cause and result were the same thing, the seed should be visible at the time of the sprout, and, for that matter, the sprout should be visible at the time of the seed. Since it is not like that, we can conclude that seed and sprout, cause and result, are not one undifferentiated entity.

On the other hand, even though the last moment of the seed and the first moment of the sprout appear to be different things, if they were truly different from each other, they would be two independent entities that would have no connection between them. The result of that would be that

since everything that was not a cause of the sprout would have no connection with the sprout, and since the seed that is the cause of the sprout would have no connection with the sprout either, then causes and noncauses would be equivalent in their lack of connection to the result, and therefore both should be equally able to produce the sprout. If a cause that is completely different from and has no connection to its result can nevertheless produce that result, what should stop a noncause that is completely different from and has no connection to the result from producing it as well?

The point is that when causes are posited as being different from their results, the distinction between what is a cause and what is not a cause of any specific result disappears. Generally in the world, we think that causes and their results have some connection or relation between them, and that is why one thing can produce a certain result but another thing cannot. Take that connection away, however, and the reason one thing can produce a certain result and others cannot disappears. Thus, when causes and results are different from each other, all things become equally able to give rise to everything else. Since this is not the case, as we can see in our own experience, for cause and result to be different from each other would also be impossible.

Related to the view that cause and result are the same is the idea that even though the cause itself does not exist at the time of the result, the cause somehow transfers its essence to the result, and therefore there is a continuity of this essential nature from the cause to the result that it produces. This would be like an actor in a play who just changes clothes from act to act, while remaining the same person throughout the whole performance—some essence, whatever that might be, would manifest at one stage as a seed and another stage as a sprout, while it itself would remain the same thing all the while, transferring itself from one stage to the next. This, however, is the view of permanence, and it is completely untenable, because if there were some permanent essence that continued to exist from one stage to the next, it would not arise from or be affected by causes and conditions. Whatever arises from causes and conditions is necessarily impermanent, ceasing immediately after it arises, as it is replaced by the result of a new set of causes and conditions. If that unchanging essence did not arise from causes and conditions, it could not perform the function of producing the result, for no causes and conditions would have given it the ability to do so. If it did not have the ability to produce the result, it would not have any relation with the cause, because its characteristics would be precisely the opposite of those of the cause, which is defined by its ability to produce a result.

On the other hand, and related to the view that cause and result are different things, is the idea that the cause ceases and then the result arises. This view, however, connotes the extreme of extinction—it posits that the cause vanishes and becomes nonexistent. If the seed first ceased and then the sprout arose, the sprout would not really have a cause, because first the seed would exist, then it would cease, then there would be nothing, and then the sprout would arise—but where would the sprout come from? It would come from out of nothingness, after its cause had ceased. So this view is not tenable either.

Finally, there is the view that the cause neither exists at the time of the result nor ceases before the result arises, but rather that the cessation of the cause and the arising of the result occur simultaneously. This is actually how it seems to happen in apparent reality: It seems that the seed ceases and the sprout arises precisely at the same moment. From the perspective of genuine reality, however, this view is also untenable, because arising and ceasing themselves are just conceptual imputations that do not accurately describe genuine reality. Positing simultaneous arising and ceasing does not help to get around the fundamental problem that cause and result cannot exist at the same time, nor can they exist sequentially, and therefore they cannot truly exist. For in the situation in which the cause's ceasing is simultaneous with the result's arising, when the cause is "ceasing" it still exists; but what about the result that is in the process of "arising"? Does the result exist when it is arising, or not?

If the result does exist when it is arising, and the arising of the result and the cessation of the cause occur simultaneously, then both cause and result would exist at the same time. This, however, is logically impossible, because then cause and result would be separate and independently existent entities that would have no connection with each other. Furthermore, if the result existed at the same time as its cause, the cause would have no opportunity to produce the result because the cause and result would come into existence simultaneously. If the result does not exist when it is arising, how-ever, then what in fact would be arising? Arising without something there to arise makes no sense. Therefore, this view that posits the simultaneous cessation of the cause and arising of the result also falls apart under analysis.

Thus, it is not possible that the cause exists at the time of the result, nor that it does not exist at the time of the result. The Middle Way, therefore, does not assert either of these two views, and in this way it is free from the extremes of permanence and extinction, existence and nonexistence.

Then what of the appearance of the sprout arising from the seed, of results arising from the collections of causes and conditions?

These appearances are not real—they are mere instances of dependent arising. They are the same as what occurs when the night sky is free of clouds, a lake is clear and still, and, as a result, a water- moon vividly shines. As the siddha Gyalwa Gotsangpa sang in his vajra song of realization The Eight Flashing Lances:

The murkiness of clinging clarified,
Causes and conditions like reflections,
Knowing what to do and not, that subtle art—
These three make dependent arising fully free,
Like a lance that flashes free in the open sky.

When one is free of the murkiness of clinging to things as being real, causes and conditions shine like reflections in clear pools of water, as vivid manifestations of appearance-emptiness. Knowing them to be this way, one gains precise knowledge of what to do and what not to do. Thus, understanding the true nature of appearances does not impede good conduct; rather, it informs good conduct. Such knowledge makes conduct more subtle and beneficial. It is just like when you stand in front of a mirror and the reflection of your face appears within it. Knowing all the while that the reflection is not real, you can still use that reflection to remove stains from your face and make yourself look beautiful.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XX

सामग्रीपरीक्षा विंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

sāmagrīparīkṣā nāma viṁśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀因果品第二十(二十四偈)

zhōng lùn guān yīn guǒ pǐn dì èr shí (èr shí sì jié;jì)

|ཚོགས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་པའོ||

| tshogs pa brtag pa (7)źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa ñi śu pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XX - Examination of Assemblage

JONES (Skt):
20. The Combination of Causes and Conditions

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Harmony

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
20. Analysis of the Whole

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[20] Examination of the Inclusive Grasp (24 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
[omitted]

STRENG (Skt):
Section 20 - An Analysis of the Aggregate of Causes and Conditions (cause and effect) In 24 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
20. conjunction (of causes and effects).

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 20 Contemplation of Cause and Effect 24 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Combination

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XX - Analysis of the Assembly

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XX: Examination of Combination

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XX - Examination of Assemblage

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 20: AN EXAMINATION OF COLLECTIONS

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Twenty - Examination of Cause and Effect

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/0 Question: Since effects produced by a combination of causes and conditions manifestly exist, we must know that these effects exist through the combination of conditions.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter omitted by Sprung]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Twenty Examination of Harmony (Samagri-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XX Examination of Combination

This chapter examines the possibility that, while no effect could be inherently dependent upon any single cause, it might be that the correct understanding of dependent arising and the thoroughgoing interdependence of phenomena that Nāgārjuna urges involves the inherent dependence of any phenomenon on the combination of all of its conditions. Thus, while every phenomenon would, as Nāgārjuna has been arguing, be completely dependent on all others, this dependence itself would be inherently existent. Much of the argument is a reprise of arguments that we have seen already, particularly in Chapters I and VII. But the temporal analysis of Chapter XIX is also in evidence.

Kārikā XX.1

हेतोश्च प्रत्ययानां च सामग्र्या जायते यदि।
फलमस्ति च सामग्र्यां सामग्र्या जायते कथम्॥१॥

LVP 391,4-5 - LVP 409,11-12
hetoś ca pratyayānāṃ ca sāmagryā jāyate yadi |
phalam asti ca sāmagryāṃ sāmagryā jāyate katham ||1||

若眾緣和合 而有果生者
和合中已有 何須和合生

T1564: vol 30, pg 26b1
ruò zhòng yuán hé hé;gé ér yǒu guǒ shēng zhě
hé hé;gé zhōng yǐ yǒu hé xū hé hé shēng

།གལ་ཏེ་རྒྱུ་དང་རྐྱེན་རྣམས་ཀྱི།།ཚོགས་པ་ཉིད་ལས་སྐྱེ་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།
།ཚོགས་ལ་འབྲས་བུ་ཡོད་ན་ནི།།ཇི་ལྟར་ཚོགས་པ་ཉིད་ལས་སྐྱེ།།

Tg tsa 11b2 - Tg tsa 12a6-7
|| gal te rgyu daṅ rkyen rnams kyi | | tshogs pa ñid las skye ’gyur źiṅ |
| tshogs la ’bras bu yod na ni | | ji ltar tshogs pa ñid las skye |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - If the effect (i.e., arisen entity or fruit) comes about from the assemblage of cause and relational conditions and exists within such an assemblage, in what manner does it come about in the assemblage?

JONES (Skt):
[1] If an effect arises from the combination of causes and conditions and is *in* the combination, then how can it arise *from* the combination?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the effect were to arise from a harmony of cause and conditions, and if it were to exist in the harmony, how can it arise from the harmony?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If an effect is produced by the whole of cause and conditions and
exists in the whole, how is it produced by the whole?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. Belonging to Reason or belonging to many Real Truths,
The Inclusive Grasp is born at that time.
Result exists also relying upon the Inclusive Grasp,
Therefore how is it possible for the Inclusive Grasp to be born newly?

STRENG (Skt):
1. If a product (phala) is produced through the aggregate of causes and conditions, And exists in an aggregate, how will it be produced in the aggregate?

ROBINSON (Skt):
If an effect is born from the conjunction of cause and conditions, and if it exists in the conjunction, how can it be born from the conjunction?

BOCKING (Ch):
20v1 If causes and conditions combine
And an existent effect is produced,
It already existed within the combination.
What need-has it to be produced by combination?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If a fruit is born from the combination of cause and conditions and exists in the combination, how can it be born from the combination itself?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If effects are produced by an assembly
Of causes and conditions
And are present in those assemblies,
How could they be produced by those assemblies? [XX.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. If, arising from the combination of
Causes and conditions,
The effect is in the combination,
How could it arise from the combination?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. If, arising from the assemblage of
Causes and conditions,
The effect is in the assemblage,
How could it arise from the assemblage?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.1 If, arising from a combination of causes and conditions, the effect were in the combination, how could it arise from the combination?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/1 If you say that an effect is produced by a combination of causes and conditions, then this effect already existed within the combination, and yet is something which arises from the combination. This is not correct, and why? If the effect had a pre-existing fixed substance, then it would not have to be produced by combination.

Question: What is wrong with saying that, though no effect exists within the combination of conditions, an effect arises out of the conditions? Reply:

Kārikā XX.2

हेतोश्च प्रत्ययानां च सामग्र्या जायते यदि।
फलं नास्ति च सामग्र्यां सामग्र्या जायते कथम्॥२॥

hetoś ca pratyayānāṃ ca sāmagryā jāyate yadi |
phalaṃ nāsti ca sāmagryāṃ sāmagryā jāyate katham ||2||

若眾緣和合 是中無果者
云何從眾緣 和合而果生

ruò zhòng yuán hé hé;gé shì zhōng wú guǒ zhě
yún hé cóng zhòng yuán hé hé;gé ér guǒ shēng

།གལ་ཏེ་རྒྱུ་དང་རྐྱེན་རྣམས་ཀྱི།།ཚོགས་པ་ཉིད་ལས་སྐྱེ་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།
།ཚོགས་ལ་འབྲས་བུ་མེད་ན་ནི།།ཇི་ལྟར་ཚོགས་པ་ཉིད་ལས་སྐྱེ།།

| gal te rgyu daṅ rkyen rnams kyi | | tshogs pa ñid (3)las skye ’gyur źiṅ |
| tshogs la ’bras bu med na ni | | ji ltar tshogs pa ñid las skye |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - If the effect comes about from the assemblage of cause and relational conditions, and it does not exist within such an assemblage, in what manner does it come about in the assemblage?

JONES (Skt):
[2] If the effect arises from the combination of causes and conditions and is *not in* the combination, then how can it arise *from* the combination?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the effect were to arise from a harmony of cause and conditions and flit were not to exist in the harmony, how can it arise from the harmony?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If an effect is produced by the whole of cause and conditions and
does not exist in the whole, how is it produced by the whole?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. Belonging to Reason or belonging to many RealTruths,
T he Inclusive Grasp is born at that time.
What is called result does never exist really receiving the influence of the Inclusive Grasp,
And so how is it possible for the Inclusive Grasp to be born newly?

STRENG (Skt):
2. If a product is produced in the aggregate of causes and conditions, And does not exist in the aggregate, how will it be produced in the aggregate?

ROBINSON (Skt):
If an effect is born from the conjunction of cause and conditions, and if it does not exist in the conjunction, how can it be born from the conjunction?

BOCKING (Ch):
20v2 If within the combination of conditions
There is no effect.
How can an effect arise
From combination of conditions?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If a fruit is born from the combination of cause and conditions and does not exist in the combination, how can it be born from the combination itself?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If effects are produced by the very assembly
Of causes and conditions,
And are not present in those assemblies,
How could they be produced by those assemblies? [XX.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. If, arising from the combination of
Causes and conditions,
The effect is not in the combination,
How could it arise from the combination?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. If, arising from the assemblage of
Causes and conditions,
The effect is not in the assemblage,
How could it arise from the assemblage?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.2 If, arising from a combination of causes and conditions, the effect were not in the combination, how could it arise from the combination?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/2 'If an effect arises out of a combination of conditions, then the effect does not exist within this combination, but is produced from the combination. ' This is not correct, and why? If an object has no self-nature, then it can never be produced.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The term used in the early discourses for "assemblage" is sangati (M 1.111-112). For example, the eye, the visible form, and visual consciousness are said to come together (sangati) in contact (phassa). Here, the eye, visible form, and visual consciousness are compatible factors, and not incompatible. However, as events came to be distinguished in the Abhidharma, the interpreters of the Abhidharma had to be concerned more with "harmony" (samagri) than with simple "assemblage" (sangati). The conception of "harmony" thus came to attract Nagarjuna's attention, even though he will return to the notion of "assemblage" later on in this chapter. Nagarjuna's attempt at the beginning of this chapter is to examine the conception of harmony and to prevent any metaphysical interpretation of it. Metaphysical speculations were further advanced by the Sarvastivada distinction between cause (hetu) and condition (pratyaya). This latter distinction, supported by the Sarvastivada conception of self-nature (svabhava), culminated in the idea of self-causation (svata utpatti). For this reason, in the very fast verse, Nagarjuna takes up three ideas: (i) harmony, (ii) distinction between cause and conditions, and (iii) the arising of an effect from a harmony of cause and conditions. (Note Nagarjuna's use of hetu in the singular and pratyaya in the plural.)

Nagarjuna's criticism is mainly directed at the idea of serf-causation. If the fruit arises from the harmony (samagrya, ablative case) of a cause and a set of conditions (hetoh pratyayanam ca), then it is already existent in the harmony (samagryam, locative case). How then can it arise from the harmony (samagrya)? The causal process presented in this manner implies the identity between "harmony of cause and conditions" and the fruit or effect that arises from it. The identity theory of causation was already criticized in Chapter I. Similarly, as stated at XX.2, if the fruit or effect arising from such a harmony were not to be in the harmony, that is, if the effect is different from the harmony, it can never arise from that harmony. This is a criticism of the non-identity theory of causation discussed in Chapter I. These two verses, therefore, state the difficulties involved in accepting theories of identity and difference.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. In the opening verses, Nāgārjuna sets up the destructive dilemma that frames the first part of this chapter: Either the effect is already present in the combination on which it is supposed by the reificationist to inherently depend or it is not. If it is, he will argue, there is no sense in which it really arises from them at all. If not, on the other hand, he will argue that there is no sense in which whatever dependence there is could be inherent dependence. Nāgārjuna alternates in the subsequent verses between these alternatives, developing a number of difficulties for each.

Kārikā XX.3

हेतोश्च प्रत्ययानां च सामग्र्यामस्ति चेत्फलम्।
गृह्येत ननु सामग्र्यां सामग्र्यां च न गृह्यते॥३॥

hetoś ca pratyayānāṃ ca sāmagryām asti cet phalam |
gṛhyeta nanu sāmagryāṃ sāmagryāṃ ca na gṛhyate ||3||

若眾緣和合 是中有果者
和合中應有 而實不可得

ruò zhòng yuán hé hé;gé shì zhōng yǒu guǒ zhě
hé hé;gé zhōng yīng yǒu ér shí bù kě dé;děi;de

།གལ་ཏེ་རྒྱུ་དང་རྐྱེན་རྣམས་ཀྱི། །ཚོགས་ལ་འབྲས་བུ་ཡོད་ན་ནི།
།ཚོགས་ལ་གཟུང་དུ་ཡོད་རིགས་ན། །ཚོགས་པ་ཉིད་ལ་གཟུང་དུ་མེད།།

| gal te rgyu daṅ rkyen rnams kyi | | tshogs la 'bras bu yod na ni |
| tshogs la gzuṅ du yod rigs na | | tshogs pa ñid la gzuṅ du med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - If the effect is in the assemblage of cause and relational conditions, it should be conceivable within the assemblage. However, (the fact is) it is inconceivable within an assemblage.

JONES (Skt):
[3] If the effect is in the combination of causes and conditions, it should certainly be grasped in that combination, but it is not grasped there.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is assumed that the effect exists in the harmony of cause and conditions, should it not be observed in the harmony? However, it is not observed in the harmony.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If an effect exists in the whole of cause and conditions, all of the whole
would never be included in it and all of the whole is not included by it.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Belonging to Reason or belonging to many Real Truths,
There might be possibility for the Inclusive Grasp to be born in such a situation.
The Result exists really relying upon the Inclusive Grasp,
But how is it possible for the Inclusive Grasp to be born newly?

STRENG (Skt):
3. If the product is in the aggregate of causes and conditions, Would it not be "grasped" i.e., located in the aggregate? But it is not "grasped" in the aggregate.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v3 If within the combination of conditions
The effect does exist
It should exist within the combination
But in reality it cannot be found.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the fruit exists in the combination of cause and conditions, it would be correct for it to be apprehendable in the combination but it is not apprehendable in the combination.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If effects are present in the assemblies
Of their causes and conditions,
They should be perceptible in those assemblies,
And yet they are not perceptible in those assemblies. [XX.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. If the effect is in the combination
Of causes and conditions,
Then it should be grasped in the combination.
But it is not grasped in the combination.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. If the effect were in the assemblage
Of causes and conditions,
Then it should be found in the assemblage.
But it is not found in the assemblage.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.3 If the effect is in the combination of causes and conditions, it should be found in the combination. But it is not.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/3 If there is an effect which comes from within a combination of conditions, then if it has form, it should be visible, and if it is formless it should be conceivable. But in reality no effect can be found within the combination. Therefore it is not correct (to say) that the effect inheres in the combination.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. First, suppose that the effect already exists somehow in the combination of phenomena on which it depends. Then in grasping that is, in conceiving or perceiving - that collection, we should, ipso facto, grasp the effect. But we do not. Consider the set of conditions of a match lighting. There is the presence of sulphur, friction, oxygen, and so forth. But neither in virtue of conceiving of these things nor in virtue of seeing them do we see fire.

Kārikā XX.4

हेतोश्च प्रत्ययानां च सामग्र्यां नास्ति चेत्फलम्।
हेतवः प्रत्ययाश्च स्युरहेतुप्रत्ययैः समाः॥४॥

hetoś ca pratyayānāṃ ca sāmagryāṃ nāsti cet phalam |
hetavaḥ pratyayāś ca syur ahetupratyayaiḥ samāḥ ||4||

若眾緣和合 是中無果者
是則眾因緣 與非因緣同

ruò zhòng yuán hé hé;gé shì zhōng wú guǒ zhě
shì zé zhòng yīn yuán yǔ fēi yīn yuán tóng;tòng

།གལ་ཏེ་རྒྱུ་དང་རྐྱེན་རྣམས་ཀྱི།།ཚོགས་ལ་འབྲས་བུ་མེད་ན་ནི།
།རྒྱུ་རྣམས་དང་ནི་རྐྱེན་དག་ཀྱང་།།རྒྱུ་རྐྱེན་མ་ཡིན་མཚུངས་པར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te rgyu daṅ rkyen rnams kyi | | tshogs (4)la 'bras bu med na ni |
| rgyu rnams daṅ ni rkyen dag kyaṅ | | rgyu rkyen ma yin mtshuṅs par 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - If the effect is not in the assemblage of cause and relational conditions, then the causes and relational conditions would be similar to non-causal and non-relational conditions.

JONES (Skt):
[4] If the effect is not in the combination of causes and conditions, then the causes and conditions would be the same as no cause and no conditions.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the effect were not to exist in the harmony of cause and conditions, then the cause and conditions would be comparable to non-cause and non-conditions.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the effect does not exist in the whole of cause and conditions,
causes and conditions would be the same as uncaused by means of conditions.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. Belonging to Reason or belonging to many Real Truths,
Being helped by the Inclusive Grasp, there might be possibility for result not to exist at all.
Many Reasons and many Truths are actually thrown away,
And what are not reasonable and what are not true might be full there.

STRENG (Skt):
4. If the product is not in the aggregate of causes and conditions, Then the causes and conditions would be the same as non-causes and non-conditions.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v4 If within the combination of conditions
There is no effect,
Then these causes and conditions
Are the same as non-causes and conditions.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the fruit does not exist in the combination of cause and conditions, the causes and conditions would be comparable to non-causes and conditions.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If effects are not present in the assemblies
Of their causes and conditions,
Then the causes and conditions
Equal what are not causes and conditions. [XX.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. If the effect is not in the combination
Of causes and conditions,
Then actual causes and conditions
Would be like noncauses and nonconditions.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. If the effect were not in the assemblage
Of causes and conditions,
Then it would be as though causes and conditions
Were not causes and conditions.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.4 If the effect is not in the combination of causes and conditions, then the causes and conditions would be like non-causes and non-conditions.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/4 If there is no effect within the combination of causes, then the causes and conditions will be the same as non-causes and conditions. If is like milk being the cause and condition of cream. If there is no cream within the milk, then, since there is no cream within water either, if the milk contains no cream it is the same as water, and we should not say that cream comes only from milk. Therefore (to say) that there is no effect within the combination of causes is not correct.

Question: A cause, having operated as a cause to bring about an effect, ceases, and thus there is cause and effect without such errors (as those above).

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If the identity theory is valid, then the fruit could be observed (grhyeta) in the harmony itself even before it is produced through such harmony. However, Nagarjuna assumes that it is not observed or grasped in this manner. Once again this confirms our view that Nagarjuna is not a mere dialectician, but an empiricist who appeals to experience, as he did at 1. 5. If, on the contrary, the fruit is not found in the harmony, then the cause and the conditions would be rendered in-effective.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. On the other hand, Nāgārjuna argues, if the proponent of inherently existent dependence argues that the effect is not present in the combination, he would have to say that there is no difference between actual conditions of an effect and an arbitrary collection of phenomena with no relation at all to it. Because the very point of this analysis is to explain how a particular set of conditions determines an effect. For Nāgārjuna, as we should be able to see by recalling his treatment of dependent origination and the relation between conditions and their effects in Chapter I, this is no problem: There is simply no general metaphysical answer to such a question for a Madhyamika philosopher. A collection of conditions determines its effect simply because when those conditions are present, that effect arises. That fact may in turn be empirically explicable by other regularities. But there is no independent foundation for the network of regularities itself. However, for the substantialist there must be some analysis of the collection of conditions itself that answers the question regarding *how* that collection has the power to produce that effect. And the answer the opponent proposes is that it does so because the effect is inherently present in some sense in that collection.

Kārikā XX.5

हेतुकं फलस्य दत्वा यदि हेतुर्निरुध्यते।
यद्दत्तं यन्निरुद्धं च हेतोरात्मद्वयं भवेत्॥५॥

hetuṃ phalasya dattvā ca yadi hetur nirudhyate |
yad dattaṃ yan nirudhaṃ ca hetor ātmadvayaṃ bhavet ||5||

若因與果因 作因已而滅
是因有二體 一與一則滅

ruò yīn yǔ guǒ yīn zuò yīn yǐ ér miè
shì yīn yǒu èr tǐ yī yǔ yī zé miè

།གལ་ཏེ་རྒྱུས་ནི་འབྲས་བུ་ལ།།རྒྱུ་བྱིན་ནས་ནི་འགག་འགྱུར་ན།
།གང་བྱིན་པ་དང་གང་འགགས་པའི།།རྒྱུ་ཡི་བདག་ཉིད་གཉིས་སུ་འགྱུར།།

| gal te rgyus ni 'bras bu la | | rgyu byin nas ni 'gag 'gyur na |
| gaṅ byin pa daṅ gaṅ 'gags pa'i | | rgyu yi bdag ñid gñis su 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - If the cause gives to the effect a causal nature before extinguishing itself, then there will be a dual causal form of the given and the extinguished.

JONES (Skt):
[5] If its status as "the cause" ceases after its causal power is passed on to the effect, there would be a dual nature to the cause: what was given to the effect and what was stopped.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the cause were to cease having passed on the causal status to the effect, then there would be two forms of the cause: the given and the ceased.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the cause is stopped by the causality having been given to the effect,
that given and that stopped would be two forms of cause.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Reason is usually given as result,
And so Reason is usually suppressed actually.
What is presented, can be what is neglected,
Because, relying upon Reason, the two kinds of factors of spirits might manifest them.

STRENG (Skt):
5. If a cause, having given the cause for a product, is stopped, Then that which is "given" and that which is stopped would be two identities of the cause.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XX.5 If the cause ceased to exist after having passed on the causal power of [bringing about] the fruit, the cause would have a double nature: the given [causal power] and the ceased [nature after having passed on the causal power].

ROBINSON (Skt):
If, having provided the cause for the effect, a cause is extinguished, then what is provided and what is extinguished would be two selves of the cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v5 If a cause gives cause to an effect
And having caused, then ceases,
This cause has a dual substance
One giving, and one ceasing.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the cause stops once it has given the cause to the fruit, there would be a double nature of the cause: one that gives and one that stops.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the cause ceases to be,
Having been supplied to its effect,
It follows that the cause has two identities,
One supplied and another that ceases. [XX.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. If the cause, in having its effect,
Ceased to have its causal status,
There would be two kinds of cause:
With and without causal status.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. If the cause ceases,
Having provided causation to the effect,
There would be two kinds of cause:
The causation that has been provided and the cause that has ceased.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.5 If the cause were to cease after passing its causal status to the effect, then there would be two kinds of cause: one with and one without causal status.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/5 If a cause, having operated as the cause for an effect then ceases, such a cause will have a dual substance, one called 'giving cause', the other called 'ceasing cause'. This is not correct, because it would be one dharma having two substances. Therefore it is not the case that a cause, having operated as the cause for an effect, then ceases.

Question: If one says that a cause, without giving rise to an effect, operates as a cause and then ceases and an effect arises, what is wrong in this?

Reply:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. At this point, Nāgārjuna turns to the temporal relation between the effect, the cause, and the combination of conditions that together with the primary cause of the effect bring about the effect. The position that he is worrying about is this: Effects depend upon particular causes, but those causes need the cooperation of supporting conditions in order to be efficacious. The familiar example in this context is that of the seed and the sprout. The seed, according to the proponent of such a position, causes the sprout, but only if there is soil, water, air, and so forth, to support it. Nāgārjuna then complains that on this view the word "cause" is being used equivocally: In one sense it is used to refer to things - the primary causes - that really don't cause anything. In the other sense, it is used to refer to those that really have causal status - namely, the entire assemblage of conditions that are necessary and sufficient for the arising of the effect.

Kārikā XX.6

हेतुं फलस्यादत्वा च यदि हेतुर्निरुध्यते।
हेतौ निरुद्धे जातं तत्फलमाहेतुकं भवेत्॥६॥

hetuṃ phalasyādattvā ca yadi hetur nirudhyate |
hetau niruddhe jātaṃ tat phalam āhetukaṃ bhavet ||6||

若因不與果 作因已而滅
因滅而果生 是果則無因

ruò yīn bù yǔ guǒ zuò yīn yǐ ér miè
yīn miè ér guǒ shēng shì guǒ zé wú yīn

།གལ་ཏེ་རྒྱུས་ནི་འབྲས་བུ་ལ།།རྒྱུ་མ་བྱིན་པར་འགག་འགྱུར་ན།
།རྒྱུ་འགགས་ནས་ནི་སྐྱེས་པ་ཡི།།འབྲས་བུ་དེ་དག་རྒྱུ་མེད་འགྱུར།།

| gal te rgyus ni ’bras bu la | | (5)rgyu ma byin par ’gag ’gyur na |
| rgyu ’gags nas ni skyes pa yi | | ’bras bu de dag rgyu med ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - If, however, the cause does not give the effect a causal nature before extinguishing itself, then the effect, arising after the cause extinguishes itself, will have no cause.

JONES (Skt):
[6] If the cause ceases to exist before it produces the effect, the effect would be a product without a cause.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the cause were to cease without passing on the causal status to the effect, then the effect that is born when the cause has ceased would be without a cause.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the cause is stopped by the causality not having been given to the effect,
that effect produced where the cause stopped would be without cause.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. When any result hasn't been given as the reason actually,
Then the reason should be erased at that time.
Relying upon the Reason, a birth is actually suppressed sometimes.
Then a result can be maintained without any kind of reason.

STRENG (Skt):
6. If a cause without having given the cause for a product is stopped Then, the cause being stopped, the product would be produced as something derived from a non-cause (ahetuka).

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XX.6 If the cause ceased without having passed on its causal power to the effect, that effect which is born when the cause has ceased would be without cause.

ROBINSON (Skt):
If, without having provided the cause of the effect, a cause is extinguished, then, the cause having been extinguished, that effect would be born without cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v6 If a cause, without giving rise to an effect,
Having operated as a cause then ceases.
The cause having ceased when the effect arises,
Such an effect will be uncaused.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the cause stops without having given the cause to the fruit, those fruits which are born after the cause has stopped would be uncaused.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If a cause ceases to be,
Without having been supplied to its effect.
The effects that arise when it has ceased
Do not have any cause. [XX.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If the cause, not yet having
Produced its effect, ceased,
Then having arisen from a ceased cause,
The effect would be without a cause.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If the cause, not yet having
Provided causation to its effect, ceased,
Then, having arisen from a ceased cause,
The effect would causeless.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.6 if the cause were to cease before passing its causal status to the effect, then the effect, having arisen from a ceased cause, would be without a cause.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/6 If a certain cause, without giving rise to an effect, operates as a cause and then ceases, then, the cause having already ceased when the effect arises, the effect will be uncaused. But this is not correct, and why? We can manifestly observe that there is no effect which is produced without a cause. Therefore, your statement that a cause, without giving rise to an effect, may operate as a cause and then cease, and then an effect arises, is not correct.

Question: What is wrong in saying that the effect is produced in the moment of combination of conditions?

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The metaphysicians recognized two types of causesthe concomitant (sahabhu) and the associated (samprayuktaka)as being presently existing and producing the effect (sahabhu-samprayuktaka-hetu vartamanau phalam prayacchati, Akv). They are supposed to give rise to the effect at the same time (samana-kalam ... phaladana, ibid.) However, with the dominance of the linear view of causation as well as the theory of momentary destruction (ksana-bhanga) of phenomena, the question was raised as to how the cause in the present moment could give rise to the effect in the succeeding moment. The answer was that the effect comes to be without a pause or gap (samanantara nirvarttanat). The effect is both given (datta), in the sense of being put forward (prayacchati) by the cause, and at the same time not given (na punah dattam, because it is not identical (tad eva) with the cause (ibid.).

These are some of the speculations referred to by Nagarjuna. He insists that if a cause were to perform the dual task of providing causal efficacy and ceasing at the same time, then it should possess dual natures (atma-dvayam). if, on the contrary, it were to cease, without passing over the causal efficacy, then the effect would be without a cause. These indeed are the implications of the conclusions reached by the metaphysician that the effect is both given (datta) and not given (na datta), referred to in the Abhidharmakosabhasya.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. But, he urges, if we want to assert that the cause, instead of changing from a cause to a noncause, simply ceases at the moment when it produces its effect, we still have a problem. Because by the time the effect emerges, the cause” will have vanished, and the effect will then have emerged without a cause and so will be a causeless effect.

Kārikā XX.7

फलं सहैव सामग्र्या यदि प्रादुर्भवेत्पुनः।
एककालौ प्रसज्येते जनको यश्च जन्यते॥७॥

phalaṃ sahaiva sāmagryā yadi prādurbhavet punaḥ |
ekakālau prasajyete janako yaś ca janyate ||7||

若眾緣合時 而有果生者
生者及可生 則為一時俱

ruò zhòng yuán hé;gé shí ér yǒu guǒ shēng zhě
shēng zhě jí kě shēng zé wéi yī shí jù;jū

།གལ་ཏེ་ཚོགས་དང་ལྷན་ཅིག་ཏུ།།འབྲས་བུ་ཡང་ནི་སྐྱེ་འགྱུར་ན།
།སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད་དང་བསྐྱེད་བྱ་གང་།།དུས་གཅིག་པར་ནི་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te tshogs daṅ lhan cig tu | | ’bras bu yaṅ ni skye ’gyur na |
| skyed par byed daṅ bskyed bya gaṅ | | dus gcig par ni thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - If, again, the effect and the assemblage appear together, then it would follow that the producer and the produced are contemporaneous (i.e., exist in the same moment).

JONES (Skt):
[7] If the effect were to arise together with the combination of causes and conditions, then the producer and the product would be simultaneous.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If, again, the effect were to appear together with the harmony, then it would follow that the producer and the produce are contemporaneous.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, if the effect would arise together with the whole,
it follows that the producer and the produced are simultaneous.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Result is also similar to the Inclusive Grasp.
And at that time also something spiritual manifests itself.
And the facts that both result and the Inclusive Grasp will appear together actually,
Suggests that such a kind of facts have been born really without fail.

STRENG (Skt):
7. If the product would become visible concomitantly with the aggregate of causes and conditions, Then it would logically follow that the producer and that which is produced exist in the same moment.

ROBINSON (Skt):
If the effect appears together with the conjunction, the absurdity ensues that producer and product are simultaneous.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v7 If in the moment of combining of conditions
An effect is produced,
Then producer and product
Would occur simultaneously.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the fruit were also born at the same time as the combination, it would follow that the producer and the produced would be simultaneous.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If effects arise together
With their assemblies,
The producer and produced
Will then be simultaneous. [XX.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. If the effect were to arise
Simultaneously with the collection,
Then the produced and the producer
Would arise simultaneously.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. If the effect were to arise
Simultaneously with the assemblage,
Then the producer and the produced
Would be simultaneous.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.7 If the effect were to arise simultaneously with its causes and conditions, then the producer and the produced would be contemporaneous.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/7 If an effect is produced in the moment of combination of conditions, then producer and product would occur simultaneously, but this is not the case, and why? It is like a father and son, who cannot be born at the same time. Therefore your assertion that an effect arises in the moment of combination of conditions is not correct.

Question: What error is there in (saying that) the arising of the effect comes first, and subsequently conditions combine? Reply:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. Turning now to the entire collection as determinative of the effect, Nāgārjuna points out that the effect cannot be simultaneous with the occurrence of a collection of its conditions for all of the reasons that he has advanced previously against the simultaneity of causes and their effects.

Kārikā XX.8

पूर्वमेव च सामग्र्याः फलं प्रादुर्भवेद्यदि।
हेतुप्रत्ययनिर्मुक्तं फलमाहेतुकं भवेत्॥८॥

pūrvam eva ca sāmagryāḥ phalaṃ prādurbhaved yadi |
hetupratyayanirmuktaṃ phalam āhetukaṃ bhavet ||8||

若先有果生 而後眾緣合
此即離因緣 名為無因果

ruò xiān yǒu guǒ shēng ér hòu zhòng yuán hé;gé
cǐ jí lí yīn yuán míng wéi wú yīn guǒ

།གལ་ཏེ་ཚོགས་པའི་སྔ་རོལ་དུ།།འབྲས་བུ་སྐྱེས་པར་གྱུར་ན་ནི།
།རྒྱུ་དང་རྐྱེན་རྣམས་མེད་པ་ཡི།།འབྲས་བུ་རྒྱུ་མེད་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te tshogs pa'i sṅa rol (6)du | | 'bras bu skyes par gyur na ni |
| rgyu daṅ rkyen rnams med pa yi | | 'bras bu rgyu med 'byuṅ bar 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - Moreover, if the effect appears prior to the assemblage, then it, without cause and relational condition, will have a non-causal nature.

JONES (Skt):
[8] If the effect were to arise before the combination of causes and conditions, the effect would be free of causes and conditions and thus causeless.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the effect were to appear even prior to the harmony, the effect, distinct from causes and conditions, would be without a cause.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the effect would arise prior to the whole, the effect, separated from cause and conditions, would be without cause.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Just before relying upon the Inclusive Grasp,
Result has possibility to manifest itself at that time.
When Reason and the Truth have been emancipated themselves,
There might be possible for result to be identified with something unreasonable.

STRENG (Skt):
8. If the product would become visible before the aggregate, Then the product, without being related to causes and conditions, would be something derived from a non-cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v8 If first there arises an effect
And subsequently combination of conditions
Since it would be separate from causes,
It would constitute an uncaused effect.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the fruit were born prior to the combination, there would occur an uncaused fruit which has no cause and conditions.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If effects arise
Before their assemblies,
The absence of causes and conditions
Implies that effects are uncaused. [XX.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. If the effect were to arise
Prior to the combination,
Then, without causes and conditions,
The effect would arise causelessly.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. If the effect were to be arisen
Prior to the assemblage,
Then, without causes and conditions,
The effect would have arisen causelessly.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.8 If the effect were to arise prior to its causes and conditions, it would arise without a cause.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/8 If, as you say, there is production of the effect before conditions have as yet combined, this is not correct, because the effect would be separate from its causes and conditions, and hence would be termed a causeless effect. Therefore to say as you do that an effect arises before conditions have combined, is not correct.

Question: What is wrong in saying that the cause ceases and transforms into the effect?

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Moving from the individual came to the harmony of conditions (pradurbhavet) Nagarjuna raises similar questions. If the effect were to appear (pradurbhavet) along with the harmony of conditions, then the distinction between the producer and the produced would collapse. Similarly, if the effect were to precede the harmony, then causation would be rendered meaningless.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. But neither, of course, can the effect arise before the conditions are met since the effect would then “arise spontaneously, and this possibility has been refuted earlier.

Kārikā XX.9

निरुद्धे चेत्फलं हेतौ हेतोः संक्रमणं भवेत्।
पूर्वजातस्य हेतोश्च पुनर्जन्म प्रसज्यते॥९॥

若因變為果 因即至於果
是則前生因 生已而復生

།གལ་ཏེ་རྒྱུ་འགགས་འབྲས་བུ་ན།།རྒྱུ་ནི་ཀུན་ཏུ་འཕོ་བར་འགྱུར།
།སྔོན་སྐྱེས་པ་ཡི་རྒྱུ་ཡང་ནི།།ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་ནི་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

niruddhe cet phalaṃ hetau hetoḥ saṃkramaṇaṃ bhavet |
pūrvajātasya hetoś ca punarjanma prasajyate ||9||

ruò yīn biàn wéi guǒ yīn jí zhì yū;yú;wū guǒ
shì zé qián shēng yīn shēng yǐ ér fù shēng

| gal te rgyu ’gags ’bras bu na | | rgyu ni kun tu ’pho bar ’gyur |
| sṅon skyes pa yi rgyu yaṅ ni | | yaṅ skye bar ni thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - If the effect is taken to be the transition of a cause which had extinguished itself, then it follows that the cause would be a re-origination of an already originated cause.

JONES (Skt):
[9] If the cause were stopped, the effect would be a transformation of the cause, and there would be a rebirth of the previously-born cause.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is assumed that when the muse has ceased to exist, the effect would become the transformation of the cause, then it follows that there is a rebirth of a cuase that was already born.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If, where the cause has ceased, the cause would transmigrate to the effect,
a rebirth of an already-born cause follows.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. When Result has been vanished,
The combination between relying upon Reason and following upon Reason, has existed,
Before being birth, actually from Reason,
The next birth must be cling to hesitation..

STRENG (Skt):
9. If, when the cause of the product is stopped, there would be a continuation of the cause, It would logically follow that there would be another production of the previous producing cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v9 If the cause transforms into the effect
The cause will reach the effect
Thus a preceding producing cause
Having produced, will produce again.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If [when] a cause stops, it is forever transferred to the fruit, then it would follow that the cause which was born before would be born again.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If a cause ceases,
Yet is transferred to its effect,
It follows that a cause already arisen
Would arise once more. [XX.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. If, the cause having ceased, the effect
Were a complete transformation of the cause,
Then a previously arisen cause
Would arise again.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. If, the cause, having ceased,
Passed completely into the effect,
Then a previously arisen cause
Would, absurdly, arise again.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.9 If, the cause having ceased, the effect were now the transformation of the spent cause, there would be the rebirth of a cause that was already born.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/9 Causes are of two kinds. One is the preceding producing (cause), the other is the co-operative producing (cause). If a ceased cause changes into an effect, then the preceding producing cause would decay and again arise, but this is not correct, and why? A thing which has already ceased should not arise again.

(27a2) If you say that a particular cause changes into an effect, this is also incorrect, and why? If it is that particular (cause) then it cannot be regarded as changed. If it is changed, then. it cannot be regarded as that particular (cause).

Question: The cause does not completely cease, only its designation (as a cause) ceases; the substance of the cause changes into the effect, just as a lump of clay turns into a jug. The designation of 'lump of clay' is lost, and the designation of 'jug' is produced.

Reply:

(27a6) If the lump of clay ceases before the jug is produced, this does not constitute transformation. Also, the substance of the lump of clay does not produce only jugs. Urns and so forth all come out of clay. If a lump of clay were merely a designation it could not change into a jug. 'Change' means as milk changes into cream. Therefore, to say as you do that although the designation of the cause ceases it changes into the effect is not correct.

Question: Even though the cause has ceased and disappeared, it can still produce an effect. Therefore, there are effects, and no such errors.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Among the variety of causes that were formulated to account for a continuous effect (nisyanda-phala) are complementary (sabhaga) and universal (sarvatraga) causes (Akb). Explained in the light of the theory of moments, a universal cause would mean the continuous arising of the same cause in order to account for the continuous effect. The continuous effect (nisyanda-phala) thus turns out to be a transformation (samkramana) of the cause (hetu). Nagarjuna refuses to recognize the rebirth of the same cause that has ceased.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. Nāgārjuna now responds to the following possible reply: The effect in question is not an. entity distinct from the cause or the collection of conditions that serve as its ground. Therefore these questions about the temporal relations between events involving distinct entities do not arise. The sprout is not distinct from the seed, but is merely a complete transformation of it. But, Nāgārjuna argues, it is also not possible to characterize the effect as a simple change of nature of a single entity that was the cause before the transformation. For then we would have to say that the cause remains in existence after the effect arises and so would have to keep producing the same effect over and over again.

This argument might seem not to have much bite. After all, one might think, the alternative being proposed seems quite like Nāgārjuna’s own view that we should not think of causes and their effects as distinct entities. But this would be wrong. This argument succeeds because the opponent denies the distinctness in entity between cause and effect by positing an identity in essence and by appealing to that essence to explain the causal potential· of the cause. If the essence of the entity is what determines its causal potential, then if that essence remains, the potential should remain as well. If the essence does not remain, then the language of transformation must be abandoned: If the essence remains, and the language of transformation is retained at an accidental level, the claim that there is an essential causal principle must be rejected.

Kārikā XX.10

जनयेत्फलमुत्पन्नं निरुद्धोऽस्तंगतः कथम्।
तिष्ठन्नपि कथं हेतुः फलेन जनयेद्वृतः॥१०॥

janayet phalam utpannaṃ niruddho ’staṃgataḥ katham |
hetus tiṣṭhann api kathaṃ phalena janayed vṛtaḥ ||10||

云何因滅失 而能生於果
又若因在果 云何因生果

yún hé yīn miè shī ér néng shēng yū;yú;wū guǒ
yòu ruò yīn zài guǒ yún hé yīn shēng guǒ

།འགགས་པ་ནུབ་པར་གྱུར་པ་ཡིས།།འབྲས་བུ་སྐྱེས་པ་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེད།
།འབྲས་བུ་དང་ནི་འབྲེལ་བའི་རྒྱུ།།གནས་པས་ཀྱང་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེད།།

| ’gags pa nub par gyur pa yis | | (7)’bras bu skyes pa ji ltar skyed |
| ’bras bu daṅ ni ’brel ba’i rgyu | | gnas pas kyaṅ ni ji ltar skyed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - How could an already extinguished cause give rise to an already arisen effect? Again, how could a cause which is concomitant with an effect give rise to the latter?

JONES (Skt):
[10] But how could a cause that has ceased and vanished give rise to an effect that has already arisen? In addition, how could an enduring cause produce an effect if it is joined to the effect?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can a cause that has ceased, has reached its end, give rise to an effect that is already arisen? How can a cause, even though enduring, produce an effect, when it is separated from the latter?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How would what is stopped and ceased give rise to an arisen effect?
And how would an enduring cause be an occasion that gives rise to an effect?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. There is possibility that Result has been born having become bigger,
But how is it possible for suppressing birth to become weaker actually?
How is it possible for the establishment of Reason to be the cause of reducing the Birth?
Relying upon result, the part, which has been concealed, has been kept by sheet.

STRENG (Skt):
10. How can that which is stopped, i.e., something which has disappeared, produce the arising of a product? How could a cause which is enclosed by its product, even though it persists, originate that product?

BOCKING (Ch):
20v10 How can a cause, ceased and disappeared,
Possibly produce an effect?
Or, if the cause is in the effect
How can it produce the effect?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How can the production of fruit be produced by the stopping and disappearing [of something]? Also how can fruit be produced by related causes which persist with it?

DOCTOR (Tb):
How could that which has ceased and disappeared
Be the producer of an arisen effect?
An enduring cause that is connected to its effect,
How could that produce it? [XX.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. How can a cause, having ceased and dissolved,
Give rise to a produced effect?
How can a cause joined with its effect produce it
If they persist together?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. How can a cause, having ceased and dissolved,
Give rise to an arisen effect?
How can an enduring cause related to its effect
Give rise to it?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.10 How can a ceased cause give rise to an effect? How can a cause concomitant with an effect give rise to the effect?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/10 If a cause has ceased and is gone, how can it possibly produce an effect? And if the cause does not cease but combines with the effect, how can it produce the effect?

Question: Particular causes have effects everywhere, and such effects arise.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Throughout the present analysis we have indicated that the philosophical method adopted in the Abhidharma did not create any metaphysical problems until the interpreters adopted a theory of moments that were followed by theories of identity and difference. The variety of causes (hetu) and conditions (pratyaya), even though not presented in such detail and in identical terminology in the discourses, is not incompatible with the teachings embodied therein. However, even a cursory glance at the manner in which the interpreters of the Abhidharma struggled with these different causes and conditions (see AK Chapter ii; Akb pp. 38-110) is sufficient to indicate the magnitude of the problems they were faced with.

Nagarjuna continues his analysis showing how a cause that has ceased (niruddha) or one that remains (tisthan), yet is distinct from the effect (phalena vrtah), could never give rise to an effect.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. Nāgārjuna now returns to the temporal trilemma. As he has argued before, just as a cause cannot follow or be simultaneous with its effect, the precedence of cause over effect is problematic as well. For when there is a cause, there is no effect. When there is an effect, there is no cause. And if we appeal to temporal overlap, we inherit all of the problems with precedence, simultaneity, and collections. In introducing the idea of a cause being "joined" with its effect *Cbrel-bal*, Nāgārjuna is introducing a putative causal link into the discussion. One who proposes simultaneity or temporal overlap of cause with effect might be doing so in order to make possible such a link. But Nāgārjuna here claims that positing that link does not overcome the temporal difficulties he has presented. In XX: 11-15, Nāgārjuna summarizes the results of these arguments. Causes, whether single or composite, cannot precede, coincide with, or follow their effects; causes cannot produce their effects in isolation, nor can collections of causes inherently produce their effects:

Kārikā XX.11

अथावृतः फलेनासौ कतमज्जनयेत्फलम्।
न ह्यदृष्ट्वा वा दृष्ट्वा वा हेतुर्जनयते फलम्॥११॥

athāvṛtaḥ phalenāsau katamaj janayet phalam |
na hy adṛṣṭvā na dṛṣṭvāpi hetur janayate phalam ||11||

若因遍有果 更生何等果
因見不見果 是二俱不生

ruò yīn biàn yǒu guǒ gēng shēng hé děng guǒ
yīn jiàn bù jiàn guǒ shì èr jù;jū bù shēng

།ཅི་སྟེ་རྒྱུ་འབྲས་མ་འབྲེལ་ན། །འབྲས་བུ་གང་ཞིག་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད།
།རྒྱུས་ནི་མཐོང་དང་མ་མཐོང་བར། །འབྲས་བུ་སྐྱེད་པར་མི་བྱེད་དོ། །

| ci ste rgyu ’bras ma ’brel na | | ’bras bu gaṅ źig skyed par byed |
| rgyus ni mthoṅ daṅ ma mthoṅ bar | | ’bras bu skyed par mi byed do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):

Verse 11 - On the other hand, what kind of an effect would result from a cause without the nature of concomitance? For, a cause will not give rise to an effect regardless of whether the latter is projected or unprotected. - Note: Projected and unprojected are peculiar translations for drstva and adrstva respectively and they refer to the state of ontological relationship or non-relationship from the standpoint of a cause and its effect.

JONES (Skt):

[11] However, if the effect is *not* joined to the cause, what effect could the cause produce? The cause does not produce either a seen or unseen effect.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):

What cause, even if it were not separated from the effect, will give rise to the effect? A cause does not produce an effect either imperceptibly or perceptibly.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):

Moreover, the occasion which would give rise to the effect is not that effect.

Indeed, the effect is not produced by either a seen or an unseen cause.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):

11. Now, relying upon cause, the situations, which have been concealed, are like that.

Who among many people, does bear result?

Because it is not always true for a blind person not to look at anything absolutely,,

Therefore there is possibility for Reason to produce result.

STRENG (Skt):

11. Or if that cause were not enclosed by the product, which product would it produce? For the cause does not produce the product, having seen or not having seen the product.

BOCKING (Ch):

20v11 If causes have effects everywhere
Again, what kinds of effects do they produce?
The cause may see, or not see, the effect
In neither of these two is there producing.

BATCHELOR (Tb):

If cause and fruit are not related, what fruit can be produced? Causes do not produce fruits they either see or don’t see.

DOCTOR (Tb):

If cause and effect are not connected,
What effect would then be produced?
Whether seen or unseen by the cause,
No effect is produced. [XX.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):

11. Moreover, if not joined with its cause,
What effect can be made to arise?
Neither seen nor unseen by causes
Are effects produced.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):

11. Moreover, if an effect is not related to its cause,
How can it be given rise to?
The cause gives rise to the effect
Neither by seeing it nor by not seeing it.

HAGEN (paraphrase):

20.11 What effect could result from a cause if it were not joined to that cause? Whether seen or not, a cause does not give rise to an effect

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/11 Suppose that a certain cause does not 'see' its effect. It should not even produce that effect, how much less if it sees it? If the cause does not itself see the effect, then it should not produce the effect. Why is this? If it does not see the effect, the effect will not follow the cause. Moreover. if the effect does not yet exist, how can (the cause) produce the effect? If the cause has previously seen the effect, it does not need to produce it again, since the effect already exists.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

When the analytical process was carried to its extreme, many events, which under normal contexts would not have been questioned, came to be doubted. For example, instead of a rented event, analysis produced two: a relation and an event. When the normal empiricist criteria were adopted in the latter case, one was compelled to assume that the relation is not perceived in the same way as the event is perceived. The metaphysician was thus compelled to insist upon the substantial existence of the relation. "Birth is the arising of what is to be born and this does not take place without causes and conditions," so says the Abhidharmakosa (janyasya janika jatir na hetu-pratyayair vina, ii.49). The bhasya on this passage continues to argue about the nature of this "birth" (jati), insisting that the genetive case (sasthi) (as in the statement, "arising of what is to be born") makes no sense if birth (jati) is not perceived in the same way as "that which is to be born" (janika) is perceptible. The Sautrantika Vasubandhu argues against this position saying that "numbers, limits, distinction, union, analysis, otherness, sameness" are recognized as reals (sattva) in the speculations of the heretics (tirthakara), and that these are needed only to establish the knowledge (buddhi) of the reality of "the one, the dual, the great, the individuated, the united, the separated, the other, the same, etc." To illustrate his point of view, he refers to the example of "the union of form" (rupasya samyoga) and maintains that the genetive case indicates the ownnature (svabhava) of "form." However, in his own Sautrantika view it is a mere designation (prajnaptimatram, Akb).

It is this controversy regarding the reality or unreality of numbers, conjunctions, disjunctions, etc. (a controversy that has continued to plague philosophers in the modern world) that Nagarjuna is referring to in the present verse when he uses the terms drstva (seen) and adrstva (unseen).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. Here Nāgārjuna returns to his critique of the idea of a causal nexus. He points out that though that idea has been shown to be incoherent, it is the only way that one can make sense of a real causal link or of inherently existent production. So in its absence, we cannot make sense of the production of an effect by its cause. In the last two lines, Nāgārjuna makes use of the strange metaphor of a cause seeing its effect to denote this link *(thongs-ba)*. (fn 100. Inada, with some philosophical justification, translates this as "projected." But I see little lexical merit in that choice.) This is clearly a metaphor for this link, suggesting that whether it is forged by contiguity or by some other means at a distance, it will be explanatorily impotent.

Kārikā XX.12

नातीतस्य ह्यतीतेन फलस्य सह हेतुना।
नाजातेन न जातेन संगतिर्जातु विद्यते॥१२॥

nātītasya hy atītena phalasya saha hetunā |
nājātena na jātena saṃgatir jātu vidyate ||12||

若言過去因 而於過去果
未來現在果 是則終不合

ruò yán guò qù yīn ér yū;yú;wū guò qù guǒ
wèi lái xiàn zài guǒ shì zé zhōng bù hé

།འབྲས་བུ་འདས་པ་རྒྱུ་འདས་དང་།།མ་སྐྱེས་པ་དང་སྐྱེས་པ་དང་།
།ལྷན་ཅིག་ཕྲད་པར་འགྱུར་པ་ནི།།ནམ་ཡང་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| ’bras bu ’das pa rgyu ’das daṅ | | ma skyes pa daṅ (12a1)skyes pa daṅ |
| lhan cig phrad par ’gyur pa ni | | nam yaṅ yod pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - Indeed, it is not possible to have a union of a past effect with a past cause nor with a future and present cause. - Note: This verse as well as the following two refer to the three possible combinations of an effect with respect to its past, present, and future conditions.

JONES (Skt):
[12] There is never seen a combination of a past effect with a past cause, nor with a future cause, nor with a cause that is currently arising.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Indeed, the assemblage of a past effect with a past or a future or a present cause is not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, a past cause is not together with a past effect.
What arises does not occur accompanied by what is present nor by what is not present.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. Because being not included into the past, and because not relying upon the past,
Being included by result suggests to be relying upon cause.
In the case not without birth, or not with birth,
The real contact must be recognized without fail.

STRENG (Skt):
12. There is no concomitance of a past product with a past cause, a future cause or present cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v12 If you say that a past cause
Goes with a past effect,
Or future, or present effect;
These never combine.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The simultaneous connection of a past fruit with a past, a future and a present cause never exists.

DOCTOR (Tb):
A past effect is never in contact
With a cause that has passed,
Nor with one that has not arisen,
Or one that has already arisen. [XX.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. There is never a simultaneous connection
Of a past effect
With a past, a nonarisen,
Or an arisen cause.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. There is never simultaneous contact
Of a past effect
With a past, non-arisen,
Or arisen cause.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.12 The concomitance of a past effect with either a past, present, or future cause is not evident.

[No Commentary on this verse.]

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Kārikā XX.13

न जातस्य ह्यजातेन फलस्य सह हेतुना।
नातीतेन न जातेन संगतिर्जातु विद्यते॥१३॥

na jātasya hy ajātena phalasya saha hetunā |
nātītena na jātena saṃgatir jātu vidyate ||13||

若言未來因 而於未來果
現在過去果 是則終不合

ruò yán wèi lái yīn ér yū;yú;wū wèi lái guǒ
xiàn zài guò qù guǒ shì zé zhōng bù hé

།འབྲས་བུ་སྐྱེས་པ་རྒྱུ་མ་སྐྱེས།།འདས་པ་དང་ནི་སྐྱེས་པ་དང་།
།ལྷན་ཅིག་ཕྲད་པར་འགྱུར་པ་ནི།།ནམ་ཡང་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| ’bras bu skyes pa rgyu ma skyes | | ’das pa daṅ ni skyes pa daṅ |
| lhan cig phrad par ’gyur pa ni | | nam yaṅ yod pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - Indeed, it is not possible to have a union of a present effect with a future cause nor with a past and present cause.

JONES (Skt):
[13] For there is never found a combination of an arisen effect with a cause that is not yet arisen, or with a cause that has already arisen, or with a cause that is currently arising.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Indeed, an assemblage of the present effect with a future or a past or a present cause is not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, a nonpresent cause is not together with a present effect.
What arises does not occur accompanied by the past nor by the present.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. Because being not included to be born, or relying upon not be born,
Being included by result suggests to be relying upon cause.
Not relying upon the past, nor relying upon being born,
The real contact must be recognized without fail.

STRENG (Skt):
13. Certainly there is no concomitance of the present product with future cause, past cause or present cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v13 If you say that a future cause
Goes with a future effect
Or with a present or past effect –
These never combine.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The simultaneous connection of a present fruit with a future, a past and a present cause never exists.

DOCTOR (Tb):
An effect that has arisen
Is never in contact
With a cause that has not arisen,
That has passed, or that has arisen. [XX.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. There is never a simultaneous connection
Of an arisen effect
With a past, a nonarisen,
Or an arisen cause.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. There is never simultaneous contact
Of an arisen effect
With a non-arisen, past,
Or arisen cause.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.13 The concomitance of a present effect with either a future, past, or present cause is not evident.

[No Commentary on this verse.]

Kārikā XX.14

नाजातस्य हि जातेन फलस्य सह हेतुना।
नाजातेन न नष्टेन संगतिर्जातु विद्यते॥१४॥

nājātasya hi jātena phalasya saha hetunā |
nājātena na naṣṭena saṃgatir jātu vidyate ||14||

若言現在因 而於現在果
未來過去果 是則終不合

ruò yán xiàn zài yīn ér yū;yú;wū xiàn zài guǒ
wèi lái guò qù guǒ shì zé zhōng bù hé

།འབྲས་བུ་མ་སྐྱེས་རྒྱུ་སྐྱེས་དང་།།མ་སྐྱེས་པ་དང་འདས་པ་དང་།
།ལྷན་ཅིག་ཕྲད་པར་འགྱུར་བ་ནི།།ནམ་ཡང་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| ’bras bu ma skyes rgyu skyes daṅ | | ma skyes pa daṅ ’das pa daṅ |
(2)lhan cig phrad par ’gyur ba ni | | nam yaṅ yod pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 14 - Indeed, it is not possible to have a union of a future effect with a present cause nor with a future and past cause.

JONES (Skt):
[14] Nor is there ever found a combination of a future effect with a currently arising cause, or with a future cause, or with an extinguished cause.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Indeed, as assemblage of the future effect with a present or a future or a past cause is not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, a present cause is not together with a nonpresent effect.
What arises does not occur accompanied by what is not present nor by what has perished.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
14. Because, not belonging to be born and relying upon to be born, are different,
Being included by result suggests to be relying upon cause.
Not relying upon not being born, and not relying upon disappearance,
The Inclusive Grasp is being recognized at every moment.

STRENG (Skt):
14. Certainly there is no concomitance of a future product with a present cause, future cause or past cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v14 If you say that a present cause
Goes with a present effect
Or with a future or past effect –
These never combine.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The simultaneous connection of a future fruit with a present, a future and a past cause never exists.

DOCTOR (Tb):
An effect that has not arisen
Is never in contact
With a cause that has arisen,
Has not arisen, or that has passed. [XX.14]

GARFIELD (Tb):
14. There is never a simultaneous connection
Of a nonarisen effect
With a past, a nonarisen,
Or an arisen cause.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
14. There is never simultaneous contact
Of a non-arisen effect
With an arisen, non-arisen,
Or a past cause.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.14 The concomitance of a future effect with either a present, future, or past cause is not evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/14 A past effect does not combine with a past, future or present cause. A future effect does not combine with a future, present or past cause. A present effect does not combine with a present, future or past cause. These three kinds of effect never combine with past, future or present causes.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

After analysing the conception of "harmony" (samagri), Nagarjuna now returns to the earlier notion of "assemblage" (samgati) (see comments on XX. 1). The notion of assemblage may not have caused philosophical problems for the early Buddhists who adopted an empiricist theory of change and causation. But, for Nagarjuna, the conception of assemblage, like the notion of harmony, does not work, so long as it is associated with the metaphysical conception of time.

Vasubandhu, as a Sautrantika, himself raises the more radical question as to how the mind (manas) that has already ceased can assemble with future and present concepts (dharma) and mental consciousness (manovijnana) in order to produce contact (Akb , manindriyasya punar niruddhasyangatavar-tamanabhyam dharma-manovijnanabhyam katham samnipatah). He then refers to a variety of insights (bhedam gata buddhayah) of different teachers, and the controversy appears to be too complicated. He dismisses them saying: "Enough of this argument" (alam prasangena). Nagarjuna's reluctance to accept any one of these views is, therefore, the result of his realization that they are all metaphysical views not allowing for any definite answers or solutions.

Kārikā XX.15

असत्यां संगतौ हेतुः कथं जनयते फलम्।
सत्यां वा संगतौ हेतुः कथं जनयते फलम्॥१५॥

asatyāṃ saṃgatau hetuḥ kathaṃ janayate phalam |
satyāṃ vā saṃgatau hetuḥ kathaṃ janayate phalam ||15||

若不和合者 因何能生果
若有和合者 因何能生果

ruò bù hé hé;gé zhě yīn hé néng shēng guǒ
ruò yǒu hé hé;gé zhě yīn hé néng shēng guǒ

།ཕྲད་པ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།རྒྱུས་ནི་འབྲས་བུ་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེད།
།ཕྲད་པ་ཡོད་པ་ཡིན་ན་ཡང་།།རྒྱུས་ནི་འབྲས་བུ་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེད།།

| phrad pa yod pa ma yin na | | rgyus ni ’bras bu ji ltar skyed |
| phrad pa yod pa yin na yaṅ | | rgyus ni ’bras bu ji ltar skyed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 15 - Without partaking in a union, how could a cause give rise to an effect? But again, with the partaking in a union, how could a cause give rise to an effect?

JONES (Skt):
[15] Where there is no combination, how can a cause produce an effect? Where there is a combination, how can a cause produce an effect?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When an assemblage does not exist, how can a cause produce an effect? When an assemblage exists, how can a cause produce an effect?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where there is no real association, how is the effect born by the cause?
Or where there is a real association, how is the effect produced by the cause?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
15. Because of the no-existence of the mutual contact, was the reason,
How is it possible for the result to be born?
The fact, or the clear meeting, is the reason, therefore,
How is it possible for the result will be born in future?

STRENG (Skt):
15. If there is no concomitance whatever, how would the cause produce the product? Or if a concomitance exists, how would the cause produce the product?

ROBINSON (Skt):
When contact does not take place, how can a cause produce an effect? When contact does take place, how can a cause produce an effect.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v15 If there is no combining,
How can a cause produce an effect?
If there is combination
How can a cause produce an effect?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When there is no connection, how can a cause produce fruit? Even when there is connection, how can a cause produce fruit?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there is no contact,
How could a cause produce its effect?
Even if there is contact,
How could a cause produce its effect? [XX.15]

GARFIELD (Tb):
15. Without connecting,
How can a cause produce an effect?
Where there is connection,
How can a cause produce an effect?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
15. Without contact,
How can a cause produce an effect?
Even where there is contact,
How can a cause produce an effect?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.15 Without concomitance, how can a cause produce an effect? With concomitance, how can a cause produce an effect?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/15 If cause and effect do not combine then there is no effect. If there is no effect, how can the cause produce an effect? If you say that the cause can produce the effect in the moment when cause and effect combine, this is also incorrect, and why? If the effect is within the cause, then, the effect already being existent within the cause, how can it arise again?

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here the cause (hetu) is defined in terms of assemblage (Samgati) which is either existent (sat) or nonexistent (asat). A cause defined in such a way turns out to be substantialist or non-substantialist. The former implies permanence and the latter, annihilation. Nagarjuna rejects both.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

15. At this point, Nāgārjuna turns directly to the connection between emptiness and the dependence of effects on collections of conditions. The opponent now asks how a cause or collection of causes that does not contain the effect in any way can produce that effect:

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Kārikā XX.16

हेतुः फलेन शून्यश्चेत्कथं जनयते फलम्।
हेतुः फलेनाशून्यश्चेत्कथं जनयते फलम्॥१६॥

hetuḥ phalena śūnyaś cet kathaṃ janayate phalam |
hetuḥ phalenāśūnyaś cet kathaṃ janayate phalam ||16||

若因空無果 因何能生果
若因不空果 因何能生果

ruò yīn kōng wú guǒ yīn hé néng shēng guǒ
ruò yīn bù kōng guǒ yīn hé néng shēng guǒ

|གལ་ཏེ་འབྲས་བུས་སྟོང་པའི་རྒྱུས||ཇི་ལྟར་འབྲས་བུ་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད|
|གལ་ཏེ་འབྲས་བུས་མི་སྟོང་རྒྱུས||ཇི་ལྟར་འབྲས་བུ་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད||

| gal te ’bras bus stoṅ pa’i rgyus | | ji ltar ’bras bu skyed par byed |
| gal te ’bras bus mi stoṅ (3)rgyus | | ji ltar ’bras bu skyed par byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 16 - If a cause is a void with respect to an effect, how could it give rise to the effect? If, on the other hand, a cause is not a void with respect to an effect, how could it give rise to the effect?

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection:*16ab] If a cause is *empty* of its effect, how can it produce the effect? [*Reply:*16cd]: If a cause is *not empty* of its effect, how can it produce the effect?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is assumed that the cause is empty of an effect, how can it produce an effect? If it is assumed that the cause is not empty of an effect, how can it produce an effect?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the cause is open to an effect, how is an effect produced?
If the cause is not open to an effect, how is an effect produced?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
16. When Reason is in the balanced autonomic nervous system relying upon the result,
How is it necessary for us to dig up any kind of cause for such a state intentionally?
When even in the case that Reason has lost the balance of the autonomic nervous system,
How is it necessary for us to dig up any kind of cause for such a state intentionally?

STRENG (Skt):
16. If the cause is empty of a product, how would it produce the product? If the cause is not empty of a product, how would it produce the product?

ROBINSON (Skt):
If the cause is empty of effect, how can it produce the effect? If the cause is not empty of effect, how can it produce the effect?

BOCKING (Ch):
20v16 If the cause is empty and there is no effect,
How can the cause produce an effect?
If the cause is not empty and there is an effect,
How can the cause produce an effect?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If a cause is empty of fruit, how can it produce fruit? If a cause is not empty of fruit, how can it produce fruit?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If empty of an effect,
How can a cause produce its effect?
If not empty of an effect,
How can a cause produce its effect? [XX.16]

GARFIELD (Tb):
16. If the cause is empty of an effect,
How can it produce an effect?
If the cause is not empty of an effect,
How can it produce an effect?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
16. If a cause is empty of an effect,
How can it produce an effect?
If a cause is not empty of an effect,
How can it produce an effect?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.16 If the cause is empty of an effect, how can it produce an effect? If the cause is not empty of an effect, how can it produce an effect?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/16 'If a cause has no effect' means that because it has no effect a cause is empty, so how can the cause produce an effect? It is like someone who is not pregnant; how can they produce a child? If the effect pre-exists in the cause, then, since the effect already exists, it does not have to be produced again. We shall now further discuss the effect:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Turning around, Nagarjuna now takes up the conception of the effect or fruit (phala). If the cause is empty (sunya) of the effect, it can never produce an effect. Neither is it appropriate to assume that the effect is produced by the cause if it is already in the cause, hence not empty (asunyam) of the effect.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

16. Nāgārjuna, echoing the argument of Chapter I, replies that only if cause and effect are empty can production be understood. The next verse explains this in more detail:

Kārikā XX.17

फलं नोत्पत्स्यतेऽशून्यमशून्यं न निरोत्स्यते।
अनिरुद्धमनुत्पन्नमशून्यं तद्भविष्यति॥१७॥

phalaṃ notpatsyate ’śūnyam aśūnyaṃ na nirotsyate |
aniruddham anutpannam aśūnyaṃ tad bhaviṣyati ||17||

果不空不生 果不空不滅
以果不空故 不生亦不滅

guǒ bù kōng bù shēng guǒ bù kōng bù miè
yǐ guǒ bù kōng gù bù shēng yì bù miè

།འབྲས་བུ་མི་སྟོང་སྐྱེ་མི་འགྱུར།།མི་སྟོང་འགག་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
།མི་སྟོང་དེ་ནི་མ་འགགས་དང་།།མ་སྐྱེས་པར་ཡང་འགྱུར་བ་ཡིན།།

| ’bras bu mi stoṅ skye mi ’gyur | | mi stoṅ ’gag par mi ’gyur ro |
| mi stoṅ de ni mi ’gags daṅ | | ma skyes par yaṅ ’gyur pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 17 - An effect which is a non-void (asunya) will not arise nor extinguish itself. For, that which is a non-void will be non-arising and non-extinguishing.

JONES (Skt):
[17] A non-empty effect does not arise, and being non-empty it would not cease - it would be unceasing and unarisen.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A non-empty effect will not arise; a non-empty effect will not cease. For, the non-ceased and non-arisen will also be the non-empty.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
An effect will not arise by being nonopen and will not cease by being nonopen.
What is not open will be nonarising and nonceasing.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
17. Result will never manifest itself as the unbalanced autonomic nervous system.
And the unbalanced autonomic nervous system will never be suppressed at all,
The state of no suppression also does not appear,
And the concrete fact of the unbalanced autonomic nervous system will continue existing.

STRENG (Skt):
17. A non-empty product would not be originated, and a non-empty product would not be destroyed. Then that is non-empty which will not originate or not disappear.

ROBINSON (Skt):
A non-empty effect would not arise and would not perish; being non-empty, it would be unextinguished and unarisen.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v17 An effect which is not empty is not produced.
An effect which is not empty does not cease.
Because where an effect is not empty
It neither arises nor ceases.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Unempty fruit would not be produced; the unempty would not stop. That unempty is unstoppable and also unproducable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
An effect that is not empty does not arise.
An effect that is not empty does not cease.
It follows that what is not empty
Has not ceased and has not arisen. [XX.17]

GARFIELD (Tb):
17. A nonempty effect does not arise.
The nonempty would not cease.
This nonempty would be
The nonceased and the nonarisen.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
17. A nonempty effect does not arise.
The nonempty would not cease.
This nonempty would be
The non-ceased and the non-arisen.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.17 A nonempty effect does not arise. A nonempty effect will not cease. The non-ceased and the non-arisen are the nonempty.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This verse should clarify the meaning of the famous terms aniruddham ("non-ceased") and anutpannam ("non-arisen") more than any other statement of Nagarjuna . Whatever phenomenon (dharma) is characterized by Nagarjuna as "empty" (sunya) is without self-nature. If something possesses a self-nature, then it is not empty (asunya). As such, it can neither cease nor arise (anirodham anutpadam). Thus, an effect or fruit that is not empty and therefore is possessed of selfnature will not arise (notpatsyate) nor cease (na nirotsyate).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

17. If the effect were nonempty, as the opponent presupposes in wondering how the effect could be produced from empty causes, then since the inherently existent depends on nothing, the effect would be unproduced and would never cease. But there are no such things. So the putative problem case, the nonempty effect of empty causes, is not even possible.

Kārikā XX.18

कथमुत्पत्स्यते शून्यं कथं शून्यं निरोत्स्यते।
शून्यमप्यनिरुद्धं तदनुत्पन्नं प्रसज्यते॥१८॥

katham utpatsyate śūnyaṃ kathaṃ śūnyaṃ nirotsyate |
śūnyam apy aniruddhaṃ tad anutpannaṃ prasajyate ||18||

果空故不生 果空故不滅
以果是空故 不生亦不滅

guǒ kōng gù bù shēng guǒ kōng gù bù miè
yǐ guǒ shì kōng gù bù shēng yì bù miè

།སྟོང་པ་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེ་འགྱུར་ཞིང༌།།སྟོང་པ་ཇི་ལྟར་འགག་པར་འགྱུར།
།སྟོང་པ་དེ་ཡང་མ་འགགས་དང༌།།མ་སྐྱེས་པར་ཡང་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| stoṅ pa ji ltar skye ’gyur źiṅ | | stoṅ pa ji ltar ’gag par ’gyur |
| stoṅ pa de yaṅ ma ’gags daṅ | | ma skyes (4)par yaṅ thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 18 - How could an effect which is a void (sunya) either arise or extinguish itself? Again it necessarily follows that that which is a Void will be non-arising and non-extinguishing.

JONES (Skt):
[18] How will the empty arise? And how will it cease? If something is empty, it will be unceasing and unarisen.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How will the empty arise and how will the empty cease? If something is empty, it follows that it is nonceased and non-arisen.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How will what is open arise, how will what is open cease?
Surely it follows that what is open is nonceasing and nonarising.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
18. How is it possible for the balanced autonomic nervous system will appear in future?
And how is it possible that the balanced autonomic nervous system will disappear too?
The balanced state of the autonomic nervous system will never be obstructed.
And what hasn’t been accomplished yet is belonging to the secular society too much.

STRENG (Skt):
18. How would that be produced which is empty? How would that be destroyed which is empty? It logically follows, then, that which is empty is not originated and not destroyed.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XX.18 How can the empty arise, how can the empty be removed? It follows that the empty is not ceased and not arisen.

ROBINSON (Skt):
How would something empty arise or perish? The absurdity ensues that the empty, too, is unextinguished and unarisen.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v18 Since an effect is empty it is not produced.
Since an effect is empty it does not cease.
Where an effect is empty
It neither arises nor ceases.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How would empty [fruit] be produced? And how would the empty stop? It follows that that empty too is unstoppable and also unproducable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
How can the empty arise?
How can the empty cease?
It follows that the empty
Has not ceased and not arisen. [XX.18]

GARFIELD (Tb):
18. How can the empty arise?
How can the empty cease?
The empty will hence also
Be the nonceased and nonarisen.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
18. How can the empty arise?
How can the empty cease?
The empty would hence also, absurdly,
Be the non-ceased and the non-arisen.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.18 How can the empty arise or cease? It follows that what is empty is non-arisen and non-ceased.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/18 If an effect is not empty, it should not be produced and should not cease. Why is this? If an effect already has a fixed existence within a cause, it does not need to be produced again, and since there is no production, there is no cessation. Therefore, because effects are not empty, they neither arise nor cease.

(27b 21) If you say that effects are empty, and hence do arise and cease this is also wrong, and why? If an effect is empty, emptiness means that there is nothing which exists, so how can arising and ceasing exist? This is why it is said that where the effect is empty, there is neither arising nor ceasing. Continuing, we shall now refute cause and effect in terms of unity and difference:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Taken by itself, this verse can be used to justify the view that according to Nagarjuna "emptiness" (sunyata) is the ultimate truth beyond all forms of description. Hence the negative description: "non-ceased" (aniruddham) and "non-arisen" (anutpannam).

However, considered along with XX. 17, which rejects the notion of identity presented by the Sarvastivadins as self-nature (svabhava), which according to Nagarjuna is "non-empty" (asunya), what is referred to as "empty" (sunya) in the present verse is more appropriately understood as a reference to the non-identity theory of the Sautrantikas. It may be remembered that the first Buddhist school to deny the Sarvastivada theory of self-nature was the Sautrantika school. How the Sautrantika theory of "emptiness" or "absence of substance" (nih-svabhava) and their theory of "momentary destruction" (ksana-bhanga) led to a denial of both arising and ceasing has already been pointed out (VII. 17 ff.).

As such, the present statement of Nagarjuna, following upon his refutation of identity, must involve a rejection of difference, the two extremes that he has persistently criticized. In other words, the Sarvastivada and Sautrantika theories both render arising and ceasing meaningless.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

18. Nāgārjuna emphasizes here the double edge of the ontology of emptiness. Even though it is in virtue of the fact that conventional entities are constantly arising and ceasing that they are empty, their emptiness entails that they do not, from the ultimate standpoint, arise, cease, or abide at all. This is an eloquent statement of the interpenetration of the ultimate and the conventional truths: The very ground on the basis of which emptiness is asserted is denied reality through the understanding .of emptiness itself. The emptiness of phenomena is, after all, asserted on the basis of their momentary impermanence. But that impermanence and the very existence of the impermanent objects asserted to be empty is not even present from the ultimate standpoint. Yet that, rather than constituting a self-refutation, constitutes a self-confirmation. For if anything were apparent from the ultimate standpoint, that phenomenon would be nonempty. It is the absence of any such phenomenon - not its presence - that confirms the analysis and that prevents it from lapsing into a view, in the pernicious sense. (fn 101: See the discussion of XXVII: 30 for more on this point.)

Kārikā XX.19

हेतोः फलस्य चैकत्वं न हि जातूपपद्यते।
हेतोः फलस्य चान्यत्वं न हि जातूपपद्यते॥१९॥

hetoḥ phalasya caikatvaṃ na hi jātūpapadyate |
hetoḥ phalasya cānyatvaṃ na hi jātūpapadyate ||19||

因果是一者 是事終不然
因果若異者 是事亦不然

yīn guǒ shì yī zhě shì shì zhōng bù rán
yīn guǒ ruò yì zhě shì shì yì bù rán

|རྒྱུ་དང་འབྲས་བུ་གཅིག་ཉིད་དུ||ནམ་ཡང་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ|
|རྒྱུ་དང་འབྲས་བུ་གཞན་ཉིད་དུ||ནམ་ཡང་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ||

| rgyu daṅ ’bras bu gcig ñid du | | nam yaṅ ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |
| rgyu daṅ ’bras bu gźan ñid du | | nam yaṅ ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 19 - It is not possible, indeed, for a cause and an effect to be identical. But again, it is not possible indeed for them to be different.

JONES (Skt):
[19] The identity of cause and effect does not occur. The difference of cause and effect does not occur.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The identity of cause and effect is indeed not appropriate. The difference between cause and effect is indeed not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, an identity of cause and effect does not take place.
Indeed, a difference between cause and effect does not happen.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
19. Belonging to Reason, and being included by Result, do not belong to the same group,
Because they do not appear together at the same time.
Belonging to Reason, and being included by Result, do not belong to the same group.
Because both Reason and Result have also possibility to be manifesting their images together.

STRENG (Skt):
19. Certainly a oneness of cause and product is not possible at all. Nor is a difference of cause and product possible at all.

ROBINSON (Skt):
For oneness of cause and effect is never a fact, and otherness of cause and effect is never a fact.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v19 That cause and effect are one –
This is never the case.
That cause and effect are different –
This, too, is not correct.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is never possible that cause and fruit are identical. It is never possible that cause and fruit are other.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Cause and effect being identical
Will never make sense.
Cause and effect being different
Will never make sense. [XX.19]

GARFIELD (Tb):
19. For cause and effect to be identical
Is not tenable.
For cause and effect to be different
Is not tenable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
19. The identity of cause and effect
Is never tenable.
The difference of cause and effect
Is never tenable.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
If cause and result were one,
Then producer and produced would be the same thing.
If cause and result were different,
Then causes and noncauses would be equivalent. (19)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.19 The identity of cause and effect is not appropriate. The difference between cause and effect is not appropriate.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

19. Nāgārjuna here returns to the business of mobilizing destructive dilemmas against the view that any dependence of effects on collocations of conditions could be inherently existent. The argument in XX: 20 is based on the dichotomy of identity or difference of cause and effect and is drawn from Chapter I:

Kārikā XX.20

एकत्वे फलहेत्वोः स्यादैक्यं जनकजन्ययोः।
पृथक्त्वे फलहेत्वोः स्यात्तुल्यो हेतुरहेतुना॥२०॥

ekatve phalahetvoḥ syād aikyaṃ janakajanyayoḥ |
pṛthaktve phalahetvoḥ syāt tulyo hetur ahetunā ||20||

若因果是一 生及所生一
若因果是異 因則同非因

ruò yīn guǒ shì yī shēng jí suǒ shēng yī
ruò yīn guǒ shì yì yīn zé tóng;tòng fēi yīn

|རྒྱུ་དང་འབྲས་བུ་གཅིག་ཉིད་ན||བསྐྱེད་བྱ་སྐྱེད་བྱེད་གཅིག་ཏུ་འགྱུར|
|རྒྱུ་དང་འབྲས་བུ་གཞན་ཉིད་ན||རྒྱུ་དང་རྒྱུ་མིན་མཚུངས་པར་འགྱུར||

| rgyu daṅ ’bras bu gcig ñid na | | bskyed bya skyed byed gcig tu ’gyur |
| rgyu daṅ ’bras bu gźan ñid na | | rgyu daṅ rgyu min (5)mtshuṅs par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 20 - If the cause and effect were identical there would be an identity of the producer and the produced. If they were different, however, then the cause would be the same as a non-causal cause.

JONES (Skt):
[20] If the identity of cause and effect did occur, the producer and product would be one. If the cause and effect were different, a cause would be the same as no cause.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If there were to be identity of cause and effect, then there would be oneness of producer and the produce. If there were to be difference between cause and effect, then the cause would be equal to a non-cause.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
In the identity of cause and effect, the producer would be one with the product.
In the difference of cause and effect, the cause would be equal to no cause.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
20. Result and Reason perhaps might have the common characteristics together.
It is just the combination between the power to bear, and the state to be born.
It might be in the oneness between result and reason,
Therefore Reason and without relying upon Reason might be similarly the same.

STRENG (Skt):
20. If there were a oneness of the cause and product, then there would be an identity of the originator and what is originated. If there were a difference of product and cause, then a cause would be the same as that which is not a cause.

ROBINSON (Skt):
If there were oneness of effect and cause, there would be oneness of producer and product. If there were difference of effect and cause, the cause would be the same as a non-cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
20v20 If cause and effect are one
Producer and produced are one.
If cause and effect are different
Cause is the same as non-cause.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If cause and fruit were identical, produce and producer would be identical. If cause and fruit were other, cause and non-cause would be similar.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If cause and effect were identical,
Produced and producer would be the same.
If cause and effect were different,
Cause and noncause would be equal. [XX.20]

GARFIELD (Tb):
20. If cause and effect were identical,
Produced and producer would be identical.
If cause and effect were different,
Cause and non-cause would be alike.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
20. If cause and effect were identical,
Produced and producer would be identical.
If cause and effect were different,
Cause and noncause would be alike.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.20 If cause and effect were identical, producer and produced would be identical. If cause and effect were different, cause and non-cause would be alike.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

20. For the relation at issue in this chapter to be inherently existent, the collection of conditions would have either to be identical in nature or different in nature from the effect. If identical, we would have the absurd consequence that the effect was self-caused. But if the effect is totally different in essence, we have no explanation of how *that* collection of conditions produced *that* effect.

Kārikā XX.21

फलं स्वभावसद्भूतं किं हेतुर्जनयिष्यति।
फलं स्वभावासद्भूतं किं हेतुर्जनयिष्यति॥२१॥

phalaṃ svabhāvasadbhūtaṃ kiṃ hetur janayiṣyati |
phalaṃ svabhāvāsadbhūtaṃ kiṃ hetur janayiṣyati ||21||

若果定有性 因為何所生
若果定無性 因為何所生

ruò guǒ dìng yǒu xìng yīn wéi hé suǒ shēng
ruò guǒ dìng wú xìng yīn wéi hé suǒ shēng

།འབྲས་བུ་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་ཡོད་ན།།རྒྱུ་ནི་ཅི་ཞིག་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད།
།འབྲས་བུ་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་མེད་ན།།རྒྱུ་ནི་ཅི་ཞིག་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད།།

| ’bras bu ṅo bo ñid yod na | | rgyus ni ci źig skyed par byed |
| ’bras bu ṅo bo ñid med na | | rgyus ni ci źig skyed par byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 21 - How could a cause give rise to an effect which in its own nature is a complete being? But again, how could a cause give rise to an effect which in its own nature is an incomplete being?

JONES (Skt):
[21] How could a cause produce an effect that is *truly real* because of its own self-existence? How could a cause produce an effect that is *not truly real* because of its own self-existence?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How is it that a cause will produce an effect which comes m be on its own nature? How is it that a cause will produce an effect which does not come to be on its own nature?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What cause will give rise to an effect that truly exists as self-nature?
What cause will give rise to an effect that does not truly exist as selfnature?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
21. If Result is the subjective existence and the Real World.
How will it be possible that Reason will bear something in future.
If Result is the subjective existence, but not the Real World,
How will it be possible that Reason will bear something in future.

STRENG (Skt):
21. Can a cause produce a product which is essentially existing in itself (svabhva) ? Can a cause produce a product which is not essentially existing in itself (svabhava) ?

BOCKING (Ch):
20v21 If the effect has a fixed, existent nature
What does the cause cause, which is produced?
If the effect has a fixed non-existent nature,
What does the cause cause, which is produced?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If fruit existed essentially, what would a cause produce? If fruit did not exist essentially, what would a cause produce?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If an effect is existent by nature,
Then what could its cause produce?
I fan effect is nonexistent by nature,
Then what could its cause produce? [XX.21]

GARFIELD (Tb):
21. If an effect had entitihood,
What could have caused it to arise?
If an effect had no entitihood,
What could have caused it to arise?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
21. If an effect is inherently existent,
To what could a cause have given rise?
If an effect is inherently nonexistent,
To what could a cause have given rise?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.21 How can a cause produce an effect which exists by its own nature? How can a cause produce an effect which does not exist by its own nature?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The implications of the theories of identity and difference discussed at XX.17-18 are further elaborated in these three verse.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

21. This attack on the inherent status of the relation between conditions and effects focuses on arising itself. The effect must either have entitihood or not. If it does, its being caused to arise is self-contradictory. If not, though, from the ultimate standpoint it does not arise. It would follow from either that there is no inherently existent arising and, so, no inherent production from a collection of conditions. The next verse makes this same point from the side of the collection. If the effect produced is not inherently produced, the collection does not inherently produce it. If not, it is not an inherently productive collection:

Kārikā XX.22

न चाजनयमानस्य हेतुत्वमुपपद्यते।
हेतुत्वानुपपत्तौ च फलं कस्य भविष्यति॥२२॥

na cājanayamānasya hetutvam upapadyate |
hetutvānupapattau ca phalaṃ kasya bhaviṣyati ||22||

因不生果者 則無有因相
若無有因相 誰能有是果

yīn bù shēng guǒ zhě zé wú yǒu yīn xiàng;xiāng ruò wú yǒu yīn xiàng;xiāng shuí néng yǒu shì guǒ

།སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།རྒྱུ་ཉིད་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
།རྒྱུ་ཉིད་འཐད་པ་ཡོད་མིན་ན།།འབྲས་བུ་གང་གི་ཡིན་པར་འགྱུར།།

| skyed par byed pa ma yin na | | rgyu ñid 'thad par mi 'gyur ro |
| rgyu ñid 'thad pa yod min na | | 'bras bu gaṅ gi yin par 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 22 - Moreover, a cause without a productive nature cannot be a cause. In the absence of such a productive nature, where will the effect be?

JONES (Skt):
[22] Something that is not producing an effect has no causal effectiveness. Where there is no causal effectiveness, of what will there be an effect?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Moreover, the causal efficacy of something that is not producing is not appropriate. In the absence of causal efficacy, to what will the effect belong?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Causation of what is not arising does not take place.
And in failing to prove causation, the effect will be of what?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
22. Never belonging to an agitators' intention,
But the reasonable attitude manifests itself actually.
When the reasonability hasn't manifested itself yet at all,
Where will it be possible for some result to exist at any place at all?

STRENG (Skt):
22. It is not possible to have "what is by its nature a cause" (hetutva) of "that which is not producing." If "what is by its nature a cause" is not possible, whose product will exist?

BOCKING (Ch):
20v22 If a cause does not produce an effect,
Then it does not have the characteristic of a cause.
If it does not have the characteristic of a cause,
From what can there be effects?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If it were not productive, the cause itself would be impossible. If the cause itself were impossible, whose would the fruit be?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If it does not produce any effect,
The cause does not make sense.
If the cause does not make sense,
Of what, then, is the effect? [XX.22]

GARFIELD (Tb):
22. If something is not producing an effect,
It is not tenable to attribute causality.
If it is not tenable to attribute causality,
Then of what will the effect be?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
22. If something is not giving rise to an effect,
It is not tenable to attribute causality.
If it is not tenable to attribute causality,
Then of what will the effect be an effect?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.22 If a cause does not produce an effect, it is not appropriate to call it a cause. If there is nothing the term "cause" refers to, then of what is there an effect?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Identity and difference are thus shown to militate against not merely arising, but also causal or dependent arising. Causal efficacy (hetutvam) is rendered meaningless if there were to be no production, that is, if the arising of an effect cannot be accounted for by a cause, which is the result of the Sarvastivada and Sautrantika theories. If causal efficacy cannot be accounted for, how can one speak of an effect or fruit?

Kārikā XX.23

न च प्रत्ययहेतूनामियमात्मानमात्मना।
या सामग्री जनयते सा कथं जनयेत्फलम्॥२३॥

na ca pratyayahetūnām iyam ātmānam ātmanā |
yā sāmagrī janayate sā kathaṃ janayet phalam ||23||

若從眾因緣 而有和合生
和合自不生 云何能生果

ruò cóng zhòng yīn yuán ér yǒu hé hé shēng
hé hé;gé zì bù shēng yún hé néng shēng guǒ

|རྒྱུ་རྣམས་དང་ནི་རྐྱེན་དག་གི||ཚོགས་པ་གང་ཡིན་དེ་ཡིས་ནི|
|བདག་གིས་བདག་ཉིད་མི་སྐྱེད་ན||འབྲས་བུ་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད||

| rgyu rnams (6)daṅ ni rkyen dag gi | | tshogs pa gaṅ yin de yin ni |
| bdag gis bdag ñid mi skyed na | | ’bras bu ji ltar skyed par byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 23 - As the assemblage of causes and relational conditions does not in virtue of itself produce itself, how could it produce an effect?

JONES (Skt):
[23] Moreover, this combination of causes and conditions is not produced by itself or by another. So how can it produce an effect?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever harmony of causes and conditions there is, it is not produced by itself or by another. If so, how can it produce an effect?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Since that whole of causes and conditions is not produced by itself
or by means of a nonself, how would it produce an effect?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
23. The Real Truth does never be included into miscellaneous Reasons.
This World utilizes the Soul well utilizing the Soul.
The Inclusive Grasp really grasps the Reality.
And so how is it possible for result to be born actually?

STRENG (Skt):
23. How will that aggregate of causes and conditions produce a product when That which is the aggregate of causes and conditions does not produce itself by itself?

BOCKING (Ch):
20v23 If, out of causes and conditions,
Combination is produced.
Combination itself does not produce
So how can it produce an effect?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If whatever is a combination of causes and conditions does not produce itself by itself, how could it produce fruit?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the assembly of causes and conditions
Does not itself
Produce its own identity,
How could it produce an effect? [XX.23]

GARFIELD (Tb):
23. If the combination
Of causes and conditions
Is not self-produced,
How does it produce an effect?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
23. If the assemblage
Of causes and conditions
Does not give rise to itself,
How does it give rise to an effect?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.23 If the combination of causes and conditions does not in and of itself produce itself, how can it produce an effect?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

After producing an exhaustive analysis of the relationship between a cause (hetu) and fruit or effect (phala), Nagarjuna returns to the question with which he began the chapter, the harmony of causes and conditions. Once again, refuting the identity and non-identity theories, he insists that whatever harmony there is, it is not produced by the causes and conditions either from within themselves (atmana = svabhavata) or from outside (anatmana = paratah). When harmony cannot be explained in any of these two ways, then it is not possible to assume that an effect can arise from a harmony so explained.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

23. The ground of an inherently existent relation of production must be inherently existent. But then it could depend on nothing else. It would have to be self-produced. But this is not claimed for the collection of conditions or the relation between them and the effect by the opponent here. It couldn't be. For the whole point of moving to a collection is to avoid the problems of production from a single cause. But collections depend upon their parts and upon the causes of those parts. So no such collection can be self-produced. So, while Nāgārjuna can certainly grant that effects are dependent upon collections of conditions, it cannot be that those collections or that dependence exist inherently.·

Kārikā XX.24

न सामग्रीकृतं फलं नासामग्रीकृतं फलम्।
अस्ति प्रत्ययसामग्री कुत एव फलं विना॥२४॥

na sāmagrīkṛtaṃ phalaṃ nāsāmagrīkṛtaṃ phalam |
asti pratyayasāmagrī kuta eva phalaṃ vinā ||24||

是故果不從 緣合不合生
若無有果者 何處有合法

shì gù guǒ bù cóng yuán hé;gé bù hé shēng
ruò wú yǒu guǒ zhě hé chǔ yǒu hé fǎ

།དེ་ཕྱིར་ཚོགས་པས་བྱས་པ་མེད།།ཚོགས་མིན་བྱས་པའི་འབྲས་བུ་མེད།
།འབྲས་བུ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།རྐྱེན་གྱི་ཚོགས་པ་ག་ལ་ཡོད།།

| de phyir tshogs pas byas pa med | | tshogs min byas pa'i 'bras bu med |
| 'bras bu yod pa ma yin na | | rkyen gyi tshogs pa ga la yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 24 - There is no effect created either by an assemblage or by a non-assemblage of causes and relational conditions. Separated from an effect, where indeed is the assemblage of relational conditions?

JONES (Skt):
[24] Therefore, the effect is not produced by the combination, nor is it not produced by the combination. Indeed, without the effect, how can there a combination of its conditions?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The effect is not made by the harmony, nor is it not made by a harmony. Where indeed can there be a harmony of conditions without an effect.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The effect is not made by the whole, and the effect is not made by what is not the whole.
Where does the whole of conditions exist without an effect?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
24. What has been created by the Inclusive Grasp, is not result?
What has not been created by the Inclusive Grasp is not result?
The Real Truth, which is just the Inclusive Grasp, exists actually.
Where is it possible for result not to exist really at all?

STRENG (Skt):
24. The product is not produced by the aggregate; nor is the product not produced by the aggregate. Without the product, how is there an aggregate of conditions?

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XX.24b How indeed can there be a causal field in the absence of an effect?

BOCKING (Ch):
20v24 Therefore effects are not produced
By the combination, or non-combination of conditions.
If there are no effects
Where is the dharma of 'combination'?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Therefore, there is no fruit which has been made by combination [or] made by non-combination. If fruit does not exist, where can a combination of conditions exist?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Therefore, nothing is produced by an assembly,
And yet there is no effect made by anything else.
When no effect exists,
How can there be an assembly of conditions? [XX.24]

GARFIELD (Tb):
24. Therefore, not made by combination,
And not without a combination can the effect arise.
If there is no effect,
Where can there be a combination of conditions?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
24. Therefore, there is no effect, either
Created by an assemblage,
Or by something that is not an assemblage.
If there is no effect, where can there be an assemblage of conditions?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
20.24 The effect is neither made by a combination of causes and conditions nor is it not so made. Separated from an effect, where is there a combination of causes and conditions?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

20/24 The dharma of 'combination of causal conditions' cannot produce a self-substance. Since there is no self-substance how can it produce any effect? Therefore, effects are not produced by a combination of conditions, nor are they produced by non-combination. If no effects exist, where can there be a dharma of combination?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The effect is not produced by a harmony of causes and conditions explained in the above manner. Nor is it produced by a non-harmony. Nagarjuna's final question is: Where can there be a harmony without a fruit or effect? This final conclusion need not be understood as a denial of fruit or effect. On the contrary, it can be the assertion of a pragmatist who insists that there cannot be a harmony of causes and conditions without a fruit or effect.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

24. Combinations of conditions, just like individual conditions and just like their effects, can only be conceived of as empty of inherent existence.

Chapter XXI

संभवविभवपरीक्षा एकविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀成壞品第二十一(二十偈)

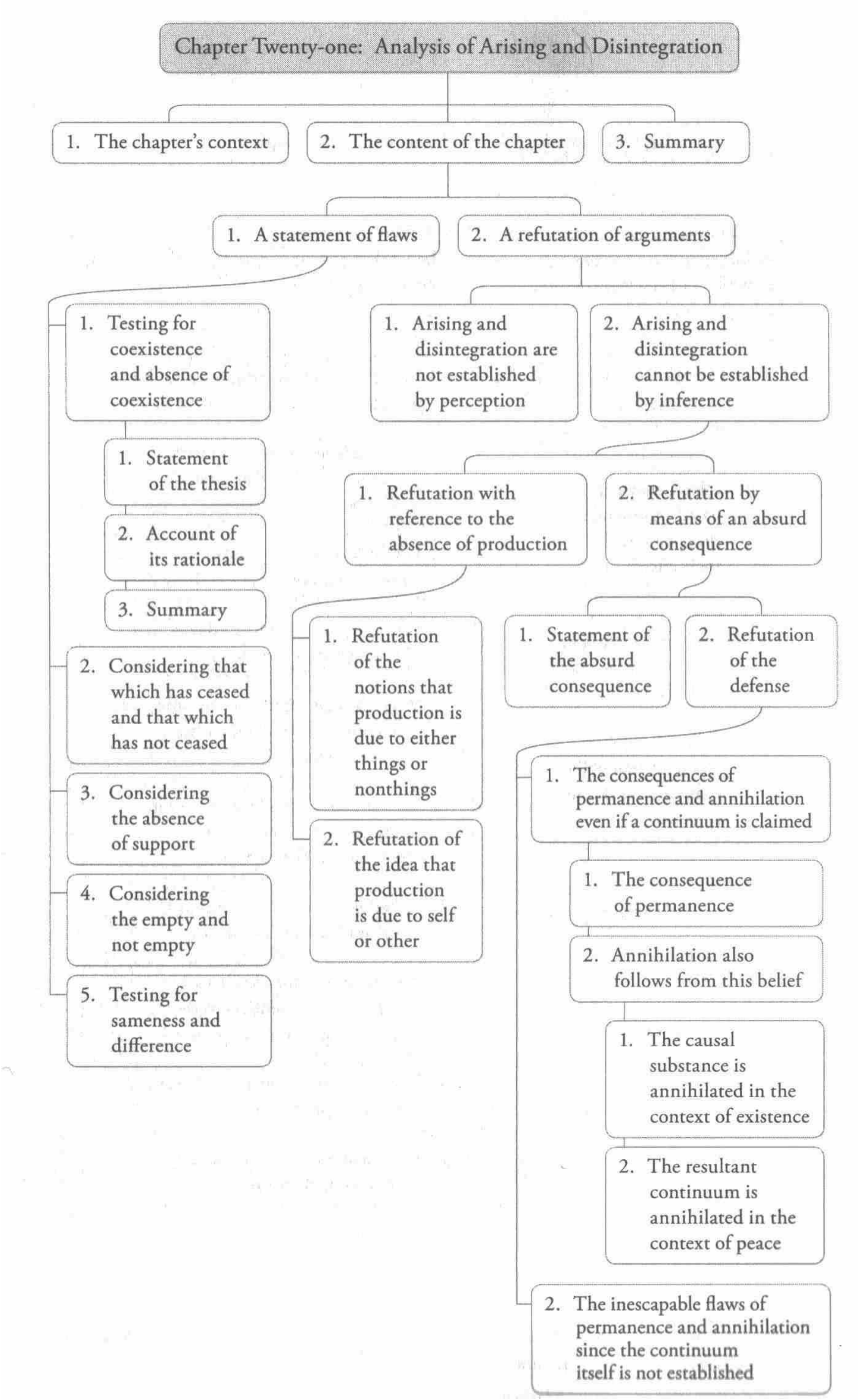
།འབྱུང་བ་དང་འཇིག་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་གཅིག་པའོ།།

saṃbhavavibhavaparīkṣā nāmaikaviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XXI: Examination of Becoming and Destruction

Chapter XXI

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the fourth section of the extensive presentation of selflessness— the presentation of the essential emptiness of time—and we are still in its second part—the refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of time. We have completed the first of the two sections of that part: the refutation of time as the supporting condition of the arising of the effect. **[357:20]** This chapter constitutes the second of those two parts: the refutation of time as the cause of the arising and cessation of the effect.

EXPLANATION:

Here someone might say that time does exist essentially because it is the cause of the becoming and cessation of effects. This is because depending on time, such as winter, sprouts disintegrate, and depending on time, such as spring, they arise.

If becoming and destruction existed inherently, then time, as the cause of becoming and destruction, would exist essentially. But that it not the case.

This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of arising and destruction and showing that the errors of nihilism and reification follow from maintaining the essential existence of arising and destruction.

SUMMARY:

Arising and destruction, birth and death, and the continuum of life which uninterruptedly goes from one life to another are regarded as existing through their own characteristic; but rational analysis into whether or not they exist in reality has refuted this. One cannot work without these conventions; therefore, one should be led to ascertain the way in which they are completely tenable in the context of their emptiness of their own characteristics.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XXI - Examination of Occurrence and Dissolution of Existence

The title refers to the concepts of occurrence (sambhava) and dissolution (vibhava) of being. In the argument which follows Nagarjuna has in mind the real meaning of human existence. In other words, the two concepts must be understood in the sense of occurring or coming into existence and dissolving or going out of existence in the context of true existence. He goes through the usual process of discussing the two concepts in relationship to each other with reference to the three temporal moments. In each instance there is no justification for asserting any of the concepts; that is to say, any dogmatically contended assertion can always be led to the realm of absurdity.

It might just be a projection but it would seem that Nagarjuna makes an illuminating point when he introduces the subtle difference between the terms, bhava and bhava. Bhava refers to the general state or nature of existence of any entity or organism. In this sense, it connotes something of the nature of an enduring or static quality. This conception is what most of us profess to understand as the basis for the existence of all things. Such an understanding, however, comes from a deluded mind and it is here that Nagarjuna goes on to show that there is another realm or aspect of being which people have always overlooked. This is the realm or aspect of bhava. Bhava refers to the truly dynamic worldly existence, i.e., it refers to the Buddhist fundamental conception of the continuity of becomingness of ordinary life. This becomingness or bhava is a fact which no amount of conceptualization will ever be able to analyze or fathom. It will "cease" only in nirvana.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

21. *Occurence and dissolution (sambhava-vibhava*). This chapter concludes Nagarjuna's examination of the nature of the human personality as it gradually evolves or dissolves depending upon one's actions (*karma*). In the "Discourse on the Knowledge of the Beginning" (*Agganna-suttanta*),110 the Buddha speaks of the evolution and dissolution not only of the world, but also of the human personality. This discourse was intended primarily to refute the rather static conception of the world and the social order presented in the Indian philosophical and religious traditions. Without committing himself to any notion of an absolute beginning, the Buddha spoke of a period of dissolution (*samvatta*)

followed by a long period of evolution (*vivatta*). In spite of the Buddha's reluctance to get involved in the discussion of such theories, because of the epistemological difficulties, he was compelled to do so by the unfortunate moral and ethical implications of the Indian castesystem. Even though the discussion of the world-systems is rare in the early discourses, the evolution as well as the dissolution of the human personality through long periods of time constituted a popular subject. The process of the evolution and dissolution of the human personality came to be designated *samsara* (life-process) or *bhava*

(becoming) and was contrasted with the Indian notion of life as eternal existence (*atthita*, Sk. *astitva*). While the concepts of *atthita* (existence) and *n' atthita* (non-existence) were used in the pre-Buddhist literature, the Buddha, realizing the metaphysical implications, avoided them and instead utilized the notion of *bhava* (becoming). No sooner than the Buddha explained the human personality as a process of becoming, the metaphysicians of the traditional schools of Indian philosophy began speaking of *bhava* (instead of *astitva*) and *abhava* (instead of *nastitva*) when speaking about existence and non-existence respectively, two terms which were not popular in the Indian tradition before the Buddha.

The Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas, who were lured into this substantialist trap as a result of their analysis of the process of becoming (*bhava*) into discrete moments, formulated the notion of a "series of becoming" (*bhava-samtati*), instead of the "stream of becoming" (*bhava-sota*) referred to in the early discourses. Buddhaghosa, who introduced these different interpretations into the Thervada tradition in the South and South East Asian countries (circa. sixth century AD), distinguished between three different notions of the present:

i the specious present (*addha-paccuppanna),*

ii the momentary present (*khana-paccuppanna*), and

iii the flowing present (*samtati-paccuppanna).111*

He proceeded to identify these with the different stages in the development of the Buddhist thought, maintaining that the "discourses" (*sutta*) advocated the first, that some other Buddhists (probably the Sautrantikas) spoke of the second, and that the commentaries accepted the third.

Nagarjuna, compiling his treatise during the second century AD after the Sarvastivada and the Sautrantika theories had come into prominence, could not have been unaware of these differences. In the present chapter he was therefore criticizing the metaphysical notion of a "series of becoming" (*bhava-samtati*), a series of disjointed or disconnected momentary (*ksanika*) existences, rather than the conception of becoming as formulated by the Buddha. Thus, after a criticism of the notion of *bhava-samtati*, in the present chapter, Nagarjuna is able to speak of *bhava* at XXVI.7-8 without rejecting it. He carefully avoids the concepts of *bhava* and *abhava* as well as *svabhava* and *parabhava* throughout the text. Thus, the denial of *bhavasamtati* need not be construed as a denial of *bhava* or *bhava-sota* which occur in the discourses of the Buddha.

The problems discussed so far relate primarily to the nature of the human personality, its survival, and its moral responsibility, and Nagarjuna's endeavor is to establish its non-substantiality (*pudgala-nairatmya*). The chapters that follow deal with the non-substantiality of the person who has attained freedom.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Disappearance

When you disappear,
You do not appear or fail to appear.
When you appear,
You neither disappear nor fail to disappear.

How can I disappear
Without appearing?
Can I die and not he born?
What disappears appears.

Can I disappear and appear at once?
Do I die the moment I am horn?
Can I appear and disappear at once?
Am I horn the moment I die?

When everything changes,
How can I appear and not disappear?
Whether dead or alive,
I am neither here nor gone.

Without things,
There would be no appearance or disappearance;
Without which,
There would be no things.

Whether empty or not,
Things neither appear nor disappear.
Appearance and disappearance
Are not the same or different--
They fool you.

Things are not born
From things or nothing,
Nothing is not born
From nothing or things.

If things arc either
Eternal or ephemeral,
To believe in them is either
Eternalism or nihilism.

Isn't the appearance
And disappearance
Of seeds and fruits
The flow of life itself?

Seeds would be annihilated:
The disappeared cannot appear again.
You would be erased in nirvana
When the flow of life is stilled.

If life stopped,
How would it start again?
If it never stopped,
How would it start again?

How can it flow
Without flowing before,
Flowing now,
Or flowing later?

JONES (COMMENTARY)

21. Becoming and Dissolving

Verse 1 involves the idea of becoming (i.e., "coming-to-be") and dissolving (i.e., "ceasing-to-be"). The verse would be wrong if "becoming" were a type of change in an existent entity (since the real cannot change); rather, it is about the arising or birth in the sense of *coming into existence.* This sets up the contrast between arising and ceasing: if they are real, then they are distinct and cannot contain the other. The conclusion is that the self-existent cannot either become or dissolve since what is cannot change; and what is empty cannot either become or dissolve since it is not real (vv. 8-9). Either way, there is no real becoming or dissolution, and so those who see becoming or dissolution do so only because of a delusion (v. 11). We are left with a world of empty entities constantly in change. Only this permits the religious goal of liberation from the cycle of becoming (v. 17) since a change in the state (and hence nature) of a person is needed.

Verses 12-15 involve entities *(bhavas)* that truly exists (i.e., have self-existence) and hence are incapable of arising or any other change.

Verse 18 reads: "If the last has ceased, the existence of a first one arising is not admissible. If the last has not ceased, the existence of a first one arising is not admissible." Interpreted in Nagarjuna's framework, this means that if the last in a series has ceased, then there was never anything real in the series to begin with and so no real first entity to rise to begin the series; if the last has not ceased, then the series could not arise since what is unceasing is eternal and so no permanent first entry arose.

21

An Examination of Emergence and Decay

In the sutras, the Buddha taught:

O Bodhisattva of Shining Intelligence, forms do not die and they are not born.

JOINING THIS WITH MANY OTHER SUBJECTS, the Buddha taught of the freedom from birth and death in a vast way.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to the proponents of the true existence of things who argued, "Your refutations of time aside, sprouts wither in the winter and emerge again in the spring, and in this way, time is the cause of emergence and decay. Therefore, if emergence and decay exist, time, which is their cause, must also exist." Thus, in order to prove to these people that time does not truly exist after all, Nagarjuna had to demonstrate logically that emergence and decay are not real.

One way to analyze emergence and decay is by asking, "If emergence and decay exist, are they the same thing or different things?" Nagarjuna gives the answer in verse ten:

Emergence and decay
Cannot logically be the same thing.
Emergence and decay
Cannot logically be different things.

Emergence and decay are not the same thing because they are opposites, like light and dark, heat and cold, and big and small. To say that something is emerging is the opposite of saying that it is decaying, just like saying that something is getting bigger is the opposite of saying that it is getting smaller. They cannot be different things either, because if they were, they would exist independent of each other. This they cannot do, because emergence can occur only in dependence upon decay, and decay can occur only in dependence upon emergence (fn For more on why emergence and decay exist only in dependent upon each other, see the similar analysis of arising, abiding, and ceasing in chapter 7, An Examination of the Composite."). Furthermore, when considering the emergence and decay of a single entity, for example, a flower, since they both occur in relation to the same flower, how could they be different? How could they occur independent of each other? If they did, they would have to occur in completely different things.

This logical reasoning as well as the other ones in this chapter were still not enough to satisfy Nagarjuna's opponents, who argued further, "What is the point of all your subtle analysis? Everyone from uneducated shepherds on up sees emergence and decay happening with their own eyes! This direct experience is enough to prove that emergence and decay are real, no matter what your analysis may find." Nagarjuna replied to this claim in verse eleven:

When you think you see emergence and decay,
It is only bewilderment that sees emergence and decay.

Just as in a dream, the apparently direct perception of emergence and decay is not enough to establish them as being truly existent. Just as in a dream when we do not know we are dreaming, it is only the veil of our bewilderment that causes us to think that the mere appearances of emergence and decay are real.

So shepherds may know quite a bit about the mode of appearance of their sheep, but that does not mean that they know the sheep's true nature. It is not really correct to say that shepherds are uneducated, though, because shepherds have to study a lot! They have to know all about their sheep: what the mother ewes are like, what the baby lambs are like, and what to do if some of the flock get sick. They also have to know how to protect their sheep from wolves and other dangers; in Western countries, shepherds have sheepdogs to help them do this job, but in Tibet, they had to do it themselves. So it is not really fair to call shepherds uneducated—good shepherds have to be very skillful! The most skillful shepherds know that their sheep are appearance-emptiness inseparable, and that their birth, aging, sickness, and death are as well. Those kinds of shepherds take the best care of their sheep, and they have a great time doing so!

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XXI

संभवविभवपरीक्षा एकविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्। saṃbhavavibhavaparīkṣā nāmaikaviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀成壞品第二十一(二十偈) **zhōng lùn guān chéng huài pǐn dì èr shí yī (èr shí jié;jì)**

|འབྱུང་བ་དང་འཇིག་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་གཅིག་པའོ|| | ’byuṅ ba daṅ ’jig pa brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa ñi śu gcig pa’o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XXI - Examination of Occurrence and Dissolution of Existence

JONES (Skt):
21. Becoming and Dissolving

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Occurrence and Dissolution

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
21. Analysis of Origination and Dissolution

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[21] Examination of Coexistence and Universal Existence (21 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
[omitted]

STRENG (Skt):
Section 21 - An Analysis of Origination and Disappearance (coming to be and passing away) In 21 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
21. origin and dissolution.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 21 Contemplation of becoming and dissolution 20 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Rising and Passing

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XXI - Analysis of Arising and Disintegration

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XXI: Examination of Becoming and Destruction

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XXI - Examination of Becoming and Destruction

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 21: AN EXAMINATION OF EMERGENCE AND DECAY

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Twenty-one - Examination of Occurrence and Dissolution

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/0 Question: Everything in the world manifestly has the characteristic of dissolution. Therefore, dissolution exists.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter omitted by Sprung]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Twenty One Examination of Occurrence and Dissolution (Sambhava-vibhava-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XXI Examination of Becoming and Destruction

In this chapter, Nāgārjuna examines the phenomenon of momentary impermanence. At this point in the dialectic, one might suggest that since the emptiness of phenomena derives directly from their decomposition into momentary time-slices and from the fact that they are constantly coming into existence and being destroyed, that process of momentary arising and destruction itself ought to be real in the strong sense. Nāgārjuna, by way of completing the discussion of the nature of conventional phenomena, demonstrates the emptiness of even arising and destruction themselves as a prelude to the final section .of the text, that discussing the nature of the ultimate and its relation to conventional reality.

Kārikā XXI.1

विना वा सह वा नास्ति विभवः संभवेन वै।
विना वा सह वा नास्ति संभवो विभवेन वै॥१॥

LVP 401,8-9 - LVP 430,4-5
vinā vā saha vā nāsti vibhavaḥ saṃbhavena vai |
vinā vā saha vā nāsti saṃbhavo vibhavena vai ||1||

離成及共成 是中無有壞
離壞及共壞 是中亦無成

T1564: vol 30, pg 27c11
lí chéng jí gòng chéng shì zhōng wú yǒu huài
lí huài jí gòng huài shì zhōng yì wú chéng

།འཇིག་པ་འབྱུང་བ་མེད་པར་རམ།།ལྷན་ཅིག་ཡོད་པ་ཉིད་མ་ཡིན།
།འབྱུང་བ་འཇིག་པ་མེད་པར་རམ།།ལྷན་ཅིག་ཡོད་པ་ཉིད་མ་ཡིན།།

Tg tsa 12a7 - Tg tsa 13a3
|| ’jig pa ’byuṅ ba med par ram | | lhan cig yod pa ñid ma yin |
| ’byuṅ ba ’jig pa med par ram | | lhan cig yod pa ñid ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - Dissolution does not exist either separated from or con current with the occurrence of being. Occurrence, likewise, does not exist either separated from or concurrent with its dissolution.

JONES (Skt):
[1] There is no dissolution (i.e., ceasing-to-be) either with or without becoming (i.e., coming-to-be). There is no becoming either with or without dissolution.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Dissolution does not exist either without or with occurrence. Occurrence does not exist either without or with dissolution.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Dissolution does not exist either with or without origination.
Origination does not exist either with or without dissolution.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. Without existence and without being together, the both Coexistence and Universal Existence do not really exist.
Universal Existence exists always relying upon Coexistence.
Either being single or being together, the both do not really exist.
Coexistence inevitably relies upon Universal Existence.

STRENG (Skt):
1. There is no disappearance either with origination or without it. There is no origination either with disappearance or without it.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v1 Whether apart from becoming, or together with becoming,
In neither case is there dissolution.
Whether apart from dissolution, or together with dissolution,
In neither case is there becoming, either.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Passing does not exist without or together with rising.
Rising does not exist without or together with passing.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Disintegration occurs neither apart from
Nor together with arising
Arising occurs neither apart from
Nor together with disintegration. [XXI.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Destruction does not occur without becoming.
It does not occur together with it.
Becoming does not occur without destruction.
It does not occur together with it.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Destruction does not occur without becoming.
It does not occur simultaneously with it.
Becoming does not occur without destruction.
It does not occur simultaneously with it.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.1 There is no dissolution either with occurrence or without it. There is no occurrence either with dissolution or without it.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/1 Whether there is becoming or there is no becoming, in neither case does dissolution exist. Whether there is dissolution, or there is no dissolution, in neither case does becoming exist. Why is this?

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. This first verse announces the final stage in the argument to be developed. Nāgārjuna will show that destruction and becoming are both mutually incompatible and that they are mutually entailing. It will then follow that if they are inherently existent, they have contradictory properties.

Kārikā XXI.2

भविष्यति कथं नाम विभवः संभवं विना।
विनैव जन्म मरणं विभवो नोद्भवं विना॥२॥

bhaviṣyati kathaṃ nāma vibhavaḥ saṃbhavaṃ vinā |
vinaiva janma maraṇaṃ vibhavo nodbhavaṃ vinā ||2||

若離於成者 云何而有壞
如離生有死 是事則不然

ruò lí yū;yú;wū chéng zhě yún hé ér yǒu huài
rú lí shēng yǒu sǐ shì shì zé bù rán

།འཇིག་པ་འབྱུང་བ་མེད་པར་ནི། །ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ན་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར། །སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་པར་འཆི་བར་འགྱུར། །འཇིག་པ་འབྱུང་བ་མེད་པར་མེད། །

| 'jig pa 'byuṅ ba med par ni | | ji lta bur na yod par 'gyur |
| skye ba med par 'chi bar 'gyur | | 'jig (12b1)pa 'byuṅ ba med par med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - How could there be dissolution separated from the occurrence of being? (As there would be the improbable phenomenon of) death without birth, there is no dissolution without occurrence.

JONES (Skt):
[2] Indeed, how could there be dissolution without becoming? How could there be death *without* birth? There is no dissolution without an arising.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can there be dissolution without occurrence, death without birth, dissolution without uprising?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What will dissolution then be without origination,
death without birth, dissolution without generation?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. How is it possible for a name to exist always in future?
Universal Existence can manifest itself even without Coexistence.
If there were no existence of both birth and death,
Universal Existence does never exist without birth.

STRENG (Skt):
2. How, indeed, will disappearance exist at all without origination? How could there be death without birth? There is no disappearance without prior origination.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v2 If separate from becoming,
How can dissolution exist?
It would be like death without birth.
This is not correct.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How can passing exist without rising? Is there death without birth? There is no passing without rising.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Disintegration without arising,
How could this occur?
There would be dying without birth.
Without arising, there is no disintegration. [XXI.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. How could there be destruction
Without becoming?
How could there be death without birth?
There is no destruction without becoming.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. How could there be destruction
Without becoming?
There would be death without birth.
There is no destruction without becoming.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.2 How can there be dissolution without occurrence, death without birth? There is not dissolution without occurrence.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The terms sambhava and vibhava need to be translated keeping in mind the purpose of this section. It is an attempt on the part of Nagarjuna to explain the life-process (samsara) or the human personality without resorting to a theory of self or soul (atman, pudgala) considered to be eternal. As mentioned earlier, this whole section is devoted to the establishing of the idea of non-substantiality of the human person (pudgalanairatmya). This has to be achieved not only by showing the untenability of the theory of permanence or eternalism, but also of a conception of annihilationism.

Thus, in this particular chapter sambhava, in the sense of occurrence, pertains to the "birth" (janma) of a human being conditioned by various factors, without any underlying permanent entity passing from one life to another. Vibhava, in the sense of dissolution, means "death" (marana), and here there is no implication of complete annihilation. In the life-process, birth is thus not the absolute beginning, nor is death the absolute end. The first two verses deny the occurrence of death without (vina) birth or at the same time (saha). Just as much as death does not occur without birth, there is no up-rising (udbhava) without dissolution (vibhava). This is an empirical, rather than a logical, analysis of birth and death. A rationalist can argue that "all human beings are not mortal," for everyone who has been born has not died. Such a rational argument did not prevent the Buddha from accepting mortality as a fact of life. For him, the evidence lies in the fact that so far all human being who have died had been born. However, this does not lead the Buddha to assert the metaphysical view that death is inherent in birth.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. Nāgārjuna argues that, absent something coming into being, there is no sense in which it can be destroyed. So destruction presupposes becoming.

Kārikā XXI.3

संभवेनैव विभवः कथं सह भविष्यति।
न जन्ममरणं चैवं तुल्यकालं हि विद्यते॥३॥

saṃbhavenaiva vibhavaḥ kathaṃ saha bhaviṣyati |
na janma maraṇaṃ caivaṃ tulyakālaṃ hi vidyate ||3||

成壞共有者 云何有成壞
如世間生死 一時俱不然

chéng huài gòng yǒu zhě yún hé yǒu chéng huài
rú shì jiān shēng sǐ yī shí jù;jū bù rán

།འཇིག་པ་འབྱུང་དང་ལྷན་ཅིག་ཏུ། །ཇི་ལྟར་ཡོད་པ་ཉིད་དུ་འགྱུར།
།འཆི་བ་སྐྱེ་དང་དུས་གཅིག་ཏུ། །ཡོད་པ་ཉིད་ནི་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| ’jig pa ’byuṅ daṅ lhan cig tu | | ji ltar yod pa ñid du ’gyur |
| ’chi ba skye daṅ dus gcig tu | | yod pa ñid ni ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - How could there be dissolution concurrent with the occurrence of being? For, indeed, it is not possible for both birth and death to exist simultaneously.

JONES (Skt):
[3] But how could death occur *with* birth? Birth and death are not seen to occur at the same time.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can there be dissolution along with occurrence? Indeed, simultaneous birth and death are similarly not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How will there be dissolution together with origination?
Indeed, death contemporary with birth does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Even though Universal Existence is just relying upon Coexistence,
How is it possible for both Coexistence and Universal Existence to exist together like this even in future?
Even though birth and death do not appear like this,
Because of that the modern situations of Human Society is recognized like that.

STRENG (Skt):
3. How can disappearance exist concomitantly with origination? Since, surely, death does not exist at the same moment as birth.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v3 If becoming and dissolution exist together,
How can there be becoming and dissolution?
It would be like. worldly birth and death
Existing simultaneously – this is not correct.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How could passing exist together with rising? Death does not exist at the same time as birth.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Disintegration together with arising
How could this occur?
Death does not take place
At the very same time as birth. [XXI.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. How could destruction and becoming
Occur simultaneously?
Death and birth
Do not occur simultaneously.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. How could destruction
Occur simultaneously with becoming?
Death does not occur
Simultaneously with birth.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.3 How could dissolution and occurrence arise simultaneously? Birth and death are never seen to occur simultaneously.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is an explicit rejection of the metaphysical view that death is inherent in birth. If the life-process (samsara) were to be understood as a series of momentary existences (samtana, samtati), as the Sautrantikas believed, then the seeds of death should occur at the very moment of birth. This logical explanation was not acceptable to the empiricist Nagarjuna.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. But they cannot exist simultaneously. For then the same entity would have contradictory properties.

Kārikā XXI.4

भविष्यति कथं नाम संभवो विभवं विना।
अनित्यता हि भावेषु न कदाचिन्न विद्यते॥४॥

若離於壞者 云何當有成
無常未曾有 不在諸法時

།འབྱུང་བ་འཇིག་པ་མེད་པར་ནི།།ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ན་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར།
།དངོས་པོ་རྣམས་ལ་མི་རྟག་ཉིད།།ནམ་ཡང་མེད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

bhaviṣyati kathaṃ nāma saṃbhavo vibhavaṃ vinā |
anityatā hi bhāveṣu na kadācin na vidyate ||4||

ruò lí yū;yú;wū huài zhě yún hé dāng yǒu chéng
wú cháng wèi céng yǒu bù zài zhū fǎ shí

| ’byuṅ ba ’jig pa med par ni | | ji lta bur na yod par ’gyur |
| dṅos po rnams la mi rtag ñid | | nam yaṅ med pa ma yin (2)no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - How could there be occurrence separated from the dissolution of being? For in the various modes of (true) existence, transient nature is never found not to exist.

JONES (Skt):
[4] But how could there be a becoming *without* dissolution? For impermanence is never not seen in entities.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can there be occurrence without dissolution, for the impermanence in existences is never not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What will origination then be without dissolution?
Indeed, never does the impermanence of beings not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. How is it actually possible for name to exist without fail in future?
When it is belonging to Coexistence, the Universal Existence does not exist at all.
But if it is only for the name of Coexistence, it might be to exist even in future.
And so it is very difficult for us to know when they have actually happened exactly.

STRENG (Skt):
4. How, indeed, will origination exist at all without disappearance? For, impermanence does not fail to be found in existent things ever.

ROBINSON (Skt):
For impermanence never does not occur in entities.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v4 Apart from dissolution,
How could there be becoming?
For there is never a time
When impermanence is not found in all dharmas.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How could rising exist without passing? Things are never not impermanent.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Arising without disintegration,
How could this occur?
It is not that things
Ever lack impermanence. [XXI.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. How could there be becoming
Without destruction?
For impermanence
Is never absent from entities.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. How could there be becoming
Without destruction?
For things never
Lack impermanence.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.4 How could there be occurrence without dissolution? Impermanence is never absent from any existent.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/4 Dissolution cannot be found apart from becoming, and why? If there were dissolution apart from becoming, then there would be dissolution independent of becoming, and dissolution consequently would be uncaused. Moreover, dharmas which had not become could nevertheless be dissolved. 'Becoming' means the combining of conditions. 'Dissolution' means the dispersion of conditions. If there were dissolution apart from becoming, then with no becoming, what would dissolve? It is just as when there is no jug, we cannot say that the jug has dissolved. Hence, there is no dissolution apart from becoming.

(27c28) If you say that dissolution exists together with becoming, this is also incorrect, and why? A dharma first comes into being - separately, and (only) afterwards is there combination. The combined dharma is not separate from the different (elements). If it dissolved separately from its different (elements), the dissolution would be causeless. Therefore, dissolution does not exist together with becoming.

(28a2) As to no becoming apart from dissolution or together with dissolution; if there were becoming apart from dissolution, then becoming would be permanent. Permanence means not having the characteristic of dissolution, but in reality we do not see any dharma which is permanent and lacks the characteristic of dissolution. Therefore, there is no becoming apart from dissolution.

(28a4) If you say that becoming and dissolution exist together, this is also wrong. Becoming and dissolution are opposites. How can they exist simultaneously? It is like a man having hair and not having any hair - he cannot have both simultaneously. Becoming and dissolution are also like this. Therefore, it is not the case that becoming exists jointly with dissolution, and why?

(28a7) If you say that dharmas are distinct, asserting that there is constant dissolution within becoming, this is not correct, and why? If there were constant dissolution within becoming, then there would be no dharma of abiding, but in reality there is abiding. Therefore, no becoming can exist, either apart from dissolution or together with dissolution.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Occurrence (sambhava), as an absolutely new beginning, is rejected here, when Nagarjuna affirms that without dissolution occurrence does not take place. Indeed, the discourse to Katyayana utilized the empirical argument that the belief in a permanent entity is abandoned when one perceives the cessation of the world (loka-nirodham ... yathabhutam sammappannaya passato ya loke atthita sa na hoti). Nagarjuna's argument here is not that "there is another realm or aspect of being which people have always overlooked. This is the realm or aspect of bhava, [which] refers to the truly dynamic worldly existence" (as Inada seems to assume, see). Rather, it is a rejection of bhava, primarily because impermanence (anityata) is incompatible with bhava, which implies permanence. In fact, Nagarjuna was probably aware that the Buddha had always employed the term bhava to explain the process of "becoming," instead of the abstract term bhava. Indeed bhava, or its more restricted form svabhava, is equivalent to astitva (atthita) and more often Nagarjuna understood the term in that sense.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. Since all phenomena are impermanent, as has been forcefully argued in earlier chapters, anything that comes into existence passes out of existence.

Kārikā XXI.5

संभवो विभवेनैव कथं सह भविष्यति।
न जन्ममरणं चैव तुल्यकालं हि विद्यते॥५॥

saṃbhavo vibhavenaiva kathaṃ saha bhaviṣyati |
na janma maraṇaṃ caiva tulyakālaṃ hi vidyate ||5||

成壞共無成 離亦無有成
是二俱不可 云何當有成

chéng huài gòng wú chéng lí yì wú yǒu chéng
shì èr jù;jū bù kě yún hé dāng yǒu chéng

།འབྱུང་བ་འཇིག་དང་ལྷན་ཅིག་ཏུ།།ཇི་ལྟར་ཡོད་པ་ཉིད་དུ་འགྱུར།
།སྐྱེ་བ་འཆི་དང་དུས་གཅིག་ཏུ།།ཡོད་པ་ཉིད་ནི་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| ’byuṅ ba ’jig daṅ lhan cig tu | | ji ltar yod pa ñid du ’gyur |
| skye ba ’chi daṅ dus gcig tu | | yod pa ñid ni ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - How could there be occurrence concurrent with the dissolution of being? For, indeed, it is not possible for both birth and death to exist simultaneously.

JONES (Skt):
[5] But how could there be a becoming *with* dissolution? Again, birth and death are not seen to occur at the same time.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can occurrence be evident along with dissolution? Indeed, simultaneous birth and death are similarly not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How will there be origination without dissolution?
Indeed, death contemporary with birth does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Coexistence is just relying upon Universal Existence actually.
Therefore how is it possible for Coexistence and Universal Existence to exist at the same time even in future?
The birth and the death do never appear at the same time actually.
Even though it is possible for birth and death to be recognized as if they were at once.

STRENG (Skt):
5. How can origination exist concomitantly with disappearance? Since, surely, death does not exist at the same moment as birth.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v5 Becoming and dissolution are not established together
Nor are they established separately.
Neither of these is tenable.
How can becoming exist?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How could rising exist together with passing? Birth does not exist at the same time as death.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Arising together with disintegration,
How could this occur?
Birth does not occur
At the very same time as death. [XXI.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. How could destruction
And becoming occur simultaneously?
Just as birth and death
Do not occur simultaneously.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. How could becoming
Be simultaneous with destruction?
Birth does not occur
Simultaneously with death.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.5 How could occurrence and dissolution arise simultaneously? Death and birth are never seen to occur simultaneously.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/5 As for becoming not being established together with dissolution, and the two not being established separately from each other; if the two are established together, then, the two dharmas being opposites, how can they exist simultaneously? But if they exist separately, then they are uncaused. In neither way can they be established, so how can becoming exist? If it does exist, you should explain how.

Question: Dharmas which have the characteristic of being exhausted and ceased, manifestly exist. Such exhausted and ceased dharmas are said to be both exhausted and not exhausted. Surely becoming and dissolution exist in the same way?

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

At XXI. 3, Nagarjuna questioned the feasibility of asserting that death occurs together with (saha) birth. In the present verse, he is questioning the validity of asserting the occurrence of birth together with (saha) death. In other words, he is questioning the feasibility of asserting an invariable connection between death and rebirth, an invariable connection that is never asserted by the Buddha. In fact, what the Buddha asserted was that a dying person, depending upon conditions, can be reborn. An invarible relationship between death and rebirth was admitted only by the substantialists.

Kārikā XXI.6

[The Chinese of verse 5 seems to correspond to the Sanskrit of verses 5 & 6.]

सहान्योन्येन वा सिद्धिर्विनान्योन्येन वा ययोः।
न विद्यते, तयोः सिद्धिः कथं नु खलु विद्यते॥६॥

sahānyo'nyena vā siddhir vinānyo'nyena vā yayoḥ |
na vidyate tayoḥ siddhiḥ kathaṃ nu khalu vidyate ||6||

[n/a]

[n/a]

།གང་དག་ཕན་ཚུན་ལྷན་ཅིག་གམ།།ཕན་ཚུན་ལྷན་ཅིག་མ་ཡིན་པར།
།གྲུབ་པ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་པ།།དེ་དག་གྲུབ་པ་ཇི་ལྟར་ཡོད།།

| gaṅ dag phan tshun lhan cig gam | | phan tshun lhan cig ma yin par |
| grub pa yod pa ma yin pa | | de dag grub pa ji ltar yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - The establishment of mutual concurrence or mutual separation is an impossibility. How then would it ever be possible to assert any completed states of the two?

JONES (Skt):
[6] When two things cannot be established as existing with each other or without each other, how can they be established at all?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The occurrence of things, either together or separately, is not evident. If so, how can their establishment be evident?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The establishment of them either conjoined by difference or without
difference does not occur. How then does the establishment of both occur?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. Even though they are the same articles or the different articles, both are able to be things accomplished.
And even in the case where there is no different article, the situations are the same as the former case.
But in a case, that one thing and another thing are existing separately, it seems to be only for the two cases as they exist.
How is it possible for them to be recognized as accomplished articles actually?

STRENG (Skt):
6. When two things cannot be proved either separately or together, No proof exists of those two things. How can these two things be proved?

BOCKING (Ch):
[n/a]

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How can those that are not established either mutually together or not mutually together be established?

DOCTOR (Tb):
When two things are neither
Established as coexistent,
Nor as not coexistent,
How can they be established? [XXI.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. How, when things cannot
Be established as existing,
With, or apart from one another,
Can they be established at all?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. How can those things which cannot
Be established as existing
Simultaneously or not simultaneously with each other
Exist at all?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.6 [axiomatic] When it is not evident that things occur either together or separately, what evidence is there that they occur at all?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This conclusion of Nagarjuna is related to his criticisms in the previous verses-He is simply questioning the metaphysical assertions relating to occurrence and dissolution, birth and death.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. This is the argument to this stage: Becoming and destructtion are mutually contradictory. So they cannot be properties of the same thing at the same time. But everything that is coming into existence is at a stage in a process that culminates in its destruction. So everything that is becoming is at the same time being destroyed. Everything that is being destroyed is in a later stage of a process that earlier resulted in its coming into existence and, indeed, is coming to exist in some other form. So everything that is being destroyed is also becoming. So becoming and destruction cannot coexist, but cannot exist apart. Hence they cannot exist independently at all.

Kārikā XXI.7

क्षयस्य संभवो नास्ति नाक्षयस्यापि संभवः।
क्षयस्य विभवो नास्ति विभवो नाक्षयस्य च॥७॥

kṣayasya saṃbhavo nāsti nākṣayasyāsti saṃbhavaḥ |
kṣayasya vibhavo nāsti vibhavo nākṣayasya ca ||7||

盡則無有成 不盡亦無成
盡則無有壞 不盡亦不壞

jìn zé wú yǒu chéng bù jìn yì wú chéng
jìn zé wú yǒu huài bù jìn yì bù huài

།ཟད་ལ་འབྱུང་བ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན། །མ་ཟད་པ་ལའང་འབྱུང་བ་མེད།
།ཟད་ལ་འཇིག་པ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན། །མ་ཟད་པ་ལའང་འཇིག་པ་མེད།

| zad la ’byuṅ ba (3)yod ma yin | | ma zad pa la’aṅ ’byuṅ ba med |
| zad la ’jig pa yod ma yin | | ma zad pa la’aṅ ’jig pa med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - There is no occurrence of being in either a ceased or an unceased entity. Again, there is no dissolution of being in either a ceased or an unceased entity.

JONES (Skt):
[7] There is no coming-to-be of dissolution, nor any coming-to-be of non-dissolution. There is no dissolution of what has ceased-to-be, nor of what has not ceased-to-be.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Occurrence of that which is waning does not exist, nor is there occurrence of that which is not waning.
Dissolution of that which is waning does not exist, nor is there dissolution of the not waning.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Origination of decay does not exist, origination of nondecay does not exist.
Dissolution of decay and dissolution of nondecay do not exist.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Coexistence does not exist at the any concrete residences at all.
And Coexistence does not exist at the any non-concrete residences at all.
Universal Existence does not exist in concrete existence.
But the Universal Existence does not belong to non-residence at all.

STRENG (Skt):
7. There is no origination of that which is destructible, nor of that which is not-destructible. There is no disappearance of that which is destructible nor of that which is non-destructible.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v6 Exhausted, there is no becoming,
Not exhausted, there is also no becoming.
Exhausted, there is no dissolution
Not exhausted, there is also no dissolution.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The finished does not rise; the unfinished too does not rise; the finished does not pass; the unfinished too does not pass.

DOCTOR (Tb):
There is no arising of the ceased,
Nor is there arising of the not ceased.
There is no disintegration of the ceased,
Nor is there disintegration of the not ceased. [XXI.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. There is no becoming of the disappeared.
There is no becoming of the nondisappeared.
There is no destruction of the disappeared.
There is no destruction of the nondisappeared.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. There is no becoming of that which is exhausted.
Nor is there becoming of that which is not exhausted.
There is no destruction of that which is exhausted.
Nor is there destruction of that which is not exhausted.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.7 There is no arising of what is either gone or not gone. There is no cessation of what is either gone or not gone.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/6 All dharmas, morning, noon and night, instant by instant, are constantly ceasing, becoming exhausted and passing away, like flowing water which never stands still. This is termed 'exhaustion'. This process cannot be grasped, and cannot be explained. Like a mirage, which has no fixed nature to get hold of, so exhaustion has no conceivable fixed nature. How can one subdivide it and assert that becoming exists? This is why it is said that exhaustion has no becoming either. Since becoming does not exist there can be no dissolution either, and this is why it is said that exhaustion has no dissolution either.

(28a25) Where there is, moment by moment, a constant succession of arisings and ceasings with no severance this is termed 'non exhaustion'. In this case dharmas are fixed, permanent and abiding and are not cut off, so how can one differentiate them and assert that 'this is a moment 'of becoming'? This is why it is said that there is no becoming in non-exhaustion either. Since there is no becoming, there is no dissolution, and this is why it is said that there is no dissolution in non-exhaustion either. One may investigate in this way, but since no real entity can be found, there is no becoming and no dissolution.

Question: Even if we set aside becoming and dissolution, what is wrong with allowing that there are simply dharmas?

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The term ksaya was used in the Buddhist texts in the context where waning or complete extinction is implied. Whereas the term nirodha could mean ceasing that could be followed by arising (utpada) and, as such, they could be used as complementaries to explain change and impermanence as well as dependent arising, the term ksaya had no such complementary term except its negation, a-hsaya, which implies permanence. For this reason, Nagarjuna was able to maintain that there is neither absolute cessation (ksaya) nor permanence (aksaya) of both occurrence (sambhava) and dissolution (vibhava).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. This verse offers an epigrammatic summary of the previous argument: All phenomena, when analyzed closely, resolve into ephemeral moments, constantly disappearing to be succeeded by later stages of what are conventionally identified as the same objects. So everything that has ever existed has disappeared. Such a thing cannot be coming into existence. But no nondisappeared thing ever comes into existence. For as soon as it exists, it disappears., Similarly such things cannot be in the process of destruction. But nothing that is not ephemeral is destroyed either. Given this ephemeral nature of phenomena, establishing becoming and destruction as distinct, independent processes is impossible. This claim is made directly in XXI: 8:

Kārikā XXI.8

संभवो विभवश्चैव विना भावं न विद्यते।
संभवं विभवं चैव विना भावो न विद्यते॥८॥

saṃbhavo vibhavaś caiva vinā bhāvaṃ na vidyate |
saṃbhavaṃ vibhavaṃ caiva vinā bhāvo na vidyate ||8||

若離於成壞 是亦無有法
若當離於法 亦無有成壞

ruò lí yū;yú;wū chéng huài shì yì wú yǒu fǎ
ruò dāng lí yū;yú;wū fǎ yì wú yǒu chéng huài

།དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་པར། །འབྱུང་དང་འཇིག་པ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།འབྱུང་དང་འཇིག་པ་མེད་པར་ནི། །དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ། །

| dṅos po yod pa ma yin par | | ’byuṅ daṅ ’jig pa yod ma yin |
| ’byuṅ daṅ ’jig pa med par ni | | dṅos po yod pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - Occurrence and dissolution are not possible apart from (true) existence. On the other hand, (true) existence is not possible apart from occurrence and dissolution.

JONES (Skt):
[8] Becoming and dissolution are not found without a self-existent entity. A self-existent entity without becoming or dissolution is not found.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Without an existent, occurrence as well as dissolution are not evident. Without occurrence as well as dissolution, an existent is not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Without a being, origination and dissolution do not occur.
Without origination and dissolution, a being does not Occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Both Coexistence and Universal Existence are,
Without their Existences they are never recognized at all.
Both the Coexistence and the Universal Existence are similarly,
If they do not have their existences, they are not recognized.

STRENG (Skt):
8. Origination and disappearance cannot exist without an existent thing. Without origination and disappearance an existent thing does not exist.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v7 Apart from becoming and dissolution,
There are no dharmas.
If they should be separated from dharmas
Becoming and dissolution also would not exist.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Rising and passing do not exist without the existence of things. Things do not exist without the existence of rising and passing.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Where there is no thing,
There is no arising and no disintegration.
Without arising and disintegration,
There is no thing. [XXI.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. When no entities exist,
There is no becoming or destruction.
Without becoming and destruction,
There are no existent entities.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Without the existence of things,
There is neither becoming nor destruction.
Without becoming and destruction,
There is no existence of things.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.8 Without an existent, neither occurrence not dissolution are evident. Without occurrence and dissolution, an existent is not evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/7 There are no dharmas apart from becoming and dissolution: If there were dharmas with no becoming and no dissolution, such dharmas would have to be either nonexistent, or permanent, but no permanent dharmas exist in the world. Your statement that there are dharmas apart from becoming and dissolution is not correct.

(28b6) Question: What is wrong in saying that only becoming and dissolution exist, without dharmas?

Reply: To say that becoming and dissolution exist without dharmas is also wrong, and why? Apart from dharmas, what is there to become, and what is there to dissolve? Therefore it is not the case that becoming and dissolution exist apart from dharmas. Further:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. In the next verse, Nāgārjuna connects this point directly to emptiness and to inherent existence, pointing out both that emptiness precludes the inherent establishment of becoming and destruction and that positing inherently existent phenomena would do no better:

Kārikā XXI.9

संभवो विभवश्चैव न शून्यस्योपपद्यते।
संभवो विभवश्चैव नाशून्यस्योपपद्यते॥९॥

saṃbhavo vibhavaś caiva na śūnyasyopapadyate |
saṃbhavo vibhavaś caiva nāśūnyasyopapadyate ||9||

若法性空者 誰當有成壞
若性不空者 亦無有成壞

ruò fǎ xìng kōng zhě shuí dāng yǒu chéng huài
ruò xìng bù kōng zhě yì wú yǒu chéng huài

།སྟོང་ལ་འབྱུང་དང་འཇིག་པ་དག།།འཐད་པ་ཉིད་ནི་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།
།མི་སྟོང་པ་ལའང་འབྱུང་འཇིག་དག།།འཐད་པ་ཉིད་ནི་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| stoṅ la 'byuṅ daṅ 'jig pa (4)dag | 'thad pa ñid ni ma yin no |
| mi stoṅ pa la'aṅ 'byuṅ 'jig dag | 'thad pa ñid ni ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - Occurrence and dissolution cannot exist in the nature of void (iunya). They cannot exist in the nature of non-void either.

JONES (Skt):
[9] No becoming or dissolution occurs for what is empty. No becoming or dissolution occurs for what is not empty.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Either occurrence or dissolution of the empty is not appropriate. Either occurrence or dissolution of the non-empty is also not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Origination and dissolution of what is open does not take place.
Origination and dissolution of what is not open does not happen.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. Both in the case of Coexistence and Universal Existence similarly,
If the balance of the autonomic nervous system does not manifest itself,
In the case of both Coexistence and Universal Existence similarly,
The unbalanced autonomic nervous system does not manifest itself.

STRENG (Skt):
9. Origination and disappearance does not obtain for that which is empty. Origination and disappearance does not obtain for that which is non-empty.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v8 If dharmas' nature is empty
What can become or dissolve?
If their nature is not empty
There will also be no becoming or dissolution.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Rising and passing are not possible for the empty; rising, passing are not possible for the non-empty also.

DOCTOR (Tb):
With respect to the empty,
Arising and disintegration make no sense.
With respect to the not empty,
Arising and disintegration make no sense either. [XXI.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. It is not tenable for the empty
To become or to be destroyed.
It is not tenable for the nonempty
To become or to be destroyed.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. It is not tenable for the empty
To become or to be destroyed.
Nor is it tenable for the nonempty
To become or to be destroyed.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.9 It is not appropriate to ascribe occurrence and dissolution to either the empty or the non-empty.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/8 If the nature of dharmas were empty, being empty, how could they become or dissolve? If the nature of dharmas were not empty, then not being empty they would have a fixed existence, and again there could be no becoming or dissolution.

Further:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. The empty cannot come to be or be destroyed simply because there is no basis for the predication. With no entities, there is nothing to be brought into existence or to be destroyed. But if we posit nonempty phenomena, their independence and consequent permanence preclude their coming to be or destruction.

Kārikā XXI.10

संभवो विभवश्चैव नैक इत्युपपद्यते।
संभवो विभवश्चैव न नानेत्युपपद्यते॥१०॥

saṃbhavo vibhavaś caiva naika ity upapadyate |
saṃbhavo vibhavaś caiva na nānety upapadyate ||10||

成壞若一者 是事則不然
成壞若異者 是事亦不然

chéng huài ruò yī zhě shì shì zé bù rán
chéng huài ruò yì zhě shì shì yì bù rán

།འབྱུང་བ་དང་ནི་འཇིག་པ་དག།གཅིག་པ་ཉིད་དུ་མི་འཐད་དོ།
།འབྱུང་བ་དང་ནི་འཇིག་པ་དག།གཞན་ཉིད་དུ་ཡང་མི་འཐད་དོ།།

| ’byuṅ ba daṅ ni ’jig pa dag | gcig pa ñid du mi ’thad do |
| ’byuṅ ba daṅ ni ’jig pa dag | gźan ñid du yaṅ mi ’thad do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - It is not possible that occurrence and dissolution are identical. They cannot be different either.

JONES (Skt):
[10] Becoming and dissolution do not arise as one. Becoming and dissolution do not arise as many.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
It is not appropriate to assume that occurrence and dissolution are identical. It is not appropriate to assume that occurrence and dissolution are different.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
“Origination and dissolution are identical” is not said.
“Origination and dissolution are different” is not said.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. When Coexistence and Universal Existence are perfectly the same,
What is called “not one,” does appear.
And when Coexistence and Universal Existence are perfectly the same,
What is called “can never be different” does not appear.

STRENG (Skt):
10. It does not obtain that origination and disappearance are the same thing. It does not obtain that origination and disappearance are different.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v9 That becoming and dissolution are one –
This is not the case.
That becoming and dissolution are different –
This also is not the case.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Rising and passing cannot possibly be one; rising and passing also cannot possibly be other.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Arising and disintegration
Do not make sense if the same.
Arising and disintegration
Do not make sense if different. [XXI.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. It is not tenable
That destruction and becoming are identical.
It is not tenable
That destruction and becoming are different.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. It is not tenable
That destruction and becoming are identical.
Nor is it tenable
That destruction and becoming are different.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Emergence and decay
Cannot logically be the same thing.
Emergence and decay
Cannot logically be different things. (10)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.10 It is not tenable that occurrence and dissolution are either identical or different.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/9 If you thoroughly investigate becoming and dissolution, no unity can be discovered, and why? Because they have different characteristics, and are differentiated in various ways. But also no difference can be found in becoming and dissolution, and why? Because they are not separated, and because they would be uncaused.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

It is probably the use of the term bhava at XXI. 8 that led Inada to assume that it represents a unique realm of existence recognized by Nagarjuna. However, if we are to keep in mind the two metaphysical schoolsSarvastivada and Sautrantikaand their metaphysical doctrines of identity and difference, it is possible to interpret the statement in verse 8 as well as the two verses that follow as straightforward criticisms of these two schools.

For example, a Sautrantika who denies a bhava or svabhava can maintain that occurrence and dissolution can take place without a permanent entity (bhava, svabhava). Occurrence and dissolution would then mean the absence of continuity. Nagarjuna denies this.

On the contrary, a Sarvastivadin can maintain that a bhava or svabhava can exist without occurrence and dissolution, and this would account for continuity but negate difference. This too is rejected by Nagarjuna. Similarly, occurrence and dissolution are incompatible with the "empty" (sunya), as understood by a Sautrantika, or the "non-empty" (asunya) as explained by the Satvastivadin (see XX. 16-18). Furthermore, occurrence and dissolution are neither identical (naika) nor different (nana) in a metaphysical sense.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. They cannot be identical because they are contradictory predicates. But every destruction is a coming to be and vice versa. Hence when conceived of inherently, they can be neither identical nor different; when conceived of inherently, they cannot exist:

Kārikā XXI.11

दृश्यते संभवश्चैव विभवश्चैव ते भवेत्।
दृश्यते संभवश्चैव मोहाद्विभव एव च॥११॥

dṛśyate saṃbhavaś caiva vibhavaś caiva te bhavet |
dṛśyate saṃbhavaś caiva mohād vibhava eva ca ||11||

若謂以眼見 而有生滅者
則為是癡妄 而見有生滅

ruò wèi yǐ yǎn jiàn ér yǒu shēng miè zhě
zé wéi shì chī wàng ér jiàn yǒu shēng miè

|འབྱུང་བ་དང་ནི་འཇིག་པ་དག||མཐོང་ངོ་སྙམ་དུ་ཁྱོད་སེམས་ན|
|འབྱུང་བ་དང་ནི་འཇིག་པ་དག||གཏི་མུག་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་མཐོང་བ་ཡིན||

| ’byuṅ ba daṅ ni ’jig pa dag | mthoṅ ṅo sñam du (5)khyod sems na |
| ’byuṅ ba daṅ ni ’jig pa dag | | gti mug ñid kyis mthoṅ ba yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - You may think that both occurrence and dissolution can be perceived but such a perception only comes about from a deluded mind.

JONES (Skt):
[11] If you see becoming and dissolution, they are seen only because of delusion.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
It may occur to yon that both occurrence and dissolution are seen. However, both occurrence and dissolution are seen only through confusion.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
As origination and disappearance is seen by you, so it could exist.
But origination and disappearance is exactly so seen out of delusion.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. When Coexistence is seen there as it is clearly,
Universal Existence might exist clearly there as it is.
When Coexistence is also seen there as it is clearly,
It is very troublesome for Universal Existence to exist also there.

STRENG (Skt):
11. You argue: Origination, as well as disappearance, is seen. Therefore it would exist for you. But origination and disappearance are seen due to a delusion.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v10 If you say that arising and ceasing
Are seen by the eyes to exist,
Seeing arising and ceasing as existent
Is considered a delusion and deception.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If you think that you can see rising and passing, rising and passing are seen by delusion.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If you think,
“I see arising and disintegration,”
Then know that what you see
Is due to ignorance. [XXI.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. If you think you see both
Destruction and becoming,
Then you see destruction and becoming
Through impaired vision.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. If you think you see both
Destruction and becoming,
Then you see destruction and becoming
In virtue of confusion.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
When you think you see emergence and decay,
It is only bewilderment that sees emergence and decay. (11)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.11 To the extent one sees occurrence and dissolution, there is confusion.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/10 If someone says 'arising and ceasing exist since we see them with our eyes; how can they be refuted by words and teachings? ' This is not correct, and why? Seeing arising and ceasing with one's-eyes is due to ignorance and delusion. In seeing the nature of dharmas, they are empty and have no fixed (nature); they are like an illusion, like a dream. It is only that the unenlightened man has attained his eyes on account of his delusion in a former world. Because of his false conceptualization and discrimination in the present world, he says that his eyes see arising and ceasing. In the ultimate sense, there is, in reality, no arising or ceasing. This topic has already been discussed at length, in the chapter refuting the (three) marks. (ch 7)

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

It would be a folly to assume that occurrence and dissolution are perceived (drsyate). Neither the Buddha nor Nagarjuna would be willing to assert this. Occurrence and dissolution in themselves are not perceivable. They are seen only in relation to phenomena that occur and dissolve. The metaphysical issues that arose during Nagarjuna's time as a result of the extremist analysis of phenomena into events and relations have already been referred to (see XX. 11).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. In the next two verses, Nāgārjuna addresses coming to be. He points out that if it is conceived of as truly existent then it must satisfy at least one of the alternatives represented in each of the following two tetralemmas. But it cannot:

Kārikā XXI.12

न भावाज्जायते भावो भावोऽभावान्न जायते।
नाभावाज्जायतेऽभावोऽभावो भावान्न जायते॥१२॥

na bhāvāj jāyate bhāvo bhāvo ’bhāvān na jāyate |
nābhāvāj jāyate ’bhāvo ’bhāvo bhāvān na jāyate ||12||

從法不生法 亦不生非法
從非法不生 法及於非法

cóng fǎ bù shēng fǎ yì bù shēng fēi fǎ
cóng fēi fǎ bù shēng fǎ jí yū;yú;wū fēi fǎ

།དངོས་པོ་དངོས་ལས་མི་སྐྱེ་སྟེ། །དངོས་པོ་དངོས་མེད་ལས་མི་སྐྱེ།
།དངོས་མེད་དངོས་མེད་མི་སྐྱེ་སྟེ། །དངོས་མེད་དངོས་ལས་མི་སྐྱེའོ། །

| dṅos po dṅos las mi skye ste | | dṅos po dṅos med las mi skye |
| dṅos med dṅos med mi skye ste | | dṅos med dṅos las mi skye’o |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):

Verse 12 - (True) existence does not arise from itself nor does it arise from non-existence. Again, non-existence does not arise from itself nor does it arise from existence.

JONES (Skt):

[12] A self-existent entity does not arise from another self-existent entity. An entity does not arise from a non-entity. A non-entity does not arise from a non-entity. A non-entity does not arise from an entity.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):

An existent does not arise from an existent; neither does an existent arise from a non-existent. A nonexistent does not arise from a non-existent; neither does a non-existent arise from an existent.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):

A being could not be born by a being, a being is not born by a nonbeing.

A non-being could not be born by a nonbeing, a nonbeing is not born by a being.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):

12. Being left from existence, existence does never be born.
Without being from non-existence, existence does never be born at all.
Without leaving non-existence, non-existence will be born.
Non-existence can not be born, leaving from existence.

STRENG (Skt):

12. An existent thing does not originate from another thing; and an existent thing does not originate from a non-existent thing. Also, a non-existent thing does not originate from another non-existent thing; and a non-existent thing does not originate from an existent thing.

BOCKING (Ch):

21v11 Dharmas do not produce dharmas
Nor do they produce non-dharmas
Non-dharmas do not produce dharmas,
Nor (do they produce) non-dharmas.

BATCHELOR (Tb):

Things are not created from things; things are not created from nothing; nothing is not created from nothing; nothing is not created from things.

DOCTOR (Tb):

Things do not arise from things.
Things do not arise from nonthings.
Nonthings do not arise from nonthings.
Nonthings do not arise from things. [XXI.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):

12. An entity does not arise from an entity.
An entity does not arise from a nonentity.
A nonentity does not arise from a nonentity.
A nonentity does not arise from an entity.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):

12. A thing does not arise from a thing.
A thing does not arise from a non-thing.
A non-thing does not arise from a non-thing.
A non-thing does not arise from a thing.

HAGEN (paraphrase):

21.12 [axiomatic] An existent arises neither from an existent nor from a non-existent. A nonexistent arises neither from a nonexistent nor from an existent.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/11 As for ' Dharmas are not produced from dharmas' : Whether they disappear or reach (each other) 1 both are incorrect. If dharmas are produced from dharmas, then whether they reach (each other) or whether they disappear, they are independent, and being independent they fall into (the error of) severance or permanence. If a dharma is produced from a dharma after it has been reached, this dharma, although it has already been reached, is called arisen, and this would be permanence. Moreover, having already arisen, it would be arising again, and it would be arising uncaused, which is not correct.

(28c4) If a dharma is produced from another dharma after it has disappeared, this would mean the cause would be missing, and the one which arose would be uncaused. Therefore no dharma is produced from a dharma which disappears.

(28c6) As for 'non-dharmas are not produced from dharmas'; 'non-dharma' means that there is nothing which exists. 'Dharma' means an existent. How can the characteristic. of nonexistence be produced from the characteristic of existence? Therefore, non-dharmas do not arise from dharmas.

(28c7) As for 'dharmas do not arise from non-dharmas'; 'non-dharma' means nonexistence. How can nonexistence produce existence? If existence arose from nonexistence this would be causelessness, and causelessness would be a great error. Therefore, dharmas are not produced from non-dharmas.

(28c10) As for 'non-dharmas are not produced from non-dharmas'; 'non-dharma' means that there is nothing which exists. How could nothing which exists be produced by nothing which exists? It is like a rabbit's horns which do not produce a tortoise's hair. Therefore, non-dharmas are not produced from non-dharmas.

Question: Although you have analyzed dharmas and non-dharmas in various ways as being non-produced, nevertheless dharmas surely do produce dharmas?

Reply:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

12. The first alternative is precluded because inherently existent and distinct phenomena, Nāgārjuna has argued, cannot be related dependently. The second is precluded because that would involve production from nothing. The third would fail to count as inherently existent production, and from the standpoint of one who posits inherent existence as a guarantor of reality, would only amount to the production of the imaginary in any case. The final alternative again would not amount to real production of anything.

Kārikā XXI.13

न स्वतो जायते भावः परतो नैव जायते।
न स्वतः परतश्चैव जायते, जायते कुतः॥१३॥

na svato jāyate bhāvaḥ parato naiva jāyate |
na svataḥ parataś caiva jāyate jāyate kutaḥ ||13||

法不從自生 亦不從他生
不從自他生 云何而有生

fǎ bù cóng zì shēng yì bù cóng tā shēng
bù cóng zì tā shēng yún hé ér yǒu shēng

།དངོས་པོ་བདག་ལས་མི་སྐྱེ་སྟེ།།གཞན་ལས་སྐྱེ་བ་ཉིད་མ་ཡིན།
།བདག་དང་གཞན་ལས་སྐྱེ་བ་ནི།།ཡོད་མིན་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| dṅos po bdag las mi skye ste | | gźan las skye ba ñid (6)ma yin |
| bdag daṅ gźan las skye ba ni | | yod min ji ltar skye bar 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - (True) existence arises neither by itself nor by an other. It does not arise by both (forces). How then does it arise?

JONES (Skt):
[13] An entity does not arise from itself, nor does it arise from another. Nor does it arise from both itself and another. How then can a self-existent entity arise?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
An existent does not arise from itself, or from another or from both itself and another. Whence can it then arise?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
A being is not born by itself nor born by another,
nor by both itself and another. It is born by what?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. Anything subjective, does never be born as existence,
And anything objective, does never be born as existence at all.
Neither anything subjective, nor anything objective, similarly,
Relying upon what kind of reason, is it possible for anyone to be born again and
again?

STRENG (Skt):
13. An existent thing does not originate either by itself or by something different. Or by itself and something different at the same time. How, then, can it be produced?

BOCKING (Ch):
21v12 Dharmas are not produced from themselves,
Nor are they produced from another.
Nor are they produced from self and other,
How can they be produced?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Things are not created from themselves, nor are they created from something else; they are not created from [both] themselves and something else. How are they created?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Things do not arise from themselves
Nor from something other than themselves.
When nothing arises from either self or other,
How could there be arising? [XXI.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. An entity does not arise from itself.
It is not arisen from another.
It is not arisen from itself and another.
How can it be arisen?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. Things do not arise from themselves.
Nor do they arise from others.
Since they arise neither from self nor from another,
How can they arise?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.13 An existent does not arise from itself, from another, from both itself and another. How then can it arise?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/12 Since nothing exists when a dharma has not yet arisen, and it itself has not arisen, dharmas are not self-produced. If a dharma has not yet been produced, there is no 'other', and because there is no other you cannot say that it arises from another. Moreover, when it has not yet arisen, it does not exist itself, and if no self and no other exists then it is not produced from the two together. Since it is not produced in any of these three ways, how can dharmas be produced from dharmas?

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Bhava and abhava referred to here may be compared with the sat and asat in the pre-Buddhist Indian philosophy. The unresolvable metaphysical questions that plagued Indian philosophy for centuries, questions such as "Did existence (sat) arise from non-existence (asat)?" or vice versa, have once again been introduced into Buddhist thought by the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas. The identity and non-identity theories of causation, theories of self-causation and external causation, and many other metaphysical views that emerged in the Buddhist tradition are repeatedly mentioned and rejected by Nagarjuna.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

13. This verse simply recapitulates the argument of Chapter I in the service of the conclusion that arising cannot be conceived of as an independent phenomenon. Nāgārjuna now draws more general conclusions regarding the implication of the view that existence amounts to inherent existence for the extreme positions. He develops in the next two verses a nice reductio ad absurdum:

Kārikā XXI.14

भावमभ्युपपन्नस्य शाश्वतोच्छेददर्शनम्।
प्रसज्यते स भावो हि नित्योऽनित्योऽथ वा भवेत्॥१४॥

bhāvam abhyupapannasya śāśvatocchedadarśanam |
prasajyate sa bhāvo hi nityo ’nityo ’tha vā bhavet ||14||

若有所受法 即墮於斷常
當知所受法 為常為無常

ruò yǒu suǒ shòu fǎ jí duò yū;yú;wū duàn cháng
dāng zhī suǒ shòu fǎ wéi cháng wéi wú cháng

།དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་པར་ཁས་བླངས་ན། །རྟག་དང་ཆད་པར་ལྟ་བར་ནི། །ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར་ཏེ་དངོས་དེ་ནི། །རྟག་དང་མི་རྟག་འགྱུར་ཕྱིར་རོ། །

| dṅos po yod par khas blaṅs na | | rtag daṅ chad par lta bar ni |
| thal bar ’gyur te dṅos de ni | | rtag daṅ mi rtag ’gyur phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 14 - One who admits existence will necessarily perceive permanence and disruption. For, it necessarily follows that such an existence must either be permanent or impermanent. - Note: This idea was discussed in XV, 10, 11.

JONES (Skt):
[14] for one who accepts the existence of an entity, the view of eternal permanence and complete annihilation follows because that entity is either permanent or impermanent.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
For him who is engrossed in existence, eternalism or annihilationism will necessarily follow, for he would assume that it is either permanent or impermanent.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
He who has agreed to the continuity of existence, the view of permanence and annihilation follows, for existence would indeed certainly be either permanent or impermanent.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
14. Even though the existences are approaching to get a teacher,
Whether it is eternal or extinctive can be seen with eyes.
Because the Real Existence can be seen as what has been born,
Even what hasn’t been looked at yet, can be seen also existing there as it is.

STRENG (Skt):
14. For someone assuming an existent thing, either an Eternalistic or nihilistic point of view would logically follow, For that existent thing would be either eternal or liable to cessation.

ROBINSON (Skt):
That existent would be either permanent or impermanent.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v13 If someone accepts the existence of dharmas,
He falls into severance or permanence.
You must know that for one who accepts dharmas
They will be either permanent or impermanent.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If you assert the existence of things, the views of eternalism and annihilationism will follow, because things are permanent and impermanent.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the existence of things is claimed,
Views of permanence and annihilation follow
Because these things must then
Be permanent or annihilated. [XXI.14]

GARFIELD (Tb):
14. If one accepts the existence of entities,
Permanence and the view of complete nonexistence follow.
For these entities
Must be both permanent and impermanent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
14. If one accepts the existence of entities,
Reificationism and nihilism will follow.
For these entities
Would have to be both permanent and impermanent.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.14 For one who is engrossed in existence, permanence and extinction are assumed, since all existents must be either permanent or liable to cessation.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/13 Someone who "accepts dharmas" differentiates between this one as good, this one as not good, as permanent, as impermanent and so on. Such a person inevitably falls into either a view of permanence or a view of severance, and why? Dharmas can be accepted in two ways, as either permanent or impermanent. Both are incorrect, and why? If (taken as) permanent, you straightaway fall into the extreme of permanence. If impermanent, you straightaway fall into the extreme of severance. Question:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna is here presenting the inevitable conclusions that a person involved in speculations relating to bhava will reach. If the bhava is assumed to be permanent, he will end up with a notion of eternalism. If, on the contrary, the bhava is looked upon as being impermanent, then he will assert annihilation. It may be noted that the Sarvastivadins who were involved in the notion of bhava, came up with the belief in an eternal self-nature (svabhava) or substance (dravya). The same involvement led them to assume the momentary destruction (ksana-bhanga) of impermanent qualities or characteristics of bhava.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

14. If one thinks that any existent entity must exist inherently, then one is forced simultaneously to embrace the extremes of nihilism and reification. One must reify because any existent must be treated as inherently existent and hence permanent. But upon observing the impermanence of phenomena, one will be driven to nihilism since their impermanence would entail their lack of inherent existence and hence their complete nonexistence. An opponent, however, can be imagined to reply as follows:

Kārikā XXI.15

भावमभ्युपपन्नस्य नैवोच्छेदो न शाश्वतम्।
उदयव्ययसंतानःफलहेत्वोर्भवः स हि॥१५॥

bhāvam abhyupapannasya naivocchedo na śāśvatam |
udayavyayasaṃtānaḥ phalahetvor bhavaḥ sa hi ||15||

所有受法者 不墮於斷常
因果相續故 不斷亦不常

suǒ yǒu shòu fǎ zhě bù duò yū;yú;wū duàn cháng
yīn guǒ xiàng;xiāng xù gù bù duàn yì bù cháng

།དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་པར་ཁས་བླངས་ཀྱང་། །ཆད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རྟག་མི་འགྱུར། །
།འབྲས་བུ་རྒྱུ་ཡི་འབྱུང་འཇིག་གི །རྒྱུན་དེ་སྲིད་པ་ཡིན་ཕྱིར་རོ། །

| dṅos po yod par khas blaṅs kyaṅ | | chad par mi 'gyur rtag mi (7)'gyur |
| 'bras bu rgyu yi 'byuṅ 'jig gi | | rgyun de srid pa yin phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 15 - (The opponent contends) On the other hand, as one admits (true) existence there could be no permanence or disruption. For, such an existence expresses the continuity in the rise and fall (i.e., disintegration) of a being in a cause-effect relationship.

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection*:15] For one who accepts the existence of an entity, the view of eternal ism and annihilation ism does *not* follow - the cycle of rebirths (i.e., "becoming") is a series of the arising and passing away of causes and effects.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
[On the contrary,] for him who is engrossed in existence, there would be neither annihilationism nor eternalism, for, indeed, becoming is the series of uprising and ceasing of cause and effect.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
For he who has agreed to the continuity of existence as neither permanent nor annihilated,
the continuity of rising and passing away is indeed the continuity of both cause and effect.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
15. Even though the existences are approaching to get a teacher,
The situations have never been broken, nor been eternal forever.
Appearance, disappearance, and continuity,
Because relying upon result and relation of cause and effect, the existence is real.

STRENG (Skt):
15. An opponent objects: For someone assuming an existent thing, there is not only Eternalism or nihilism, Since this is existence: namely, the continuity of the originating and stopping of causes and product.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v14 There are those who accept, dharmas
And do not fall into severance or permanence.
Since the continuity of cause and effect
Involves neither severance nor permanence.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If you assert the existence of things, eternalism and annihilationism will not be, because the continuity of the rising and passing of cause -effect is becoming.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Although the existence of things is claimed,
Permanence and annihilation do not follow
Because existence is the continuum of effects and causes
That arise and disintegrate. [XXI.15]

GARFIELD (Tb):
15. If one accepts the existence of entities
Nonexistence and permanence will not follow.
Cyclic existence is the continuous
Becoming and destruction of causes and effects.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
15. Even if one accepts the existence of things,
Nihilism and reification will not follow.
Cyclic existence is the continuous
Becoming and destruction of causes and effects.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.15 [an opponent objects]: For one who assumes existence, there would be neither permanence nor extinction, for cyclic existence is the continuous rise and fall of cause and effect.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/14 There are those who accept and admit distinctions in speaking of dharmas, yet do not fall into severance or permanence. For instance, the sutras teach that the five skandhas are impermanent, suffering, empty and without self, but without severance, and they teach that sins and merits are never lost throughout countless kalpas, yet this is not permanence, and why? Because such dharmas constantly arise and cease in a succession of causes and effects, coming and going without interruption. Because they arise and cease, there is no permanence. Because they have continuity, there is no severance.

Reply:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

15. If Nāgārjuna is correct, this objection goes, there is a constant becoming and destruction of causally related phenomena. This, after all, is the heart of the Madhyamika analysis of phenomenal reality. But if that is so, these phenomena that are becoming and being destroyed must exist. Otherwise, what comes into and passes out of existence? It is these entities, this opponent argues, that we must posit. And from positing such entities, neither their complete nonexistence nor their permanence follows. For they are by definition impermanently existent. Nāgārjuna replies in the next verse:

Kārikā XXI.16

उदयव्ययसंतानः फलहेत्वोर्भवः स चेत्।
व्ययस्यापुनरुत्पत्तेर्हेतूच्छेदः प्रसज्यते॥१६॥

udayavyayasaṃtānaḥ phalahetvor bhavaḥ sa cet |
vyayasyāpunarutpatter hetūcchedaḥ prasajyate ||16||

若因果生滅 相續而不斷
滅更不生故 因即為斷滅

ruò yīn guǒ shēng miè xiàng;xiāng xù ér bù duàn
miè gèng;gēng bù shēng gù yīn jí wéi duàn miè

།འབྲས་བུ་རྒྱུ་ཡི་འབྱུང་འཇིག་གི།།རྒྱུན་དེ་སྲིད་པ་ཡིན་འགྱུར་ན།
།འཇིག་ལ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་མེད་པའི་ཕྱིར།།རྒྱུ་ནི་ཆད་པར་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| ’bras bu rgyu yi ’byuṅ ’jig gi | | rgyun de srid pa yin ’gyur na |
| ’jig la yaṅ skye med pa’i phyir | | rgyu ni chad par thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 16 - (Nagarjuna asserts) If such an existence expresses the continuity in the rise and fall (i.e., disintegration) of a being in a cause-effect relationship, then, since the fall does not have the nature of arising again, it will necessarily be the disruption of cause.

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply:*16] If becoming is a series of the arising and passing away of causes and effects, then the annihilation of the cause follows from the repeated non-arising of what has ceased.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is assumed that becoming is the series of uprising and ceasing of the cause and effect, then with the repeated non-arising of that which ceases, it will follow that there will be annihilation of the cause.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the continuity of rising and passing away is the continuity of cause and effect,
it follows that only one [occurance] of arising and of passing away is the annihlation of causality.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
16. Appearance, disappearance, and continuity,
Relying upon result and reason, the existence really exists there.
By passing through, relying upon the birth, which does never occur once more again,
Then the cutting the reason might be done presumably.

STRENG (Skt):
16. Nargarjuna replies: If this is existence: namely, the continuity of originating and stopping of causes and product, It would logically follow that the cause is destroyed because the destroyed thing does not originate again.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v15 If causes and effects arise and cease
In succession, with no cessation
Since what has ceased does not arise again,
The cause should be considered extinct.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the continuity of the rising and passing of cause-effect is becoming, because what has passed will not be created again, it will follow that the cause is annihilated.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If a continuum of arising and ceasing
Causes and effects constitutes existence,
That which is destroyed does not arise again
And so causes are annihilated. [XXI.16]

GARFIELD (Tb):
16. If cyclic existence is the continuous
Becoming and destruction of causes and effects,
Then from the nonarising of the destroyed
Follows the nonexistence of cause.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
16. If cyclic existence were the continuous
Becoming and destruction of causes and effects,
Since that which is destroyed does not arise again,
Causes would, absurdly, be annihilated.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.16 [Nagarjuna replies]: If cyclic existence is the continuity of the rise and fall of cause and effect, then, since the fall does not have the nature of arising, it will necessarily be the end of the cause.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/15 If you say that by virtue of the continuous succession of causes and effects, dharmas are neither severed nor permanent, then if a ceased dharma has already ceased it will not arise again, and this is severance of the cause. If the cause is cut off, how can there be continuity, since what has ceased does not arise again?

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Sautrantika position was no more different. They assumed that bhava is none other than bhava, the process of becoming represented by the series (samtana) of arising and ceasing of effect and cause (phalabetvoh) As such, they believed that their conception of existence does not come under either eternalism or annihilationism.

However, Nagarjuna has a different perception. He assumes that if the process of becoming (bhava) is analysed into a series of arising and ceasing of effect and cause, as the Sautrantikas did, one is compelled to recognize the non-rebirth (a-punar-utpatti) of that which has ceded, and there would be complete annihilation of the cause. This is similar to the argument used at XXI.7.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

16. Given the pervasiveness of dependent arising, the impermanence of all causes and effects, and the emptiness of the relation of dependence itself, causes and effects themselves must be regarded as noninherently existent. For the person who equates existence with inherent existence, this forces the denial of the very becoming and destruction he has posited as the only inherently existent phenomena. The point against the objection asserted in the previous verse is this: The very fact that constant becoming and destruction characterizes reality entails that at no point can anything be identified as an entity in the robust sense - a thing with a nature that persists over time. The very phenomena the opponent wants to posit as existent in order to make sense of the series of becoming and destruction are, when that series is taken seriously, themselves nonexistent. But the kind of full existence the opponent feels compelled to posit is in any case not only impossible given this situation, but unnecessary as well. Nāgārjuna now turns to the soteriological implications of this view of becoming, destruction, and entitihood:

Kārikā XXI.17

सद्भावस्य स्वभावेन नासद्भावश्च युज्यते।
निर्वाणकाले चोच्छेदः प्रशमाद्भवसंततेः॥१७॥

法住於自性 不應有有無
涅槃滅相續 則墮於斷滅

།དངོས་པོ་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་ཡོད་ན།།དངོས་མེད་འགྱུར་བར་མི་རིགས་སོ།
།མྱ་ངན་འདས་པའི་དུས་ན་ཆད།།སྲིད་རྒྱུན་རབ་ཏུ་ཞི་ཕྱིར་རོ།།

sadbhāvasya svabhāvena nāsadbhāvaś ca yujyate |
nirvāṇakāle cocchedaḥ praśamād bhavasaṃtateḥ ||17||

fǎ zhù yū;yú;wū zì xìng bù yīng yǒu yǒu wú
niè pán miè xiàng;xiāng xù zé duò yū;yú;wū duàn miè

| dṅos po ṅo bo ñid yod na | | dṅos med 'gyur bar mi rigs so |
| (13a1)mya ṅan 'das pa'i dus na chad | | srid rgyun rab tu źi phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 17 - It is not justifiable to assert that an existence in virtue of self-nature becomes a non-existence. For, at the time of nirvana, there is a disruption in virtue of the quiescence of the continuity of being.

JONES (Skt):
[I7] The nonexistence of a real entity existing through self-existence is not admissible. At the time of nirvana, there will be cessation because of the stilling of the stream of becoming.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The non-existence of that which possesses existence in terms of self-nature is not appropriate. [On the contrary,] at the time of freedom, there will be annihilation as a result of the appeasement of the stream of becoming.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
By means of the self-nature of a real existent, a nonreal existent does not occur.
At the time of *nirvāṇa* there is annihilation of the uninterrupted series of births and transmigrations on account of calmness.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
17. Belonging to the real existence, and relying upon subjective existence,
There is no concrete situation for the non-concrete existence to be bound by abstract conditions at all.
In the time when we are staying in the serene state of the balanced autonomic nervous system.
Relying upon the tranquility, even the existence itself will continue its no stopping state further.

STRENG (Skt):
17. If there is self-existence of something which is intrinsically existing, then non-existence does not obtain. At the time of nirvana there is destruction of the cycle of existence (bhavasamtana) as a result of the cessation.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v16 A dharma abiding in its own self-nature
Should not both existent and nonexistent.
Nirvana extinguishes the continuity
And thus falls into severance.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If things exist essentially, it would be unreasonable [for them] to become nothing. At the time of nirvana [they] would be annihilated, because the continuity of becoming is totally pacified.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If things have an essential nature,
They cannot reasonably become nonexistent.
When suffering is transcended there is annihilation,
For the continuum of existence is then entirely pacified. [XXI.17]

GARFIELD (Tb):
17. If entities exist with entitihood,
Then their nonexistence would make no sense.
But at the time of nirvana,
Cyclic existence ceases completely, having been pacified.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
17. If things existed inherently,
Then their nonexistence would make no sense.
At the time of nirvana, because it is complete pacification,
The continuum of cyclic existence would be annihilated.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.17 [Nagarjuna continues]: If things exist in terms of self-nature, their non-existence makes no sense. Nirvana would be seen as annihilation since it's the cessation of the stream of becoming.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/16 At the time when a dharma is fixed within the characteristic of existence, it is not without characteristics, just as a jug, when it is fixed in the characteristics of a jug, does not have the characteristics of destruction. As long as the jug exists, it does not have the characteristics of destruction, but when the jug does not exist, there are no characteristics of destruction either, and why? Because if there is no jug, there is nothing to be destroyed. Understood in this way, cessation is untenable.

Without cessation there can be no production either, and why? Because arising and ceasing are mutually interdependent, and also because there would be the errors of permanence etc. Therefore, existence and nonexistence may not co-exist in one dharma.

(29a18) Also, your earlier assertion that because there is a succession of arising and ceasing of cause and effect, one can accept dharmas without falling into severance and permanence, is not correct, and why? You say that because there is a continuity of cause and effect, there is continuity of characteristics of the three existences, and that nirvana means continuity of the characteristic of cessation. If this were so, then at the time of nirvana, one ought to fall into severance and cessation, because of the cessation of the continuity of characteristics of the three existences.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna's attention is now directed at the Sautrantika view, for it is that which finally contributed to the "personalist theory" (pudgala-vada) of the Vatsiputriyas. The Sautrantika will dismiss the Sarvastivada view, insisting that there is no way is which nirvana can be explained in terms of their notion of self-nature (svabhava), especially because what is really existing (sadbhava) on its own (svabhavena) cannot become a non-existent (asadbhava).

However, the Sautrantika will say that as a result of the appeasement of the series of becoming (bhava-samtati), there is annihilation at the time of nirvana. Having stated this position, Nagarjuna proceeds to analyse its implications.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

17. If we thought that anything had inherent-existence - whether entities, processes, or arising and its determinants - that could not possibly cease in nirvāṇa. So this view would render Buddhist soteriology incoherent and is therefore, since it purports to be a view of the nature of cyclic existence by contrast with nirvāṇa, untenable.

The next three verses sum up the results of this investigation regarding the possibility of conceiving of empirical reality as consisting of a series of momentary phenomena, each one of which gives rise to the next through an inherently real nexus of destruction and becoming. The structure of the argument is by now familiar:

Kārikā XXI.18

चरमे न निरुद्धे च प्रथमो युज्यते भवः।
चरमे नानिरुद्धे च प्रथमो युज्यते भवः॥१८॥

carame na niruddhe ca prathamo yujyate bhavaḥ |
carame nāniruddhe ca prathamo yujyate bhavaḥ ||18||

若初有滅者 則無有後有
初有若不滅 亦無有後有

ruò chū yǒu miè zhě zé wú yǒu hòu yǒu
chū yǒu ruò bù miè yì wú yǒu hòu yǒu

།ཐ་མ་འགགས་པར་གྱུར་པ་ན། །སྲིད་པ་དང་པོ་རིགས་མི་འགྱུར།
།ཐ་མ་འགགས་པར་མ་གྱུར་ཚེ། །སྲིད་པ་དང་པོ་རིགས་མི་འགྱུར། །

| tha ma ’gags par gyur pa na | | srid pa daṅ po rigs mi ’gyur |
| tha ma ’gags par ma gyur tshe | | srid pa daṅ po rigs mi ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 18 - It is not justifiable to assert that a being arises only at a time when a previous being ceases to be, nor also that a being arises when a previous being does not cease to be.

JONES (Skt):
[18] If the last has ceased, the existence of a first one arising is not admissible. If the last has *not* ceased, the existence of a first one arising is not admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
It is not proper to assume that there is first becoming when the last has ceased. Nor is it proper to assume that there is first becoming when the last has not ceased.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
A being first occurs where the last has not ceased [or]
a being first occurs where the last has not not ceased.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
18. The ultimate ends are not always stopped,
And Existences are usually restraint by the most former top.
Even at the latest End, there is no situation, where any kind of hindrance does not exist,
And Existences are usually restraint by the most former top.

STRENG (Skt):
18. If the last part of existence is destroyed, the first part of existence does not obtain. If the last part of existence is not destroyed, the first part of existence does not obtain.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v17 If the first existence ceases
There will be no subsequent existence.
If the first existence does not cease
There will also be no subsequent existence.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the end stops, it is unreasonable for there to be a beginning of becoming. When the end does not stop, it is unreasonable for there to be a beginning of becoming.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the last ceases,
The first existence does not make sense.
When the last does not cease,
The first existence does not make sense. [XXI.18]

GARFIELD (Tb):
18. If the final one has ceased,
The existence of a first one makes no sense.
If the final one has not ceased,
The existence of a first one makes no sense.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
18. If the final moment were to cease,
The first moment of life would make no sense.
If the final moment were not to cease,
The first moment of life would make no sense.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.18 It is not proper to assume either that one first begins after a previous one has all of this implies Emptiness.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/17 'The first existence' means existence in the present time period. 'Subsequent existence' means existence in a future period of time. If the first existence ceases and afterwards there is the subsequent existence, it will be uncaused, and this is not correct. Therefore, we cannot say that the first existence ceases and (then) there is the subsequent existence.

(29a27) If the first existence does not cease, there will not be any subsequent existence either, and why? If the subsequent existence exists when the first existence has not yet ceased, this would be two existences existing at one time, and this is not correct. Therefore, if the first existence does not cease, there will be no subsequent existence.

Question: The subsequent existence does not arise through the cessation of the first existence, nor does it arise through the non-cessation of the first existence. It is simply produced at the moment of cessation.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Sautrantika theory of a series of momentary existences is under investigation here. As mentioned before, the Sautrantikas were often faced with the problem of explaining arising (utpada). Thus, Nagarjuna argues that the first (moment of) becoming (prathamo bharah) cannot occur when the last (carama) has ceased, for there will be nothing to give rise to the former. This is what was referred to as the cessation of the cause (hetuccheda) at XXI. 16. The other alternative is to assume that the entity of the last moment has not ceased (aniruddha), and this, of course, makes it difficult for the first becoming to occur at all.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

18. If the momentary phenomenon prior to a present momentary phenomenon has ceased prior to the arising of the present one, there is no basis for that arising. But if it has not ceased, then its destruction cannot be an occasion for the arising of the subsequent event. So the prior momentary phenomenon can neither. have ceased nor not ceased.

Kārikā XXI.19

निरुध्यमाने चरमे प्रथमो यदि जायते।
निरुध्यमान एकः स्याज्जायमानोऽपरो भवेत्॥१९॥

nirudhyamāne carame prathamo yadi jāyate |
nirudhyamāna ekaḥ syāj jāyamāno ’paro bhavet ‖19‖

若初有滅時 而後有生者
滅時是一有 生時是一有

ruò chū yǒu miè shí ér hòu yǒu shēng zhě
miè shí shì yī yǒu shēng shí shì yī yǒu

|གལ་ཏེ་ཐ་མ་འགག་བཞིན་ན། །དང་པོ་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར་ན་ནི།
|འགག་བཞིན་པ་ནི་གཅིག་འགྱུར་ཞིང༌། །སྐྱེ་བཞིན་པ་ཡང་གཞན་དུ་འགྱུར།།

| gal te tha ma ’gag bźin na | | daṅ po skye bar (2)’gyur na ni |
| ’gag bźin pa ni gcig ’gyur źiṅ | | skye bźin pa yaṅ gźan du ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 19 - If a being arises in the ceasing process of the previous being, then perhaps the ceasing process refers to one kind of being and the arising process to another.

JONES (Skt):
[19] If the first one is being born as the last one is ceasing, the one ceasing would be one thing and the one being born would be another.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the first were to be born when the last is ceasing, then that which is ceasing would be one and that which is being born would be another.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the first is born where the last is presently ceasing,
what is ceasing would be one and what is being born would be another.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
19. When everything has been stopped, or at the latest end,
Then the earliest one at that time is born.
All kinds of stopping must be supposed to exist only one,
And so the simple fact of going on at the present moment can exist.

STRENG (Skt):
19. If the first part of existence were produced while the final part were being destroyed, There would be one thing being destroyed and being produced both at the same time.

BOCKING (Ch):
21v18 If in the moment of cessation of the first existence,
There is a subsequent existence produced.
The moment of cessation is one existence,
The moment of production is another existence.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the beginning is created while the end is stopping, the stopping would be one and the creating would be another.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the last is in the process of ceasing
While the first arises,
There is one that is ceasing
And another that arises. [XXI.19]

GARFIELD (Tb):
19. If when the final one was ceasing,
Then the first was arising,
The one ceasing would be one.
The one arising would be another.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
19. If the final moment were ceasing
And the prior one were arising,
The one ceasing would be one, and
The one arising would be another.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.19 If the first were to begin while the last is ending, then the first would be one and the last would be another.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/18 If the subsequent existence is produced in the moment of cessation of the first existence, this is two existences together in one moment, one existence being the moment of cessation, the other existence being the moment of production.

Question: It is not that the moment of cessation and the moment of production are two existences together, it is merely that we manifestly see that when the first existence-ceases, the subsequent existence arises.

Reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Assume that the first becoming occurs at the time when the last is ceasing (nirudhyamana). Nagarjuna insists that, in that case, what is ceasing is one thing and what is arising is something completely different (aparo). Nagarjuna is here referring to the implications of the theory of moments, namely, the recognition of absolute distinctions.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

19. That is, if we say that the cessation of the previous momentary phenomenon is simultaneous with the arising of its successor, then being simultaneous but distinct, the two phenomena are separable and hence independent. If so, there is no basis for positing any connection between them. This is yet another application of the principle of the independence of separable phenomena.

Kārikā XXI.20

न चेन्निरुध्यमानश्च जायमानश्च युज्यते।
साधं च म्रियते येषु तेषु स्कन्धेषु जायते॥२०॥

na cen nirudhyamānaś ca jāyamānaś ca yujyate |
sārdhaṃ ca mriyate yeṣu teṣu skandheṣu jāyate ||20||

若言於生滅 而謂一時者
則於此陰死 即於此陰生

ruò yán yū;yú;wū shēng miè ér wèi yī shí zhě
zé yū;yú;wū cǐ yīn sǐ jí yū;yú;wū cǐ yīn shēng

།གལ་ཏེ་འགག་བཞིན་སྐྱེ་བཞིན་དག།ལྷན་ཅིག་ཏུ་ཡང་རིགས་མིན་ན།
།ཕུང་པོ་གང་ལ་འཆི་འགྱུར་བ།།དེ་ལ་སྐྱེ་བ་འབྱུང་འགྱུར་རམ།།

| gal te ’gag bźin skye bźin dag | | lhan cig tu yaṅ rigs min na |
| phuṅ po gaṅ la ’chi ’gyur ba | | de la skye ba ’byuṅ ’gyur ram |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 20 - If it is not justifiable to assert that existence can be expressed in the concurrent process of arising and ceasing, then it should arise as well as cease within the same realm of the skandhas (i.e., the five aggregates of being).

JONES (Skt):
[20] But if the one ceasing is the one being born, then one ceases in the aggregates in which one is also being born.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is asserted that the ceasing is also the being born, this would not be props. For, in that case, whatever that is born in relation to the aggregates, would also be dying at the same time.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If not, presently ceasing and presently being born occur where those *skandhas* being born are the same as these dying.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
20. If the situation there, is not stopped actually,
The real situation of flying might be stopped.
And if the whole situations are stopped then,
Relying upon them, or relying upon miscellaneous things and phenomena, Birth will be realized.

STRENG (Skt):
20. If the one "being destroyed" and the one "being produced" cannot exist together, Can someone be produced in those "groups of universal elements" (skandhas) in which he is also "dying"?

BOCKING (Ch):
21v19 If you say that arising and ceasing
Take place simultaneously
Then when these skandhas die,
These same skandhas are born.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If it is also unreasonable for stopping and creating to be together, aren’t the aggregates that die also those that are created?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Hence, it does not make sense either
For ceasing and arising to occur together.
Could the aggregates with which one dies
Be the ones with which one is born as well? [XXI.20]

GARFIELD (Tb):
20. If, absurdly, the one arising
And the one ceasing were the same,
Then whoever is dying with the aggregates
Is also arising.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
20. It does not even make sense that the one arising
And the one ceasing are simultaneous.
Whoever is dying with respect to the aggregates
Would also be arising with respect to them.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.20 It makes no sense that the one arising is the one ending. Were this so, then one being formed of the fluxing aggregates is simultaneously dying with them.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/19 If the moment of arising and the moment of ceasing are one moment and not two existences, and you say that in the moment when the first' existence ceases, the subsequent existence arises, then according to whatever skandhas one dies in, these skandhas should be (re)born, and one should not be reborn in any other skandhas. Why is this? Because the one who dies will be the same as the one who is reborn. But these dharmas of 'dying' and 'being born' are opposites, and cannot both occupy one moment or one place. Therefore, your earlier statements that the moment of cessation and the moment of arising are one moment and not two existences, and that it is merely a case of manifestly seeing that when the first existence ceases, the subsequent existence is produced, are not correct.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Further complications will arise if it is assumed that something that ceases is also arising. Nagarjuna is not prepared to accept such an occurrence because this would mean the simultaneous death and birth of the aggregates. Therefore, an occurrence is not explained by a strictly momentary theory of existence advocated by the Sautrantikas.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

20. Finally, we don’t want to identify arising and ceasing, claiming that they are the same phenomenon, since they are by definition contraries. It would be tantamount, Nāgārjuna claims, to saying that a person who is dying is simultaneously being born. From the standpoint of one who wants to posit arising and destruction as the two complementary inherently existent bases of cyclic existence, it would hardly do to say that they are one and the same thing.

Kārikā XXI.21

एवं त्रिष्वपि कालेषु न युक्ता भवसंततिः।
त्रिषु कालेषु या नास्ति सा कथं भवसंततिः॥२१॥

evaṃ triṣv api kāleṣu na yuktā bhavasaṃtatiḥ |
triṣu kāleṣu yā nāsti sā kathaṃ bhavasaṃtatiḥ ||21||

三世中求有 相續不可得
若三世中無 何有有相續

sān shì zhōng qiú yǒu xiàng;xiāng xù bù kě dé;děi;de
ruò sān shì zhōng wú hé yǒu yǒu xiàng;xiāng xù

|དེ་ལྟར་དུས་གསུམ་དག་ཏུ་ཡང་།སྲིད་པའི་རྒྱུན་ནི་མི་རིགས་ན།
|དུས་གསུམ་དག་ཏུ་གང་མེད་པ།།དེ་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་སྲིད་པའི་རྒྱུན།།

| de ltar dus gsum dag tu (3)yaṅ | | srid pa'i rgyun ni mi rigs na |
| dus gsum dag tu gaṅ med pa | | de ni ji ltar srid pa'i rgyun |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 21 - Consequently, the continuity of being is not possible within the three temporal moments. As it does not exist within the three temporal moments, in what manner does it exist? - Note: Reference to past, present, and future.

JONES (Skt):
[21] Therefore, the stream of becoming is not connected to the three times (i.e., past, present, and future). How can there be a stream of becoming that is not in the three times?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Thus, the stream of becoming is not proper in the context of the three periods of time. How can there be a stream of becoming that does not exist during the three periods of time?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Thus the continuing series of births and transmigrations is not
reasonable in the three times. How can that which does not exist in the three times be [regarded] as a "series"?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
21. Following like this, relying upon the three kinds of time, past, present, and future, or relying upon the time itself,
The talks about continuity of being born and the continuity of cause and effect, has ended in talks.
Even in the three kinds of times, they do not really exist,
And so how is it possible for such a kind of stopping continuity of birth and continuity of cause and effect?

STRENG (Skt):
21. Thus, the chain of existences is not possible in any of the tree times i.e. past, present, and future; And if it does not exist in the three times, how can the chain of existences exist?

ROBINSON (Skt):
Thus succession of becoming is not valid in any of the three times; how can that which does not exist in the three times be a succession of becoming?

BOCKING (Ch):
21v20 Seeking a continuity of existence in the three periods of time
It cannot be found.
If it is not existent in the three periods of time,
What continuity of existence exists?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Likewise, if the continuity of becoming is not reasonable at any of the three times, how can there be a continuity of becoming which isnon-existent in the three times?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Therefore, nowhere in the three times,
Could there reasonably be any continuum of existence.
How could something outside o[the three times
Be the continuum of existence? [XXI.21]

GARFIELD (Tb):
21. Since the series of cyclic existence is not evident
In the three times,
If it is not in the three times,
How could there be a series of cyclic existence?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
21. Since the continuum of life makes no sense
In terms of any of the three temporal periods,
How could that which does not exist in the three temporal periods
Be the continuum of life?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
21.21 Thus continuity of being is not found in any of the three times. If it is not found in time, in what manner can it be said to exist at all?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

21/20 'The three existences' means desire-existence, form-existence and no-form existence. It is because one is unable to attain true insight within beginningless samsara and death, the three existences eternally succeed each other. Now, even if we earnestly seek for them in the three periods of time, they cannot be found, and if not within the three periods of time, then where can this continuous succession of existences take place? You should know that the continuity of existence exists only by virtue of delusions and perverted views. In reality, it does not exist.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The conclusion is inevitable that the series of becoming (bhava-samtati) is not appropriately explained in terms of the three periods of time, a concept which, as shown in the previous chapter, is not empirically grounded.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

21. And finally, if we cannot conceive of the domain of conventional phenomena as inherently existent in time, there is no sense in suggesting that it has some kind of transtemporal existence. The object of analysis here is the conventional world we inhabit. So, Nāgārjuna concludes, we cannot, upon analysis, resolve the domain of conventional phenomena into a series of constantly arising, constantly ceasing, yet individually inherently existent momentary phenomena, connected to one another and characterized by inherently real arising and ceasing. As this target ontology was among the subtlest of the pre-Madhyamika views of the nature of reality, dependent arising, and impermanence (and is indeed not by any means a relic within Theravada Buddhism) and as it represents a plausible interpretation of fundamental Buddhist tenets, this refutation is an appropriate close to the portion of the text concerned directly with the analysis of the fundamental structure of conventional reality. With this in hand, Nāgārjuna turns in the final six chapters to topics concerned with the nature of ultimate reality: buddhahood, prominent incorrect views about the ultimate, the Four Noble Truths and emptiness, nirvāṇa, and the twelve limbs of dependent origination.

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Chapter XXII

तथागतपरीक्षा द्वाविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

觀如來品第二十二(十六偈)

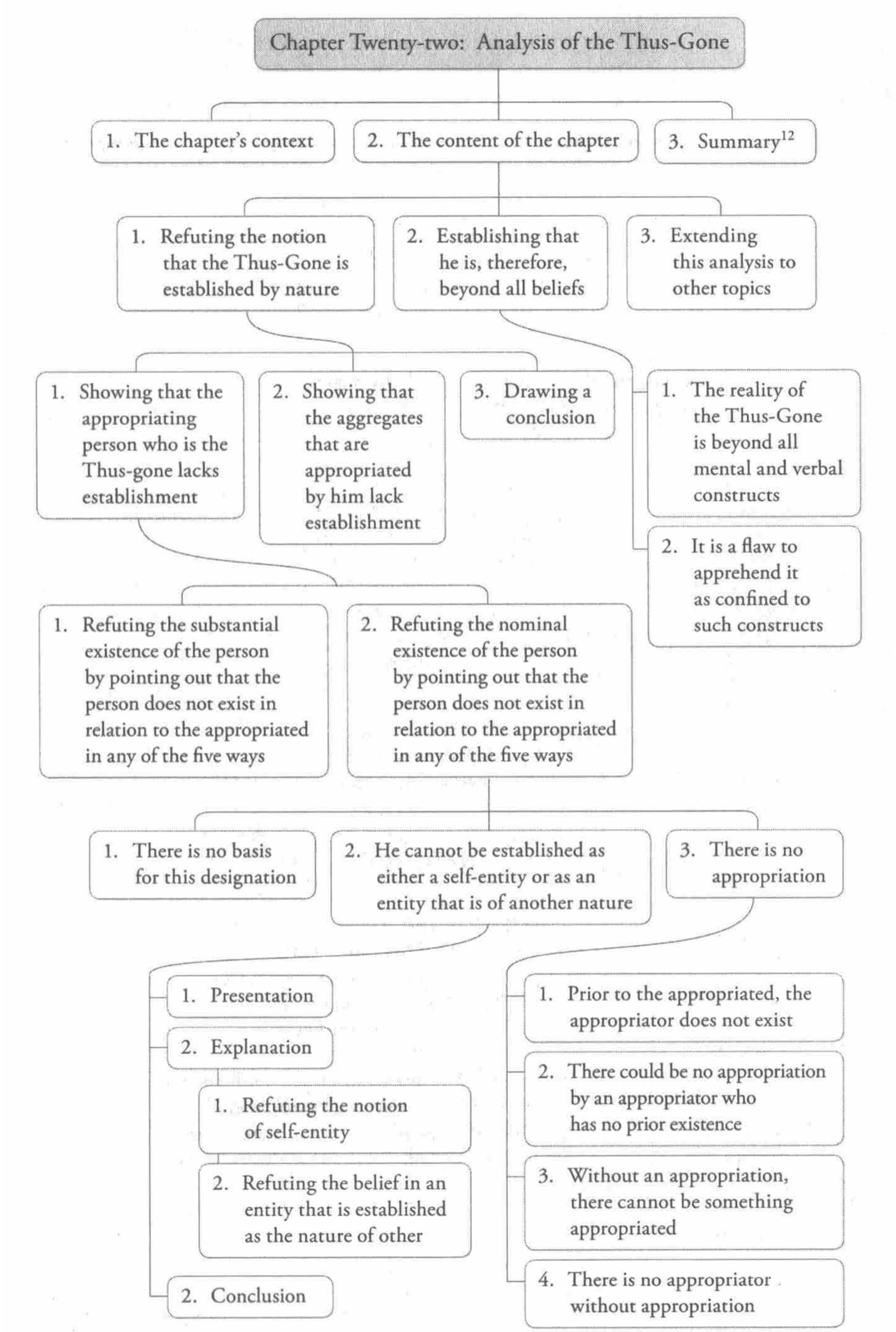
།དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་གཉིས་པའོ།།

tathāgataparīkṣā nāma dvāviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XXII: Examination of the Tathagata

Chapter XXII

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We now begin the fifth section of the extensive explanation of selflessness: the presentation of the essential emptiness of the continuum of life. This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the Tathagata; and the refutation of the essential existence of the afflictions. This chapter constitutes the first of those two parts.

EXPLANATION:

Here some say that the continuum of life exists essentially because the Tatha gata exists essentially. The Victor, for the benefit of sentient beings, accumulated vast merits for either three or seven countless aeons and attained buddhahood through these long efforts. If the continuum of his life had not existed essentially, the Tathagata could not exist, because the attainment of buddhahood depends on going through many births in cyclic existence.

Efforts have been made through the various lights of reason to dispel the deep darkness of your ignorance. But, because you have been habituated to it for a very long time it has not been dispelled. This shows that because your deep ignorance has not been dispelled, the continuum of cyclic existence has not been terminated **[371]** and instead has been prolonged. If the Tathagata existed essentially, the continuum of cyclic existence would exist essentially as well, but he does not.

This discussion has four parts: the refutation of the existence of the Tatha gata through his own characteristic, showing that there is no room for others' false views, the presentation of the deficiencies of those false views, and applying arguments to those other views.

SUMMARY:

If phenomena existed through their own characteristics, the ontological status of the Tathagata and his attributes would not make any sense. But their ontological status is completely tenable insofar as they are dependently originated and empty of existence through their own characteristics. Thus it is completely tenable in this system, and only in this system, to posit the Tathagata as a refuge object.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XXII - Examination of the Tathagata

This chapter investigates the question of the Tathagata. The term itself is an interesting one in that it refers to one who has attained or arrived at the state of truth (tathata or tattva). It is normally translated as thus-come or thus-gone.

In reality, this chapter is a logical consequence of what has been hinted at in the previous chapter. There we have seen that Nagarjuna advertently or inadvertently stressed the concept of bhava (rather than bhava), the realm of true worldly existence beyond any conceptualization. It is in this realm that the true meaning of a Tathagata will have to be understood. He goes through the usual pattern of thought but, as in Chapter XVIII, Verse 8, he introduces the so-called four-cornered logic, i.e., the four and only four possible ways of viewing anything. He applies the elements of this logic to the concepts of sunya (void) and concludes that, after all, sunya is spoken of only as a provisional means of understanding the true realm.

The two basic questions discussed here are (1) whether or not a Tathagata lives after death and (2) whether or not a Tathagata is concurrent with the five skandhas. These questions are reminiscent of the extreme distaste of metaphysical questions (i.e., "questions which tend not to edification") which the historical Buddha expressed when asked about certain speculative views on the eternal or non-eternal nature of the world, etc.. The questions are, of course, ill-directed because they discriminate or bifurcate the concept of Tathagata. In Verses 15 & 16 he finally asserts that there is a basic identity between the realms of the Tathagata and our mundane world. As a consequence, the world of truth, the tattva, the tathata, and the Tathagata are all one and the same, irrespective of the names we advertently or inadvertently employ.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

22. *"Thus Gone One" (tathagata*). A host of epithets were used to describe the attainments of the person who was able to understand the nature of human existence and overcome the suffering associated with it. Two of them stand prominent. These were *buddha* or the "enlightened one" and *tathagata* or the "thus gone one," and even these two terms were used synonymously. The lust of these describes the ideal achieved by one who was aspiring for knowledge or understanding, an aspiration clearly expressed in the famous Upanisadic statement: "From darkness, lead me to light," (*tamaso mam jyotir gamaya*).112 In the *Upanisads*, this enlightenment was nothing short of "omniscience" (*sarvajña*),119 even though this term was not used in a technical sense. For the Buddha, enlightenment is attained as a result of the realization of the means and limits of knowledge (see the above analysis of the *Kaccanagotta-sutta).*

The second epithet, *tathagata*, led to more misunderstanding and misinterpretation in the Buddhist context. As the term implies, it explains the ultimate goal to be achieved by such enlightenment. It represents an attempt to answer the aspirations of the human beings who were looking for immortality avoiding the endless cycle of births and deaths. In the *Upanisads* it is expressed in the statement: "From death, lead me to immortality," (*mrtyor mam amrtam gamaya*).113 According to the *Upanoads,* the "enlightened one" who understands the nature of the real self (*atman*), upon the dissolution of the psychophysical personality, is united with the universal ideal self (*brahman*) and thereby enjoys eternal life. The Buddha, who was not willing to admit the existence of such a state, merely maintained that the "enlightened one" (*buddha*) is also freed from continuous becoming (*bhava*). Hence, the *tathagata* or the "thus gone one" is contrasted with one who is subjected to becoming (*bhava*) or re-becoming (*punabbhava*).

With the attainment of enlightenment and freedom from grasping (*upadana*), the freed one leads a happy and contented life, while at the same time not longing for a future existence. Enlightenment (*bodhi*) is synonymous with waning of craving (*tanhakkhaya*). However, the unenlightened person, bound by craving and grasping, not only looks for eternal life beyond the grave (*param marana*), but also expects to see something more mysterious and awe-inspiring (*acchariya-abbhuta*) in the life of a freed one who is alive. It is for this reason that two major questions were raised in relation to the conception of a *tathagata*. The first is the question as to whether the *tathagata* is identical or different from the psychophysical personality.114 The second is the question as to whether the *tathagata* survives the destruction of the psychophysical personality.115 This may explain why, in the early discourses, whenever such questions were raised they were raised more in relation to a *tathagata* than in connection with a *buddha*. Thus, after a detailed examination of the problems of human existence, problems such as action, moral responsibility, or becoming, it was natural for Nagarjuna to direct his attention to the questions pertaining to the conception of ultimate goal as envisaged in Buddhism. In doing so, he was compelled to deal, fast of all, with the meaning of the concept *tathagata*.

Nagarjuna's examination of the *tathagata* follows the line of analysis found in the early discourses. While early Buddhism confronted problems relating to the conception of *tathagata* because it was understood in terms of the notion of a permanent and eternal self (*atman*), Nagarjuna is here struggling with the same conception as explained in relation to the notion of a real substance (*svabhava*). Nagarjuna was not willing to consider the *tathagata*, conceived in such a metaphysical way, as identical with the aggregates (*skandha*). This was the Sarvastivada position which Nagarjuna was rejecting (XXII. 2). Nor was he prepared to accept the alternative suggested by the Sautrantikas, who emphasized non-identity or difference. The notion of *anatman* (no-self) referred to at XXII.3 is really the conception of "other-nature" (*parabhava*) that was propounded by the Sautrantikas. Inada's explanation that "the use of the term *anatman* here is not to be confused with the cardinal Buddhist doctrine by the same term,"116 therefore needs to be qualified as the "cardinal *early* Buddhist doctrine," for the Sautrantikas were guilty of propounding a theory of *anatman* which emphasized real *difference*. Nagarjuna was therefore ready to assert that a *tathagata* conceived in terms of either "self-nature" (*svabhava*) or "other-nature" (*parabhava*) is not evident.

The question whether the *tathagata* is dependent is taken up next. Its dependence or independence is then rejected primarily because once again it is understood in terms of substantial dependence (*svabhavata upadanam*) or substantial independence (which is the implication of "other-nature" or *parabhava*)(XXII.9). Views of *tathagata* as "empty" (*sunya*) or "not empty" (*asunya*) are considered, and these again are particular *views* (expressed in the *iti*-formula) and are therefore rejected.

How the notion of a living *tathagata*, conceived of in a rather metaphysical way, leads to the belief in a *tathagata* after death is explicitly stated by Nagarjuna at XXII. 13. Nagarjuna's argument is that if the *tathagata* were to be considered empty in terms of self-nature (*svabhavatah*), any thought of his being existent or non-existent after death (*param-nirodhat*) is not appropriate. This, indeed, is the view expressed by the Buddha in the early discourses.117

The concluding statement of this chapter is rather significant, especially in view of the nature of the "freed one" (*nibbuta*) or "freedom" (*nibbana*) as enunciated in the early discourses. We have already pointed out that freedom (*nibbana*) is a state unconditioned by dispositions (*asankhata*). It is not a state that is uncaused (*appaticca-samuppanna*). The *tathagata* is, therefore, unconditioned by dispositions but not in-dependent. Elsewhere Nagarjuna insists that there is nothing in the world that is independent (XXIV. 19). The *tathagata* is, therefore, like the universe (*jagat*) wherein the principle of dependence (*pratitya-samutpada*) functions. He has no self (*atman*) or substance (*svabhava*), as it is in the case of the universe (*jagat*).

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Buddhanature

It's not physical, emotional,
Conceptual, impulsive, conscious –
Or anything else.
It does not dwell in us
Nor we in it.
It does not own us.

If it depended on us
Or on anything else,
It would not he in itself.
How could it be anything but itself?
Could what is not itself
Be buddhanature?

What is it apart from itself
Or something else?
Is it independent of body, feeling, thought,
Impulse or consciousness?
It depends on them now
And is set to continue.

Can you say that
Buddhanature is "contingent"
When what is depended on
And what depends are empty?

Can you say that
Buddhanature is "empty"
When "empty" and "not empty"
Are mere ciphers?

Fixed ideas of permanence
And transience,
Finitude and infinity,
Have no place when all is well.

Believers believe in buddhas
Who vanish in nirvana.
Don't imagine empty buddhas
Vanishing or not.

When transfixed
On what's unwavering
Beyond fixation's range,
You see no buddhanature.

Buddhanature
Is the nature of this world.
Buddhanature has no nature,
Nor does this world.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

22. The Buddha

The title used here, "Tathagata," is a compound meaning either "the thus come one" or "the thus gone one," depending on how we parse the Sanskrit - *"tatha-agata"* or *"tatha-gata."* The Tibetans do it the second way and Chinese the first. Either way, it means one who has successfully traversed the path to enlightenment.

There is no "real" Buddha (vv. 3-4) because there is no self-existence, and so the Buddha does not speak since only something "real" can really speak. So too, there is nothing real to say. And so, the Buddha is "the silent one" - his title *"Shakya-muni"* means the "silent one of the Shakya clan" even if this is no longer understood literally: he could speak, as his discourses testify, but without projecting the linguistic distinctions onto reality. The traditional fivefold analysis (v. 8) is to examine whether the Buddha is the aggregates, is independent of the aggregates, or is in the aggregates, or the aggregates are in the Buddha, and whether the Buddha possesses the aggregates. (See R 82.) Verses 8-9 are saying that the Buddha is not self-existent and not a real entity since he is dependent upon the bodily aggregates (vv. 1-6).

The rejection of the four options in verse 11 introduces the idea of the "*emptiness of emptiness*" and the conventionality of all language: "'Empty,' 'not empty,' 'both,' or 'neither' - these should not be said, but they are said only as an indicator *(prajnaptir)."* (See also 24.18.) The word "emptiness" is itself empty (W 59). In short, there is no real, self-existent entity called "emptiness," but, like all nouns, it can be used conventionally to designate something - it indicates the *absence* of self-existence. It differs from other nouns in that there is no phenomenon, either real or empty, to be indicated by the word "emptiness" while other nouns have some (empty) phenomena to be indicated in objective reality. But even so, the unenlightened think that if there is an "indicator" then there is some thing to be in the world "indicated." Nevertheless, the enlightened have gotten beyond projecting our categories onto reality (v. 15). They see that *"shunyata"* is only a fabrication employed to inform us of the fabricated nature of our fabrications.

Verse 16 uses *"svabhava"* in a non-technical sense: whatever is the "nature" or "essence" of the Buddha, that is the "nature" or "essence" of the world. (See 7. 16.) This is not claiming that the Buddha or the world has *svabhava* in the technical sense of *self-existence* but only that the nature of the Buddha and the world is the same - being empty of self-existence. This comes up again in his claim that there is no difference between nirvana and *samsara (25.20).*

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

22

An Examination of the Tathagata

In the sutras, the Buddha taught:

The Tathagata is a phenomenon that never arises, and all other phenomena are similar to the Sugata.

(fn Tathagata, meaning "The Thus Gone One," and Sugata, meaning "The One Gone to Bliss," are epithets for the Buddha.)

JUST AS THE TATHAGATAS of the three times are ultimately unborn, so all other phenomena are the same.

Nagarjuna composed this chapter in response to those who argued, "Samsara exists because the tathagatas, the buddhas, exist. The tathagatas are the ones who gain liberation from samsara, and since they exist, then the samsara that they transcend by attaining enlightenment must also exist."

To help these people overcome their mistaken belief in the true existence of samsara, Nagarjuna proves in this chapter that the Buddha does not truly exist, for if the Buddha does not truly exist, then samsara does not truly exist. Similarly, for samsara to be unreal while the Buddha was real would be illogical. To assert that all phenomena do not truly exist except for the Buddha who does truly exist would be illogical. For if sentient beings did not exist and the Buddha did, the Buddha would have no work to do because there would be no sentient beings to benefit!

The eleventh verse of the chapter reads:

The Tathagata cannot be called "empty," nor "not empty," nor both, nor neither.
Use these terms as mere conventional designations.

At the stage when there is no analysis of the true nature of reality, the Buddha exists. At the stage of slight analysis, when precise knowledge examines the Buddha, it cannot find anything, and therefore it is explained that from the perspective of the eye of wisdom, the Buddha does not exist. At the stage of thorough analysis, one discovers that the actual nature of reality transcends both the existence and the nonexistence of the Buddha. No conceptual fabrications can apply. This is what the first line of this verse teaches. Nevertheless, as it says in the second line, "Use these terms as mere conventional designations," which means that even though none of these expressions of "empty," "not empty," "both empty and not empty," and "neither empty nor not empty" can describe genuine reality, still, sometimes it is good to explain that the Buddha exists, sometimes it is good to explain that the Buddha does not exist, and sometimes it is good to explain that the true nature of the Buddha transcends all conceptual fabrications.

To those who do not believe in the Buddha at all, who have no confidence that there is such a thing as enlightenment, it is good to explain that buddhahood exists as the ultimate result of the path of the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. We can explain that there is a path of wisdom and compassion, and when one reaches the culmination of that path, when one actualizes the ultimate perfection of these two qualities, then one is the Buddha. So the Buddha exists as the result of this path of wisdom and compassion, and it is good to explain things in this way to those people. There are many logical proofs of the existence of this path and its result.

To those who believe that the Buddha truly exists, it is good to explain that when one analyzes logically, no Buddha can actually be found. One cannot find any existence of the Buddha, and in fact Buddha Shakyamuni himself said that the Buddha does not truly exist. Explaining things in this way helps people to let go of their clinging to the Buddha as being real. In fact, the only way to stop thinking that things exist is to develop certainty that they do not exist. When meditating on emptiness, therefore, one must first meditate on the nonaffirming negation (fn A nonaffirming negation is a negation of existence that does not affirm the existence of anything in its place. For example, the statement "There is no spoon" merely negates the existence of a spoon without affirming the existence of anything else. This is opposed to an affirming negation, such as the statement "The lion is not dead." Negating death here implicitly affirms that the lion is alive.) of existence that leaves nothing remaining—emptiness that is like space.

This, however, is still a conceptual fabrication of emptiness, and as such it obscures our vision of the true nature of reality beyond conceptual fabrications. Therefore, to those who cling to the belief that the Buddha is empty or nonexistent, it is good to explain how, in the ultimate sense, reality transcends all conceptual fabrications. It is good to explain how the Buddha neither exists, nor does not exist, nor is some combination of the two, nor is something that is neither of them. This will help them to give up their clinging to the notion of the Buddha's emptiness and to realize the true nature of the Buddha, beyond all notions of what it might be.

When you dream and you know that you are dreaming, do you think of yourself as existent? As nonexistent? As both? Or as neither? How do you think of yourself at that

time? This type of analysis will help you to understand the meaning of this verse.

Thus, the first step is to see what perspective people are taking in terms of these four conceptual extremes. They might think that the Buddha exists or does not exist, or both exists and does not exist, or neither exists nor does not exist. Then, depending upon their conceptual perspective, the teacher explains to them from one of the three stages of analysis—either that the Buddha exists, or that the Buddha does not exist, or that the Buddha's nature transcends both existence and nonexistence. We have to see which perspective it is important to explain at that point, or else we will not be able to be of benefit. Therefore, we have to know: What are the reasons one can say that the Buddha exists? What are the reasons one can say that the Buddha does not exist? Finally, what are the reasons one can say that the Buddha transcends existence and nonexistence?

The twelfth verse refutes the extremes of permanence and impermanence and of finity and infinity:

Permanent, impermanent, and so forth, the four—
Where are they in this peace?
Finite, infinite, and so forth, the four—
Where are they in this peace?

Peace here refers to the true nature of enlightenment, the true nature of the Tathagata. In this nature, the ultimate nature of reality, where is there any permanence or impermanence? Where is there some combination of the two or the absence of the two? Similarly, where is there finity or infinity? Where is there something that is both? Where is there something that is neither?

Depending on what is necessary at the time, it is both permissible and important to describe the Buddha as permanent, impermanent, or transcending both permanence and impermanence. These are the three main stages. For example, someone may think, "Well, the Buddha died, so the Buddha is not here now. The Buddha does not exist now because the Buddha is impermanent." If someone thinks like that, then the explanation to give is that the dharmakaya of natural purity is permanent and unchanging (The *dharmakaya* is one of the three kayas, or dimensions of enlightenment. The other two are the *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya.* The dharmakaya refers to the Buddha's enlightened mind, and the dharmakaya of natural purity is the true nature of that enlightened mind, as well as the true nature of the mind of every sentient being. In its nature it transcends conceptual fabrication; it is the essence of genuine reality. When one realizes its nature perfectly, one attains the dharmakaya free of fleeting stains, awakening into the complete and perfect enlightenment of buddhahood.). The dharmakaya of natural purity is nothing other than the Buddha, and therefore the Buddha is permanent. The Buddha is precisely the natural purity of reality's basic essence, which never ceases to exist.

On the other hand, if people cling to the notion that the Buddha is permanent, then they need the explanation from the perspective of the form kayas, which is that even the Buddha passes into nirvana (fn There are two form kayas, the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya. The former appears to and teaches exclusively the noble bodhisattvas on the ten bodhisattva grounds; the latter appears to and teaches ordinary sentient beings and noble bodhisattvas alike.). Even the Buddha dies. So that is the way these two explanations are used, depending upon the way a person thinks. In fact, the true nature of reality transcends both the permanence and the impermanence of the Buddha. That is the actual nature of reality. It is the same with thinking about things being either finite or infinite—the same analysis applies.

The sixteenth verse of the chapter reads:

Whatever is the nature of the Tathagata,
That is the nature of wandering beings.
The Tathagata has no inherent nature;
Wandering beings have no inherent nature.

The nature of the tathagatas is beyond any concept of what it might be. It is completely free of any stain. It is originally pure.

That, precisely, is the nature of sentient beings—completely beyond concept, completely free of stains, pure from the very beginning. The true nature of the Tathagata and the true nature of sentient beings are exactly the same.

Samsara and nirvana are equality—in their true nature, they are the same. This is what is taught in Mahamudra and Dzogchen, and just as it is taught that samsara and nirvana are equality, so it is with buddhas and sentient beings—they are equality.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XXII

तथागतपरीक्षा द्वाविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

tathāgataparīkṣā nāma dvāviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

觀如來品第二十二(十六偈)

guān rú lái pǐn dì èr shí èr (shí liù jié;jì)

|དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་གཉིས་པའོ།། | de bźin gśegs (5)pa brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa ñi śu gñis pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XXII - Examination of the Tathagata

JONES (Skt):
22. The Buddha

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of the Tathāgata

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
22. Analysis of the Thus Come/fhus Gone

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[22] Examination of Realization (16 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
The Perfectly Realized One

STRENG (Skt):
Section 22 - An Analysis of the "Fully Completed" (Tathágata– the Buddha) In 16 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
22. the Tathagata.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 22 Contemplation of the Thus-Come (Tathagata) 16 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of the Tathagata

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XXII - Analysis of the Thus-Gone

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XXII: Examination of the Tathagata

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XXII - Examination of the Tathāgata

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of the Tathagata

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 22: AN EXAMINATION OF THE TATHAGATA

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/0 Question: Honored in all the worlds, only the Thus-Come has right and perfect knowledge. He is called 'King of the Dharma' and 'omniscient one', so surely he exists?

Reply: Now examine and consider this: If he exists, then he must be grasping. If he does not exist, what is there which grasps? Why is this? The Thus-Come...

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter XVI]

Some argue that the individual birth-death cycle (*bhavasamtati*) is fact because the perfectly realized one (*tathagata*) is incontestable fact.

According to this view the illustrious one, endowed with great compassion and the twin achievements of perfect awareness (*prajna*) and practical wisdom (*upaya*), single-mindedly devoted to ending the misery of existence for all creatures in the three worlds, attained the estate of omniscience, capable of discernment in every form. Throughout perhaps three or perhaps countless aeons, progressing uninterruptedly step by step through undertaking various unsurpassable and exceedingly splendid meritorious deeds out of love for the entire creation, a love surpassing even that for an only son, and obedient to his great compassion for the weal of the entire creation, and becoming in ways appropriate to the need of each, a healing tree for all living creatures in

the great universe being like the universal elements earth, air, fire and water, he attained omniscience.

The one who thus attains this omniscience is the illustrious one. He is held to be the truth (*tattvam*) of all things (*dharmanam*) precisely because he is perfectly realized, because he is perfectly enlightened: the perfectly realized one. So, if there were no individual birth-death cycle there would be no perfectly realized one either. As it is not possible to attain perfect realization in one life, the individual birth-death cycle must be fact because the perfectly realized one is incontestable fact.

In reply we say that it is great ignorance which leads to this notion of an uninterrupted series of births throughout a great period of time. The darkness of a great mass of ignorance may be dispersed by many and various flashes of insight, like the autumn moon; however, if it increases in complexity because of dispositions acquired over a very long time, it is not to be dispersed nor rendered null.

If there were any such thing as a self-existent (*svabhavatah*) perfectly realized one there would be a series of manifestations of such a one in different births throughout a great period of time. But no such thing as a self-existent perfectly realized one is ever directly experienced (*upalabhyate*). But if one's vision is afflicted by a great defect, one is in primal ignorance, and, like two moons and optically illusory hair and gnats, direct experience of the perfectly realized one as self-existent is illusory.

Why it is that the perfectly realized one is not self-existent, Nagarjuna explains in this way:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Twenty Two Examination of the Tathagata (Tathagata-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XXII Examination of the Tathāgata

This is the first of the final set of chapters in the text, all of which deal directly with topics concerning the ultimate truth and its relation to the conventional. The doctrine of the two truths, central to all Mahayana Buddhist philosophy, is most explicitly enunciated in Chapter XXIV. But it is present as a pervasive theme in the text. There is a conventional world of dependently arisen objects with properties, of selves and their properties and relations. And in that world there is conventional truth: Snow is white. Grass is green. Individual humans are distinct from one another and from their material possessions. But there is also an ultimate truth about this world: It is empty (of inherent existence). None of these objects or persons exists from its own side (independently of convention). From the ultimate point of view there are no individual objects or relations between them. Just how these two truths are connected, and how we are to understand them simultaneously, is the central problem of Madhyamika epistemology and metaphysics, and from the standpoint of Madhyamika, a satisfactory solution is essential for Buddhist soteriological practice and ethics as well.

But discourse about the ultimate is perilous in a number of ways. First, and most obviously, there is the ever-present danger of talking sheer nonsense. For the ultimate truth is, in some sense, ineffable in that all words and their referents ,are by definition conventional. The dualities generated by the use of terms that denote 276 individuals or classes as distinct from others or from their complements are unavoidable in discourse and nonexistent in the ultimate. So one must be very careful to kick away all ladders promptly. At the same time, there are things that one' can say without lapsing into nonsense, by way of ostention, even from the bottom rungs.

But the other grave danger is this: By distinguishing the conventional from the ultimate, it is tempting to disparage the former in contrast to the latter, developing a sort of theory of one truth and one falsehood. This is done if one reifies the entities associated with the ultimate, such as emptiness or impermanence, or the Four Noble Truths, or the Buddha. Then one treats these as real, intrinsically existent phenomena. The conventional then becomes the world of illusion. It is to combat this tendency to treat the conventional world as illusory through treating such apparently transcendent entities as inherently existent that Nāgārjuna develops these final chapters. Perhaps the most obvious candidate for reification in a Buddhist context is the Buddha himself, and that is where Nāgārjuna begins:

Kārikā XXII.1

स्कन्धा न नान्यः स्कन्धेभ्यो नास्मिन् स्कन्धा न तेषु सः।
तथागतः स्कन्धवान्न कतमोऽत्र तथागतः॥१॥

LVP 432,12-13 - LVP 450,11-12
skandhā na nānyaḥ skandhebhyo nāsmin skandhā na teṣu saḥ |
tathāgataḥ skandhavān na katamo ’tra tathāgataḥ ||1||

非陰不離陰 此彼不相在
如來不有陰 何處有如來

T1564: vol 30, pg 29c6
fēi yīn bù lí yīn cǐ bǐ bù xiàng;xiāng zài
rú lái bù yǒu yīn hé chǔ yǒu rú lái

|ཕུང་མིན་ཕུང་པོ་ལས་གཞན་མིན||དེ་ལ་ཕུང་མེད་དེ་དེར་མེད|
|དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ཕུང་ལྡན་མིན||དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་གང་ཞིག་ཡིན||

Tg tsa 13a3-4 - Tg tsa 13b4-5
|| phuṅ min phuṅ po las gźan min | | de la phuṅ med de der med |
| de bźin (4)gśegs pa phuṅ ldan min | | de bźin gśegs pa gaṅ źig yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - The Tathagata is not the (aggregation of the) skandhas nor is it different from the skandhas. He is not in the skandhas nor are the skandhas in him. As he cannot possess the skandhas, what actually is he?

JONES (Skt):
[1] The Buddha is neither the aggregates of the body nor other than the aggregates. Nor are the aggregates in him, nor he in them. Nor does he possess the aggregates. So what here is the Buddha?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The *tathāgata* is neither the aggregates nor different from them. The aggregates are not in him; nor is he in the aggregates. He is not possessed of the aggregates. In such a context, who is a *tathāgata?*

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Not the *skandhas* nor different from the *skandhas*, nor are the *skandhas* in him nor is he in them.
The Tathāgata is not possessed of *skandhas*. Who then is the Tathāgata?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. The five kinds of substances, that is, matter, perception, consideration, action, and consciousness, are not always the same as the five kinds of substances,
Not always relying upon this world, the five kinds of substances do not belong to this world actually.
The real arrival of Reality does not have left the five kinds of substances,
And in that situation, what is just the real arrival of Reality there?

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 The perfectly realized one is not identical with the factors of personal existence, nor other than them; he is not in them, nor they in him; and the perfectly realized one is not the possessor of the factors of personal existence. What then is the perfectly realized one?

STRENG (Skt):
1. That one who is "fully-completed" is not the "groups of universal elements" (skandha), nor something other than the "groups"; the "groups" are not in him, nor is he in them; The "fully completed" does not possess the "groups." What, then, is the "fully completed"?

ROBINSON (Skt):
He is not identical with the skandhas; he is not other than the skandhas; the skandhas are not in him, and he is not in them; the Tathagata does not have skandhas; in this case, what Tathagata is there?

BOCKING (Ch):
22v1… is neither the skandhas, nor separate from the skandhas,
He and they are not in each other.
The Thus-Come does not have the skandhas
In what place does the Thus-Come exist?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Not the aggregates, not other than the aggregates; the aggregates are not in him; he is not in them: the Tathagata does not possess the aggregates. What is the Tathagata?

DOCTOR (Tb):
He is not the aggregates, nor is he different from them.
He is not in them, nor are they in him.
Neither does the Thus-Gone possess the aggregates.
Who, then, is the Thus-Gone? [XXII.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Neither the aggregates, nor different from the aggregates,
The aggregates are not in him, nor is he in the aggregates.
The Tathagata does not possess the aggregates.
What is the Tathagata?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Neither the aggregates, nor different from the aggregates,
The aggregates are not in him, nor is he in the aggregates.
The Tathāgata does not possess the aggregates.
What is the Tathāgata?

HAGEN (paraphrase):

The Tathagata is neither the aggregates nor different from them. The aggregates are not in him, nor he in them. He does not possess the aggregates. What then, is the Tathagata?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/1 If the Thus-Come really exists, (then) either the five skandhas are the Thus-Come, or the Thus-Come exists separately from the five skandhas, or the five skandhas are within the Thus-Come, or the Thus-Come is within the five skandhas, or the Thus-Come has the five skandhas, but none of these is the case.

(29c14) The five skandhas are not the Thus-Come, and why? Because they have the characteristics of arising and ceasing. Since the five skandhas have the characteristics of arising and ceasing, if the Thus-Come were the five skandhas, the Thus-Come would have those same characteristics of arising and ceasing. If he had the characteristics of arising and ceasing this would involve the errors of the Thus-Come being impermanent, annihilated, etc. Also the receiver and the dharma of receiving would be one, the receiver being the Thus-Come and the dharma of receiving being the five skandhas. But this is not correct, and therefore the Thus-Come is not the five skandhas.

(29c19) The Thus-Come does not exist separately from the five skandhas either. If the Thus-Come existed separately from the five skandhas, he would not have the characteristics of arising and ceasing. If this were the case, the Thus-Come would have the error of permanence etc., and in addition all the functions such as the eye, etc., would not be able to see or know, and this would not be correct. Therefore, the Thus-Come does not exist separately from the five skandhas either.

(29c22) The five skandhas are also not found within the Thus-Come and why? If the five skandhas were within the Thus-Come, this would be like fruit in a bowl, or fish in water; they would be different from each other. If they were different, this would involve the error of permanence etc., as above. Therefore, the five skandhas are not situated within the Thus-Come.

(29c25) The Thus-Come, moreover, is not within the five- skandhas, and why? If the Thus-Come were within the five skandhas, this would be like a man being in a bed, or milk being in a bowl. They would thus be distinct entities, and the same errors as discussed above would apply. Therefore, the Thus-Come is not within the five skandhas.

(29c28) The Thus-Come does not have the five skandhas either, and why? If the Thus-Come had the five skandhas, it would be like a man who has a child. They would thus be distinct entities, and this being the case, the same errors as above would apply, so this is not correct. Therefore, the Thus-Come does not have the five skandhas. You may look for him in these five ways but you will not be able to grasp what kind of being this Thus-Come is.

Question: Though one seeks for the Thus-Come in these ways and be unable to find him, nevertheless, by the combination of the five skandhas, the Thus-Come exists.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If there were an entity called a perfectly realized one, pure and beyond all named things, then either he would be self-existent as the factors of personal existence, i.e., he would be self- existent as the five factors: body, feelings, ideation, dispositions and consciousness; or perhaps as the five states: morality, meditation, wisdom, freedom and the intuition and knowledge of freedom. The other case is that he would be separate (*vyatirikta*) from them. The five factors of personal existence are adopted in this investigation because they are the reason for assuming individual beings. The five states are not universal and are included in the former.

On the other hand, the perfectly realized one might be entirely separate from the five factors of personal existence. In this case either the perfectly realized one would be based in the factors of personal existence; or the factors of personal existence would be based in the perfectly realized one; or the perfectly realized one would possess the factors of personal existence as Devadatta possesses wealth. On being thought through however, none of these ways is possible.

Why? To begin with, the perfectly realized one is not identical with the factors of personal existence. For what reason?

Because, as was argued: 'If fire is fuel that would be identity of agent and act.' (MMK X.1) This verse is also relevant: if Buddha were identical with the factors of personal existence (fn 1 *upadana:* 'what is appropriated'.), that would be identity of agent and act.'

Likewise, it is said: if the self were identical with the factors of personal existence, it would itself arise and perish.' (MMK XVIII.1) And this is relevant here: if Buddha were identical with the factors of personal existence, he would be subject to arising and perishing.' Thus, in the first place, the perfectly realized one is not the factors of personal existence.

Nor is the perfectly realized one other than the factors of personal existence. Why? Because, as was argued: if fire is wholly other than fuel then it could exist even without fuel.' (MMK X.1) Again: 'Because it is unrelated to anything else, it is not caused by bursting into flame; as it burns forever it follows that it is pointless to kindle it again.' (MMK X.3) The following is relevant here too: if Buddha were other than the factors of personal existence he would exist apart from them.' Again: 'Not being dependent on anything else, the Buddha would not be influenced by the factors of personal existence. Moreover every spiritual act being thus futile, the Buddha would be ineffectual.' Again: if he were other than the factors of personal existence he could not be characterized in their terms.'

Because the perfectly realized one is not other than the factors of personal existence he cannot logically exist in the factors of personal existence nor they in him.

In the Madhyamakavatara these two theses are expounded in this way (VI. 142, 143): 'The self does not exist in the factors of personal existence nor are these in the self. If these two were other than each other this conception would be plausible; but as they are not other it is an empty hypothesis.'

And how it is that the perfectly realized one cannot possess the factors of personal existence is argued in the same place: 'The self is not to be thought of as possessing a body because the self does not exist; the idea of possession cannot therefore obtain. In the case of the possessor of cattle there is a difference but in the case of what has a body there can be no distinction between possessor and possessed; the dichotomy of identity and otherness does not obtain in this case as the self has no bodily form.'

It should be understood that all five theses are really included in the thesis concerning identity and otherness. Nagarjuna deals with all five theses because the problem of the perfectly realized one is cognate with that of the permanent personal self. In what other base can the perfectly realized one exist who, on thorough investigation, is not based in the factors of personal existence? A perfectly realized one is logically and factually impossible (fn 2 *na sambhavati*. Though the words 'logically' and 'factually' are not separate words in the Sanskrit, the verb *sambhavati* implies both.) in every respect. Not discovering him as self-existent the venerable teacher, Nagarjuna, said, 'What then is a perfectly realized one?' He means that there is nothing ontic (*vastu*) in all the three worlds which can be truly discerned as self-existent.

Because the perfectly realized one is ontically non-existent, it is established that the birth-death cycle as a round of real entities does not exist.

At this point some will interject: We do not say that the perfectly realized one is identical with the factors of personal existence because of the faulty consequence pointed out; nor that he is entirely separate from them. Nor do we say that the purified factors of personal existence are in the perfectly realized one as a group of trees is on a snowy mountain, nor that he is in the factors of personal existence as a lion is in a clump of trees; nor do we say that he possesses the factors of personal existence as the universal monarch possesses his qualities, because we do not agree that he must be either identical with or different from them. But we definitely affirm that the perfectly realized one is based on (upadaya) purified factors of personal existence and is indefinable in respect to identity and difference (fn 3 This refers to the concept of the *dharmakaya*: Buddha as the embodiment of truth.). Therefore your logic does not dispose of our point of view. To this it is rejoined:

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. ("What is the Tathāgata?" fn 102. *"Tathāgata"* is an epithet of the Buddha. It is an ambiguous compound, meaning, depending upon how it is parsed, "thus gone" or "thus come," hence indicating either the one gone along the path to enlightenment, or the one come to teach the Buddhist doctrine.)

This form of analytic demonstration of the nonexistence of the self through an analysis of its possible relationship to the aggregates, often referred to as the "fivefold analysis," is developed with great elegance by Candrakīrti in *Mādhyamakāvatāra.* Nāgārjuna proposes four of five possible relations the self bears to the aggregates in this first verse, and the fifth is considered in the next two verses. Here the self in question is the Buddha's self, but the analysis is perfectly general as a refutation of any assertion of an inherently existent personal self. That self cannot be the aggregates for two reasons: First, the self posited is meant to be unitary, and the aggregates are plural. Second, the aggregates are constantly undergoing change, while the self that is posited is meant to endure as a single entity.

But the self can't be different from the aggregates either. For anything that happens to the aggregates happens to the self, and vice versa. If I hurt my body, I hurt *myself.* If you lose your vision, *you* become blind. And in the present case, buddhahood is presumably attained by a purification of the aggregates through practice. If the aggregates were entirely different from the self. it is not clear how purifying *them* would lead the *practitioner* to buddhahood. The self cannot stand outside the aggregates as a basis for them, for if we strip away all of the aggregates, there is nothing left as an independent support. But nor is the self somehow contained in the aggregates as a hidden core, and for the same reason. When we strip away all of the aggregates in thought, nothing remains of the self.

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Kārikā XXII.2

बुद्धः स्कन्धानुपादाय यदि नास्ति स्वभावतः।
स्वभावतश्च यो नास्ति कुतः स परभावतः॥२॥

buddhaḥ skandhān upādāya yadi nāsti svabhāvataḥ |
svabhāvataś ca yo nāsti kutaḥ sa parabhāvataḥ ||2||

陰合有如來 則無有自性
若無有自性 云何因他有

yīn hé;gé yǒu rú lái zé wú yǒu zì xìng
ruò wú yǒu zì xìng yún hé yīn tā yǒu

།གལ་ཏེ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཕུང་པོ་ལ། །བརྟེན་ནས་རང་བཞིན་ལས་ཡོད་མིན།
།རང་བཞིན་ལས་ནི་གང་མེད་པ། །དེ་གཞན་དངོས་ལས་ག་ལ་ཡོད།།

| gal te saṅs rgyas phuṅ po la | | brten nas raṅ bźin las yod min |
| raṅ bźin las ni gaṅ med pa | | de gźan dṅos las ga la yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - If a Buddha appropriates the skandhas, it is not so from the standpoint of self-existence. As there can be no self-existence, how can there be (a Buddha from the standpoint of other-existence? - Note: The Buddha and the Tathagata are interchangeable concepts. They refer to the foremost enlightened state. Also, the term, skandha, is left untranslated in the hope of gaining currency.

JONES (Skt):
[2] If the Buddha is dependent upon the aggregates, his does not exist through self-existence. And what does not exist through its own self-existence does not exist through the self-existence of another.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If a Buddha were to be dependent upon the aggregates, he does not exist in terms of self-nature. He who does not exist in terms of self-nature, how can he exist in terms of other nature?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the Buddha is clinging to *skandhas*, he does not exist by self-nature.
He who does not exist by self-nature, how does he exist by othernature?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. When a person, who is going to get the Truth,
Just at the time, there is no subjective existence of real fact.
And when there is no subjective existence really,
How is it possible for any kind of objective existence to exist really anywhere at all?

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 If the Buddha is based in the factors of personal existence he is not self-existent; and how can anything exist in dependence on another if it does not exist in itself?

STRENG (Skt):
2. If the Buddha exists dependent on the "groups," then he is not "that which exists by itself" (svabbava) And how can he exist as something else (parabhava) ("other-existence") if he is not "that which exists by itself" (svabbava)?

BOCKING (Ch):
22v2 If the Thus-Come exists by the combining of the skandhas,
Then he has no self-nature.
If he has no self-nature
How can he exist on account of another?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the buddha depends on the aggregates, he does not exist from an own-nature. How can that which does not exist from an own-nature exist from an other-nature?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the Buddha exists dependent on the aggregates,
And thus not by his own nature,
How could that which does not exist in terms of its own nature
Exist through the nature of another? [XXII.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. If the Buddha depended on the aggregates,
He would not exist through an essence.
Not existing through an essence,
How could he exist through otherness-essence?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. If the Buddha, depending on the aggregates,
Does not exist through an essence,
How could something that does not exist through its essence
Exist through the nature of another?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If the Buddha were dependent upon the aggregates, he would not exist in terms of self-nature. How could that which does not exist in terms of self-nature exist in terms of other-nature?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/2 If the Thus-Come exists because of the combination of the five skandhas, then he has no self-nature, and why? Because he exists on account of the combination of the five skandhas.

Question: The Thus-Come does not exist by means of a self-nature, but merely on account of other-natures.

Reply: If he has no self-nature, how can he exist by virtue of other-natures? Why is this? Other-natures also have no self-nature, and since there is no reciprocal dependence, no other-natures can be found. Since they cannot be found, they do not constitute 'others'.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If the Buddha is understood as based in purified factors of personal existence though it is impossible to say if he is identical with or other than them, then it is obvious that he is not self-existent because he is understood as dependent, like a reflection. How can one who is not self-existent in the sense that he does not have a substance (*svarupa*) of his own (*atmiya*) - one who, in fact, is not self-existent — have his existence in dependence on the factors of personal existence? It does not make sense that a factually non-existent son of a barren woman could exist in dependence on the existence of another.

Let it be so, you may interject. In that case he will be like a reflection, which, though it does not exist as a reality in itself, does exist in dependence on other factors such as the face, the mirror and so on. And so the perfectly realized one too, though not in fact self-existent, will have being in dependence on other factors through being based in the five purified factors of personal existence.

However:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

In addition to some of the terms used by the Buddha to refer to his own achievements, his disciples used a vast array of epithets in extolling his virtues. It is significant to note that none of these epithets caused so much misunderstanding as the one under discussion in the present chapter, namely, tathagata. It seems that the very conception of tathagata invited misunderstanding.

The term can be rendered into English as "thus-gone" (tatha-gata). The conception of one who has "thusgone" immediately brings to mind the idea of an "agent" (see Chapter II). It was, therefore, inevitable that when questions relating to the "destiny" of the enlightened one were raised, they were always raised in relation to a tathagata.

Nagarjuna was aware that questions pertaining not only to the final destiny, but also to the nature of the living saint were raised during the Buddha's day. A discussion between Sariputta and a monk named Yamaka, who had entertained the belief that a tathagata is annihilated after death (param marana) is reported in the Samyutta-nikaya (S 3.109-115; Tsa 5.2 [Taisho 2.30c-31c]). Reading the first part of this discussion, one gets the impression that Sariputta was reluctant to identify the tathagata with the five aggregates or to distinguish the tathagata from the aggregates. On the basis of this, it is possible to come to the conclusions, that the tathagata is linguistically transcendent.

However, if the discussion is followed to the very end, one can clearly see that such a conclusion is not warranted. For Sariputta is not willing to admit a tathagata in an absolute sense (saccato thetato), comparable to the metaphysical "self" (atman) that was considered to be permanent and eternal. Indeed, toward the end of the discussion, Sariputta moves from the conception of tathagata to the notion of "self" (atta) and refuses to admit a self that is identical with or different from the aggregates. Nagarjuna, as if he had read this discourse, begins the present chapter in an identical way, first maintaining that the tathagata is neither identical nor different from the aggregates, and then proceeding to question the existence or non-existence of the tathagata after death. As in the Samyutta passage, Nagarjuna immediately qualifies his reference to the living tathagata, insisting that the tathagata or the buddha under investigation is one possessed of self-nature (svabhava) and hence similar to the notion of "self" (atta) rejected by Sariputta. Nagarjuna thereupon uses his famous argument that if the tathagata is not found in terms of self-nature, he cannot either be found in terms of other-nature (para-bhava).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. The fifth possibility is that the self, in this case the Buddha's self, is distinct from but dependent upon the aggregates. But from the standpoint of positing an inherently existent Buddha this is unsatisfactory. For if the Buddha were dependent, he would lack an essence and would be empty. And the situation can't be saved by suggesting that he has an essence through a relation to another since that presupposes essential difference, which presupposes that both the Buddha and the aggregates on which he is supposed to depend have individual essences: This is reinforced in the first two lines of the next verse:

Kārikā XXII.3

प्रतीत्य परभावं यः सोऽनात्मेत्युपपद्यते।
यश्चानात्मा स च कथं भविष्यति तथागतः॥३॥

pratītya parabhāvaṃ yaḥ so ’nātmety upapadyate |
yaś cānātmā sa ca kathaṃ bhaviṣyati tathāgataḥ ||3||

法若因他生 是即為非我
若法非我者 云何是如來

fǎ ruò yīn tā shēng shì jí wéi fēi wǒ
ruò fǎ fēi wǒ zhě yún hé shì rú lái

|གང་ཞིག་གཞན་གྱི་དངོས་བརྟེན་ནས||དེ་བདག་ཉིད་དུ་མི་འཐད་དོ|
|གང་ཞིག་བདག་ཉིད་མེད་པ་དེ||ཇི་ལྟར་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པར་འགྱུར||

| gaṅ źig gźan gyi dṅos brten nas | | de bdag ñid du (5)mi ’thad do |
| gaṅ źig bdag ñid med pa de | | ji ltar de bźin gśegs par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - It would thus follow that relationship by virtue of other-existence will constitute a non-self. But how could that which is a non-self be a Tathagata?

JONES (Skt):
[3ab] Whatever is dependent upon the self-existence of another is without a self. [*Objection:*3cd] But how can what is without a self be a buddha?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
He who is dependent upon other nature would appropriately be without self. Yet, how can he who is without self be a *tathāgata*?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
He who is dependent upon other-nature occurs as “not self.”
And how will he who is not self be the *tathāgata?*

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. And such situations produce objective existence clearly.
Then, what is called Spirit or Mind, will appear actually.
And what is like that, which does not have Spirit or Vigor, is?
Therefore it is possible for something, which is called the Arrival of Reality, will exist in future.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 One who is dependent on another’s being, is, it follows, without a self; and how can one who is without a self become a perfectly realized one?

STRENG (Skt):
3. That which exists presupposing another existent thing is properly called a "non-individual self" (anatma). How will that which is a non-individual self become the "fully completed"?

BOCKING (Ch):
22v3 If a dharma arises on account of another,
Then it has no self.
If a dharma has no self
How can it be the Thus-Come?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is not tenable for something dependent on other-nature to be self-existent. How can that which has no self-existence be tathagata?

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which depends on the nature of another
Cannot reasonably have an identity of its own.
How could something lacking an identity
Turn out to be the Thus-Gone? [XXII.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. Whatever is dependent on another entit
Its selfhood is not appropriate.
It is not tenable that what lacks a self
Could be a Tathagata.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. Whatever is dependent on the nature of another,
Its selfhood is not tenable.
How could that which lacks selfhood
Be a Tathāgata?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
For that which is dependent upon another, selfhood is not appropriate. But how could that which is without self be a Tathagata?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/3 If a dharma arises by virtue of causes and conditions, then it will have no self. It is like a fist which exists by virtue of the five fingers, but has no own-substance. In the same way we speak of a 'self' on account of the five skandhas, but this 'self' has no own-substance. 'Self' has various names such as living being, man, god, Thus-Come etc. If the Thus-Come exists by virtue of the five skandhas, then he has no own-nature, and since he has no own-nature he has no self. Since he has no self, how can you describe him as "The Thus-Come"? This is why it says in the verse "if a dharma arises on account of another, then it has no self" and "if a dharma has no self, how can it be the Thus-Come? "

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If the perfectly realized one is thought of as dependent on other factors, as is a reflection, then in so far as he is like a reflection, it follows that he is without a self; it would not make sense that he would have a being of his own. The term self is a synonym for the term self-existent. How can one who is without self, without a being of his own, exactly as is a reflection, be a self-existing, concrete, perfectly realized one? The thought is that he cannot be one who has followed the veritable way (fn 4 '*avipartamargagata'*, a play on the term *tathagata*.).

Furthermore, if there were any self-existence of the perfectly realized one, then, with regard to that self-existence, the self- existence of the factors of personal existence would constitute other being and the perfectly realized one would be dependent on it; as however, there is no self-existence in the perfectly realized one how could there be otherness in the factors of personal existence?

Nagarjuna expounded this when he said

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If serf-nature (svabhava) were to be equivalent to serf (atman) as an entity in itself, then whatever is of "other-nature" (para-bhava) will be "no-self" (anatma). "No-self" in this particular sense, which implies absolute difference, is not acceptable to Nagarjuna, for it is a recognition of a difference between a tathagata and the psychophysical personality.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. The reifier in the last two lines of this verse and in the next asks how it is possible that a real Buddha could lack a self. What then would be the thing that practiced, that became enlightened and that preached the Dharma?

Kārikā XXII.4

यदि नास्ति स्वभावश्च परभावः कथं भवेत्।
स्वभावपरभावाभ्यामृते कः स तथागतः॥४॥

yadi nāsti svabhāvaś ca parabhāvaḥ kathaṃ bhavet |
svabhāvaparabhāvābhyām ṛte kaḥ sa tathāgataḥ ||4||

若無有自性 云何有他性
離自性他性 何名為如來

ruò wú yǒu zì xìng yún hé yǒu tā xìng
lí zì xìng tā xìng hé míng wéi rú lái

|གལ་ཏེ་རང་བཞིན་ཡོད་མིན་ན||གཞན་དངོས་ཡོད་པར་ཇི་ལྟར་འགྱུར|
|རང་བཞིན་དང་ནི་གཞན་དངོས་དག||མ་གཏོགས་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་དེ་གང་||

| gal te raṅ bźin yod min na | | gźan dṅos yod par ji ltar 'gyur |
| raṅ bźin daṅ ni gźan dṅos dag | | ma gtogs de bźin gśegs de gaṅ |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - If self-existence does not exist, how does other-existence exist? Apart from self-existence and other-existence, what could be (the nature of) a Tathagata

JONES (Skt):
[4] If there is no self-existence, how can there be the self-existence of another? And without one's own self-existence or the self-existence of another, who is the Buddha?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If there exists no self-nature, how could there be other-nature? Without both self-nature and other-nature, who is this *tathāgata?*

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If self-nature does not exist, how would other-nature exist?
Without self-nature or other-nature, who is he, the Tathāgata?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. When the subjective existence does never exist at all,
How is it possible for objective existence to exist actually?
When something moves relying upon the oneness between the subjective and objective existences,
The Something Real is just the Arrival of Reality itself.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 If there is no self-existence how can there be other-existence? What perfectly realized one can there be apart from self-existence and other-existence?

STRENG (Skt):
4. And if there is no self-existence (svabhava), how would it have an "other-existence" (parabhava)? What would that "fully completed" reality be without either a self-existence or other-existence?

BOCKING (Ch):
22v4 If there is no own-nature
How can there be other-nature?
Apart from own-nature or other-nature
What can constitute a Thus-Come?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If self-nature does not exist, how can there be the existence of other-nature? What is a Tathagata apart from own-nature and other-nature?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If he does not exist by his own nature,
How could there be the nature of something else?
Apart from what is of the nature of self and other,
What sort of Thus-Gone could there be? [XXII.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. If there is no essence,
How could there be otherness-essence?
Without possessing essence or otherness-essence,
What is the Tathagata?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. If there is no essence
How could there be the nature of being other?
Apart from having essence or the nature of another,
What could the Tathāgata be?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If there is no self-nature, how can there be other-nature? Without self-nature or other-nature, what is the Tathagata?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/4 If there is no own-nature, then other-nature cannot exist either, because it is only on account of own-nature that we refer to other-nature. If the one does not exist, the other will not exist either, and consequently neither own-nature nor other-nature exists. Apart from an own-nature or other-nature, who is there to be a Thus-Come?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

4ab *If there is no self-existence how can there be other-existence?*

As thus there is neither self-existence nor other-existence (fn 5 I.e. existence as other; or existence-through-another.) so:

4cd *What perfectly realized one can there be apart from self-existence and other-existence?*

Any existing thing is either self-existent or other-existent. The conclusion is that apart from these two possibilities what other thing could a perfectly realized one be? Therefore the perfectly realized one is not self-existent.

Furthermore:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The idea that if there were to be no serf-nature other-nature too would not be evident was already emphasized at I.3. A third metaphysical alternative that transcends both serf-nature and other-nature is here denied.

Kārikā XXII.5

स्कन्धान् यद्यनुपादाय भवेत्कश्चित्तथागतः।
स इदानीमुपाददद्यादुपादाय ततो भवेत्॥५॥

skandhān yady anupādāya bhavet kaścit tathāgataḥ |
sa idānīm upādadyād upādāya tato bhavet ||5||

若不因五陰 先有如來者
以今受陰故 則說為如來

ruò bù yīn wǔ yīn xiān yǒu rú lái zhě
yǐ jīn shòu yīn gù zé shuì wéi rú lái

།གལ་ཏེ་ཕུང་པོ་མ་བརྟེན་པར།།དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་འགའ་ཡོད་ན།
།དེ་ནི་ད་གདོང་རྟེན་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།།བརྟེན་ནས་དེ་ནས་འགྱུར་ལ་རག།

| gal te phuṅ po ma brten par | | (6)de bźin gśegs pa ’ga’ yod na |
| de ni da gdoṅ rten ’gyur źiṅ | | brten nas de nas ’gyur la rag |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - If a Tathagata exists without appropriating the skandhas, then he should be appropriating the skandhas now. And he should be a Tathagata in virtue of the appropriation.

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply:*5] A buddha who did not depend upon the aggregates would exist apart from the aggregates, but he now depends upon the aggregates and thus exists dependently.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If there were to be a *tathāgata* because of non-grasping on to the aggregates, he should still depend upon them in the present. As such he will be dependent.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If any Tathāgata would be not clinging to the *skandhas*,
he would now cling and then would be clinging.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. When the five kinds of substances are impossible to be accepted,
Then some kinds of possibility in the Arrival of Reality might exist.
Such a kind of facts at the present moment, can be possible,
And so the situation of expansion can be going bigger more and more.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 If a perfectly realized one existed without being based in the factors of personal existence, at some point he would appropriate them and thus be based in them.

STRENG (Skt):
5. If some kind of "fully completed" thing would exist without dependence on the "groups," It is dependent now; therefore it exists dependent on something.

BOCKING (Ch):
22v5 If, independent of the five skandhas,
A Thus-Come were pre-existent.
By virtue of his receiving the skandhas now
He would be described as a Thus-Come.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there exists a tathagata [who is] not depending on the aggregates, he exists in depending [on them] now and will henceforth depend.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If, independent of the aggregates,
There were a Thus-Gone,
Then he could now rely on the aggregates
And, based on them, become that. [XXII.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. If without depending on the aggregates
There were a Tathagata,
Then now he would be depending on them
Therefore he would exist through dependence.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. If, without depending on the aggregates
There could be a Tathāgata at all,
He would now depend on them.
Through depending on them he would be dependent.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If, without dependence upon the aggregates, there were a Tathagata, there would now be dependence. Thus is a Tathagata dependent.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

(fn 6 *upadayat*: enter into a concrete personal existence.)

If you think a perfectly realized one, because it cannot be said whether he is identical with or other than the factors of personal existence, is to be understood as not based in them, that could hardly make sense. If there were a perfectly realized one who was not based in the factors of personal existence, not having taken possession of them, he would at some point have to make them his own (*upadayat*). As Devadatta, in a prior state is wholly separate from his wealth, he must at some point take possession of it; so if a perfectly realized one were not based in the factors of personal existence he would at some point have to take possession of them as his own. Therefore he could be said to be based in the factors of personal existence. From this investigation it follows

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

In the early discourses, a person in bondage and therefore in a state of suffering (dukkha) is explained in terms of the five aggregates of grasping (upadanak-khandha). A person who is freed is said to be without grasping (anupadana), but not without the aggregates. The gerund upadaya was used in the discourses to express two different meanings, namely, (i) "clinging to" (see an-upadaya, Vin 1.14; A 1.162; 4.290, etc.) and (ii) "depending upon" (D 1.205, kalan ca samayañ ca upadaya). It was only in the former sense that a person was said to be freed from the aggregates, not in the latter sense. Yet, with the development of substantialism, that is, when a freed person came to be looked upon as being totally different from the one in bondage, each having his own nature (svabhava)(see Chapter XXV), the freed one was perceived not only as one not grasping (anupadaya) on to the aggregates, but also as one who is independent of the aggregates. It is this substantialist interpretation that Nagarjuna is criticizing when he points out that if a tathagata were to exist without grasping on to the aggregates (skandban anupadaya), he will still be dependent upon (upadadyad) them at the present time (idanim), that is, as long as he is alive. Nagarjuna was thus going back to the Buddha's own definition of a freed one.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. That is, on the opponent's view, even if the Buddha had no dependence on the aggregates prior to attaining Buddhahood, in order to act as a Buddha, he must depend upon his consciousness, perception, body, and so forth. So if we suppose that the Buddha is now inherently existent and omniscient and compassionate and so forth, we must assume that he exists through dependence on his aggregates in some sense.

Kārikā XXII.6

स्कन्धांश्चाप्यनुपादाय नास्ति कश्चित्तथागतः।
यश्च नास्त्यनुपादाय स उपादास्यते कथम्॥६॥

skandhāṃś cāpy anupādāya nāsti kaścit tathāgataḥ |
yaś ca nāsty anupādāya sa upādāsyate katham ||6||

今實不受陰 更無如來法
若以不受無 今當云何受

jīn shí bù shòu yīn gèng;gēng wú rú lái fǎ
ruò yǐ bù shòu wú jīn dāng yún hé shòu

།ཕུང་པོ་རྣམས་ལ་མ་བརྟེན་པར།།དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་འགའ་ཡང་མེད།
།གང་ཞིག་མ་བརྟེན་ཡོད་མིན་ན།།དེས་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་ཉེར་ལེན་འགྱུར།།

| phuṅ po rnams la ma brten par | | de bźin gśegs pa 'ga' yaṅ med |
| gaṅ źig ma brten yod min na | | des ni ji ltar ñer len 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - Again, no Tathagata could exist without appropriating the skandhas. And how does an entity which cannot exist without appropriation appropriate the skandhas?

JONES (Skt):
[6] Thus, there is no buddha not dependent upon the aggregates. And if he does not exist independently of the aggregates now, how would he become dependent later?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
There exists no *tathāgata* independent of the aggregates. How can he who does not exist dependently be grasped?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Not any Tathāgata exists not clinging to *skandhas*.
How will he who does not exist by not clinging be grasped?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. When even the smallest volume of the five kinds of substances do never appear at all,
Even the smallest volume of Reality Arrival does never exist at all.
And even the slightest Reality Arrival does not exist even as a non-appearance,
How is it possible for the Reality Arrival to be realized to occur even in future?

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 There is no perfectly realized one not based in the factors of personal existence; How can one who, not being based in the factors of personal existence, does not exist, take possession of them?

STRENG (Skt):
6. There is no kind of "fully completed" being which is not dependent on the "groups." And whatever is not non-dependent—how will it become dependent?

BOCKING (Ch):
22v6 In reality there is no receiving of the skandhas now,
Nor any dharma of a Thus-Come.
If, by not receiving, he does not exist
How can he receive them now?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there does not exist a tathagata [who is]not depending on the aggregates, how does he grasp [depend on? them]?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Yet, independent of the aggregates,
There is no Thus-Gone at all.
When there is no one who exists independently,
How could there be any appropriation? [XXII.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. Inasmuch as there is no Tathagata
Dependent upon the aggregates,
How could something that is not dependent
Come to be so?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. Inasmuch as there is no Tathāgata
Not dependent upon the aggregates,
If he does not exist without depending on them,
How could he appropriate them?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
There is no Tathagata independent of the aggregates. How can one who is not dependent become dependent?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

6ab *There is no perfectly realized one not based in the factors of personal existence;*

because that would mean he was beyond causation.

6cd *How can one who, not being based in the factors of personal existence, does not exist, take possession of them?*

Because he would be factually non-existent, is meant. Thus, as there is nothing which enters into possession it does not make sense that a perfectly realized one could take possession of, or be based in, the factors of personal existence (fn 7 That is, they cannot be what they are supposed to be. The play on words here defies translation. The word for the factors of personal existence - *upadanam* - means 'that which is appropriated'. Hence the inconceivability of the factors of personal existence without one who appropriates them. The argument is more self-evident in Sanskrit than it is in English.).

As, thus, a perfectly realized one prior to the factors of personal existence cannot enter into possession of anything, because he does not factually exist, so it is not possible that there can be possession of factors of personal existence which have not been taken possession of by any one at all.

Nagarjuna explains this:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna seems to be using the passive very upadasyate in an epistemological sense. In the previous verse, he maintained that a living tathagata should be dependent upon the aggregates, even though he does not grasp on to them. Here Nagarjuna is re-asserting the same position, when he says: "There exists no tathagata who is independent of the aggregates." The reason for this is that such an independent tathagata, being a metaphysical entity like the atman, cannot be grasped or known.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. We already know that the Buddha as a sentient being in saṃsāra, prior to entering nirvāṇa, could not exist dependent on the aggregates. This is a straightforward consequence of the argument for the nonexistence of a self distinct from the aggregates and from the fact that in order to depend upon the aggregates, the self would need to be distinct from them. And so, Nāgārjuna points out, it would be odd to think that an entity not dependent upon the aggregates in saṃsāra would come to be so upon entering nirvāṇa. It would, of course, be particularly odd for someone defending the target of this critique. Anyone holding such a position would hardly be expected to ascribe to the Buddha a *more* dependent status in nirvāṇa than in saṃsāra.

Kārikā XXII.7

न भवत्यनुपादत्तमुपादानं च किंचन।
न चास्ति निरुपादानः कथंचन तथागतः ॥७॥

na bhavaty anupādattam upādānaṃ ca kiṃ cana |
na cāsti nirupādānaḥ kathaṃ cana tathāgataḥ ||7||

若其未有受 所受不名受
無有無受法 而名為如來

ruò qí wèi yǒu shòu suǒ shòu bù míng shòu
wú yǒu wú shòu fǎ ér míng wéi rú lái

།ཉེ་བར་བླངས་པ་མ་ཡིན་པ།།ཉེ་བར་ལེན་པར་ཅིས་མི་འགྱུར།
།ཉེ་བར་ལེན་པ་མེད་པ་ཡི།།དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ཅི་ཡང་མེད།།

| ñe bar blaṅs pa ma yin (7)pa | | ñe bar len par cis mi ’gyur |
| ñe bar len pa med pa yi | | de bźin gśegs pa ci yaṅ med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - There is neither an appropriating process nor an unappropriated entity. How could there ever be a Tathagata which is without the process of appropriation?

JONES (Skt):
[7] There is no nondependent dependency, and no buddha exists in any way without dependency.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
There is no sphere of non-grasping, nor is there something as grasping. Neither is there someone who is without grasping. How can there be a *tathāgata?*

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Nothing is unseized and no one is clinging.
Does the Tathāgata somehow not exist without clinging?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. If there were no behavior not to receive anything,
Even a study itself, is also actually something, which is called just a study itself.
The situation that, in which everything has been emancipated from desire or attachments, does not exist actually.
In such situations what kind of Reality Arrival has not arrived at yet?

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 There can be no factors of personal existence whatever which have not been taken possession of; In no way can there be a perfectly realized one who is without appropriated factors of personal existence.

STRENG (Skt):
7. There is nothing whatever that is dependent on the "groups" and there is no thing whatever on which something does not depend. There would not exist in any way a "fully completed" being without being dependent on the "groups".

BOCKING (Ch):
22v7 When there has not yet been receiving
We do not call what is to be received 'received'.
Without the dharma of reception
There is nothing to be called a Thus-Come.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
[Since] there is nothing to be grasped/dependent on, there can be no grasping/depending. There is no tathagata at all who is without grasping/depending.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Without any appropriation,
There cannot be something appropriated.
Not involved in appropriation—
Such a Thus-Gone does not exist at all. [XXII.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. There is no appropriation.
There is no appropriator.
Without appropriation
How can there be a Tathagata?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. Without the appropriated,
There is no appropriation.
Without appropriation,
How can there be a Tathāgata?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
There is neither dependence nor an independent thing. Without dependence, how can there be a Tathagata?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

7ab *There can be no factors of personal existence whatever which have not been taken possession of;*

as factors of personal existence which have not been appropriated by anyone are not factors of personal existence. So, if nothing is appropriated there is no one who appropriates.

7cd *In no way can there be a perfectly realized one who is without appropriated factors of personal existence.*

So, according to the logic developed:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The metaphysical speculations regarding identity and difference (svabhava , parabhava) leave the dependent or the grasped (upadatta), dependence or grasping (upadana) as well as the one who is free or independent (nirupadanah), without any basis. How can there be a tathagata? The fact that it is only an explanation in terms of identity and difference that is rejected here is clearly indicated in the verse that follows.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. The appropriation here is the appropriation of aggregates as one's own. Without it, there can be no sense of individual identity. Since the opponent is positing the Tathāgata as an inherently existent individual, he must hold him to have his own aggregates.

Kārikā XXII.8

तत्त्वान्यत्वेन यो नास्ति मृग्यमाणश्च पञ्चधा।
उपादानेन स कथं प्रज्ञप्येत तथागतः॥८॥

tattvānyatvena yo nāsti mṛgyamāṇaś ca pañcadhā |
upādānena sa kathaṃ prajñapyate tathāgataḥ ||8||

若於一異中 如來不可得
五種求亦無 云何受中有

ruò yū;yú;wū yī yì zhōng rú lái bù kě dé;děi;de
wǔ zhǒng qiú yì wú yún hé shòu zhōng yǒu

།རྣམ་པ་ལྔས་ནི་བཙལ་བྱས་ན།།གང་ཞིག་དེ་ཉིད་གཞན་ཉིད་དུ།
།མེད་པའི་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་དེ།།ཉེ་བར་ལེན་པས་ཇི་ལྟར་གདགས།།

| rnam pa lṅas ni btsal byas na | | gaṅ źig de ñid gźan ñid du |
| med pa'i de bźin gśegs pa de | | ñe bar len pas ji ltar gdags |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - How could a Tathagata be known by his appropriating process when he does not exist in terms of the fivefold nature of identity and difference with respect to (the function of) the skandhas?

JONES (Skt):
[8] Having sought the Buddha in this fivefold way and finding that he does not exist by his own reality or by another's reality, how can he be thought to be a buddha through dependency?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
He who, sought for in the fivefold manner, does not exist in the form of the different identity, how can that *tathāgata* be made known through grasping?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
He who does not exist is presently being sought for by means of five
real and distinct forms of clinging. By what is the Tathāgata known?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. The situations, which rely upon Reality and Non-Reality, do not exist relying upon the mutual relations between Reality and Non-Reality,
The thoughts, which have been persuaded, and the five kinds of Matter, the Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, and the Space,
Something, which relies upon Reality,
Can be realized as the Arrival of Reality.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 How can someone who, after the fivefold enquiry, is neither identical with factors of personal existence nor other than them, be comprehended as a perfectly realized one in terms of the factors of personal existence?

STRENG (Skt):
8. That fully completed being which does not exist by its actual reality (tattva) or by some other reality (anyatva) according to the five-fold examination— How is the "fully completed" being perceived by being dependent?

BOCKING (Ch):
22v8 If the Thus-Come cannot be found
In unity or in difference,
And sought in five ways he cannot be found,
How can he exist in receiving?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If having examined in five ways, how can that tathagata who does not exist as that one or the other be [conventionally] understood by grasping/depending?

DOCTOR (Tb):
When examined in the five ways,
He exists neither as identical nor different.
How, then, could a Thus-Gone who does not exist like that
Be spoken of by virtue of appropriation? [XXII.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. Having been sought in the fivefold way,
What, being neither identical nor different,
Can be thought to be the Tathagata
Through grasping?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Having been sought in the fivefold way,
How can that which is neither identical nor different
Be designated as the Tathāgata
In virtue of appropriating?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How can a Tathagata, found neither in nor apart from the aggregates, be made known through grasping?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The perfectly realized one, on being critically thought about, exists neither in virtue of identity, that is, oneness with the factors of personal existence, nor in virtue of otherness, that is, separateness from them. How can one who, after the enquiry into the five theories — identity, otherness, nonexistence, base and quality - does not exist, be capable of being taken as a perfectly realized one, one who is completely non-existent in fact? Therefore the perfectly realized one is not self-existent.

It is not only a perfectly realized one who according to this line of thought does not exist.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The substantialiast explanation of a tathagata would imply that he has completely transformed himself into a different entity, that is, a tathagata having his own-nature (svabhava) with no relationship to the person in bondage. However, examining the fivefold aggregates, no such entity can be discovered. Such a tathagata cannot be explained in terms of dependence (upadanena). Thus, the conception of dependence (upadana) is incompatible with both identity and difference. What is denied here is neither dependence nor a tathagata, but merely the metaphysical approaches to both dependence and tathagata. Instead of translating tattva and anyatva and as identity and difference, we have rendered the phrase as "different idenity" since it occurs in the singular.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. But, as we have seen in the first two verses of this chapter, there is no way that the Buddha can be thought of as inherently existent in relation to those aggregates. So we can't divorce the Buddha from the aggregates. Nor can we understand the Buddha as inherently existing given that he must have aggregates.

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Kārikā XXII.9

यदपीदमुपादानं तत्स्वभावत्वान्न विद्यते।
स्वभावतश्च यन्नास्ति कुतस्तत्परभावतः॥९॥

yad apīdam upādānaṃ tat svabhāvān na vidyate |
svabhāvataś ca yan nāsti kutas tat parabhāvataḥ ||9||

又所受五陰 不從自性有
若無自性者 云何有他性

yòu suǒ shòu wǔ yīn bù cóng zì xìng yǒu
ruò wú zì xìng zhě yún hé yǒu tā xìng

|གང་ཞིག་ཉེ་བར་བླང་བ་དེ||དེ་ནི་རང་བཞིན་ལས་ཡོད་མིན|
|བདག་གི་དངོས་ལས་གང་མེད་པ||དེ་གཞན་དངོས་ལས་ཡོད་རེ་སྐན||

| gaṅ źig ñe bar blaṅ ba de | | de ni (13b1)raṅ bźin las yod min |
| bdag gi dṅos las gaṅ med pa | | de gźan dṅos las yod re skan |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - Again, the appropriating process cannot function from the standpoint of self-existence. If nothing exists in virtue of self-existence, how could it exist in virtue of other-existence?

JONES (Skt):
[9] In addition, this dependency is not seen to exist through its own self-existence. And how can what does not exist through its own self-existence come to exist through the self-existence of another?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
This grasping is not found in terms of self-nature. How can that which does not exist in terms of self-nature come to be in terms of other nature?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Because of this clinging, what has self-nature does not occur.
What does not exist by self-nature, how does that exist by other nature?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. A person, who especially has ability to realize the concrete thing at this place,
Does not like to recognize miscellaneous subjective thoughts at all.
Because the subjective existence does never anywhere really exist actually.
Therefore where will it be possible for the concrete facts to exist only as the physical problems?

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 The factors of personal existence as well are not self-existent. How can something which does not exist in itself, exist in virtue of something else?

STRENG (Skt):
9. So when there is dependence, self-existence does not exist; And if there is no self-existence whatever, how is an other-existence possible?

BOCKING (Ch):
22v9 Moreover the five receptive skandhas
Do not exist by virtue of own-nature.
If they have no own-nature
How can there be an other-nature?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
That which is grasped/depended on does not exist from its own nature. It is impossible for that which does not exist from its own nature to exist from another nature.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which is appropriated
Does not exist by its own nature.
That which does not exist by itself
Can definitely not exist due to other things. [XXII.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. Whatever grasping there is
Does not exist through essence.
And when something does not exist through itself,
It can never exist through otherness-essence.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. Whatever there is to be appropriated
Does not exist through essence.
And when something does not exist through its own nature,
It can never exist through the nature of another.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Where there is dependence, self-nature is not found. How can there be other-nature where there is no self-nature?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/9 If the Thus-Come already existed before receiving the five skandhas, then this Thus-Come would receive the five skandhas now, having already become a Thus-Come. But in reality a Thus-Come does not exist before the time when. the five skandhas are received, so how will he receive them now? Also, if he does not receive the five skandhas, the five skandhas will not be termed 'received', and without receiving them, there is nothing to be called a Thus-Come.

(30b11) You can search for the Thus-Come within unity and difference but you will not be able to find him. You can search for him five ways in the five skandhas but you will not find him there either. This being the case, how can you assert that the Thus- Come exists within the five skandhas? Also, the five skandhas which are received do not exist by virtue of any own-nature. You may say that they exist by virtue of other-nature, but if they do not come from own-nature, how can they exist by virtue of other-nature? Why is this? Because if there is no own-nature, there is no other-nature either.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

9ab *The factors of personal existence* (fn 8 I.e. what is appropriated *(upadanam)*.) *as well are not self-existent.*

What is appropriated — the fivefold factors of personal existence: body, feelings, ideation, disposition and consciousness — does not exist as real in itself, because it arises in dependence and because of the detailed refutation given in the Chapter on the factors of personal existence (MMK IV). Again it might be thought that the factors of personal existence, though not self-existent, exist in dependence on something else, because this is the nature of causal dependence. Nagarjuna explains that that is not logically possible.

9cd *How can something which does not exist in itself, exist in virtue of something else?*

How can the son of a barren woman, totally non-existent in itself, be made sense out of (*prajnapayitum*) in virtue of being dependent on something else? Therefore the factors of personal existence do not exist. Or, as it is put: 'The factors of personal existence as well are not self-existent.'

As there are no appropriated factors of personal existence unrelated to someone appropriating them because they are inherently dependent on an appropriator, the self-existence of the factors of personal existence has not been established. But, if you say: It is not possible to establish the self-existence of the factors of personal existence unrelated to an appropriator, so let them exist in dependence on him, the reply is, 'How can something which does not exist in itself, exist in virtue of something else?' How can appropriated factors of personal existence which are not self-existent, that is, which are not real, exist in dependence on someone who appropriates them? It follows that the factors of personal existence do not exist.

And now, to show what has been demonstrated, Nagarjuna says

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Just as much as a tathagata cannot be explained satisfactorily by relying upon a theory of identity (svabhava) or difference (parabhava), even so grasping itself (upadana) cannot be found in terms of selfnature or other nature. In other words, it would not be appropriate to explain grasping as an inevitable act or tendency in human beings.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. So the Buddha does not exist inherently in virtue of his own essence. Nor does he exist inherently in virtue of some property of his aggregates or, for that matter, in virtue of anything else that is other, such as an inherently existent buddha-nature or state of nirvāṇa.

———

Kārikā XXII.10

एवं शून्यमुपादानमुपादाता च सर्वशः।
प्रज्ञप्यते च शून्येन कथं शून्यस्तथागतः॥१०॥

evaṃ śūnyam upādānam upādātā ca sarvaśaḥ |
prajñapyate ca śūnyena kathaṃ śūnyas tathāgataḥ ||10||

以如是義故 受空受者空
云何當以空 而說空如來

yǐ rú shì yì gù shòu kōng shòu zhě kōng
yún hé dāng yǐ kōng ér shuì kōng rú lái

།དེ་ལྟར་ཉེར་བླང་ཉེར་ལེན་པོ།།རྣམ་པ་ཀུན་གྱིས་སྟོང་པ་ཡིན།
།སྟོང་པས་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་སྟོང་པ།།ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ན་འདོགས་པར་འགྱུར།།

| de ltar ñer blaṅ ñer len po | | rnam pa kun gyis stoṅ pa yin |
| stoṅ pas de bźin gśegs stoṅ pa | | ji lta bur na ’dogs par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - Consequently, all instances of appropriation and the appropriating entity are in the nature of Sunya. But then, how could a Tathagata in the nature of sunya be known in terms of sunya? - Note: It seems better to leave the technical term sunya untranslated here as well as in the subsequent verses. The same can be said for its opposite, asunya.

JONES (Skt):
[10] Therefore, both the dependency and the one dependent upon it are empty in every way. And how could an empty buddha be made known by means of what is empty?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Thus, grasping and grasper are empty in every way. How can an empty *tathāgata* be made known by something that is empty?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
And thus the one who clings is clinging to what is everywhere open.
How is the open Tathāgata known by means of what is open?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. Relying upon such a method, the balanced states of the autonomic nervous system, can be recognized.
What we have actually perceived, are just everything.
Just relying upon intuition, or just relying upon the balance of the autonomic nervous system.
How is it possible for the balanced autonomic nervous system itself to be the Arrival of Reality itself?.

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 Thus, in every respect, both the appropriated factors of personal existence and the one appropriating them are devoid of being. How can a perfectly realized one, himself devoid of being, be comprehended in terms of what is itself devoid?

STRENG (Skt):
10. Thus "dependence" and "that which is dependent" are completely empty (sunya). How is that empty "fully completed one" known through that which is empty?

ROBINSON (Skt):
Thus in every way appropriation and appropriator are empty; how can an empty Tathagata be designated by an empty [designator]?

BOCKING (Ch):
22v10 By such interpretations
Receiving is empty, the receiver is empty
But how, by means of emptiness
Can one speak of an empty Thus-come?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
In that way, what is grasped/depended on and what grasps/depends are empty in every aspect. How can an empty tathagata be [conventionally] understood by what is empty?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Thus, the appropriated and the appropriator
Are empty in all regards.
Given their emptiness, how to speak
Of an empty Thus-Gone? [XXII.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. Thus grasping and grasper
Together are empty in every respect.
How can an empty Tathagata
Be known through the empty?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. Thus appropriated and appropriator
Are empty in every respect.
How can an empty Tathāgata
Be imputed through the empty?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Thus dependence and the dependent are completely Empty. How can an Empty Tathagata be known through what is Empty?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/10 Analyzed according to these ideas, receiving and the recipient are entirely empty. If receiving is empty, how can one speak of an empty Thus-come in terms of empty receiving?

Question: You say that receiving is empty, and that the recipient is empty - is this not a fixed existent emptiness?

Reply: Not so, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

10ab *Thus, in every respect, both the appropriated factors of personal existence and the one appropriating them are devoid of being.*

The factors of personal existence, having been investigated from every angle, arc devoid of being. That is, they do not have their being in themselves; and the appropriator is devoid of being, that is, he is without self existence.

10cd *How can a perfectly realized one, himself devoid of being, be comprehended in terms of what is itself devoid?*

In terms of the factors of personal existence, that is. It is in no way possible that a non-existing perfectly realized one could be made sense of by means of what itself is non-existent. Therefore it is not logically possible to make sense of (*prajnapyate*) the perfectly realized one as based in the factors of personal existence.

At this point some would object. Our aspirations are destroyed by you. We have had to give up the pleasures we had in refuting the heresies of the Vaisesikas, Aksapada,the Jains, Jaimini, the Naiyayikas and the others, who are as if firmly entangled in the vines of the harmful, vain conjectures of their own imaginations, who are denied walking the veritable path which leads to the city of *nirvāṇa*, who have not penetrated the forests and jungles and dangers of this world and who misunderstand the teaching about the veritable path which leads to heaven and final beatitude.

Aspiring to freedom and to supreme and perfect enlightenment for the sake of dispersing the darkness of ignorance, we have taken refuge in the illumination of the perfectly realized one who destroys the darkness spread by the heretical views, who points out the veritable path leading to heaven and final beatitude, who has filled all the worlds with effulgent rays and his teaching of the Truth, who has devoted himself to arousing the petals of the lotus — the spirits of the different peoples to be freed — who is the sole and pure eye for those capable of understanding the truth of the nature of reality, who is the sole refuge of all men, whose halo is formed of the Buddha's own true properties — the ten powers, the four assurances and so on -- who is the best guide and leader of the Mahayana, who is endowed with swiftness of mind and foot - the seven-membered enlightenment - who dries up for men of all the three worlds the rivers in the forest of the cycle of birth, old age and death, who conquers his foes the four incomparable Maras - with arrows and who confounds the evil demons, Rahu, Vigraha and Udgraha in all the three worlds. You have destroyed our hope for freedom and our aspiration to supreme, perfect enlightenment by declaring, 'Thus, in every respect, both the appropriated factors of personal existence and the one appropriating them are devoid of being. How can a perfectly realized one, himself devoid of being, be comprehended in terms of what is itself devoid?'

So by your proclaiming that nothing has its being in itself you destroy our hope for freedom and our aspiration for the attainment of the unsurpassable perfect enlightenment. You have succeeded in obscuring the great, luminous orb of the perfectly realized one by improperly generating a succession of clouds not unlike the ignorance of the world.

Our reply is that we have destroyed the hope only of people who, like you, have been unable to bear the supremely profound lion's roar of the truth that there is no self, a truth absent from all heretical systems. You have, indeed, desiring freedom, abandoned the systems of the heretics and have followed the way of the supreme and incontrovertible Teacher, the perfectly realized one; but, because of the weakness of your aspiration you err about like antelopes on the evil paths of this forest, of this jungle, of this prison — this ineluctable cycle of birth and death — paths full of the pitfalls of faulty views which those astray follow. The perfectly realized ones never teach the reality of the factors of personal existence or of the self.

As it is said in the Bhagavati, 'Buddha himself, venerable Subhuti, is like may a or a dream; and the

essential qualities of Buddha are like may a and a dream.' Again, 'The Truth, properly understood" is devoid of an existence of its own; enlightenment, properly understood, is devoid of an existence of its own; and one who would enter the way is also devoid of self- existence. So think the wise though not the foolish.'

But we are not urging that the perfectly realized ones who are beyond all named things do not exist in any sense at all; to deny that they do would be an error on our part. A wise and saintly one, explaining that the perfectly realized one is without self-existence, and desiring to speak the unerring truth (iaviparTtartha), might say

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Thus, grasping as well as the one who grasps are empty in every possible way. They are devoid of any substance. For the substantialist, the tathagata as well as the aggregates have substance or own-nature, even though they are different from one another. The substantialist can explain the tathagata, whose self-nature (svabhava) is freedom, contrasting him with the one who is in bondage as a result of his being a "grasper" (upadatr.) and whose nature is distinct (para) from that of the tathagata. However, with Nagarjuna's denial of self-nature, that sharp dichotomy also is dissolved. Hence Nagarjuna's insistence that an empty tathagata cannot be made known in relation to an equally empty "grasper" (upadatr.) or "grasping" (upadana) referred to in the previous verse.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. So we must conceive of the Buddha and of all that pertains to him as empty of inherent existence. But the question then arises: What can we say or know of such an empty Buddha? This is a fundamental question not only with regard to our knowledge of the nature of enlightenment, but also with regard to our ability to say anything coherent about emptiness itself and empty phenomena.

Kārikā XXII.11

शून्यमिति न वक्तव्यमशून्यमिति वा भवेत्।
उभयं नोभयं चेति प्रज्ञप्त्यर्थं तु कथ्यते॥११॥

śūnyam iti na vaktavyam aśūnyam iti vā bhavet |
ubhayaṃ nobhayaṃ ceti prajñaptyarthaṃ tu kathyate ||11||

空則不可說 非空不可說
共不共叵說 但以假名說

kōng zé bù kě shuì fēi kōng bù kě shuì
gòng bù gòng pǒ shuì dàn yǐ jiǎ míng shuì

།སྟོང་ངོ་ཞེས་ཀྱང་མི་བརྗོད་དེ། །མི་སྟོང་ཞེས་ཀྱང་མི་བྱ་ཞིང་།
།གཉིས་དང་གཉིས་མིན་མི་བྱ་སྟེ། །གདགས་པའི་དོན་དུ་བརྗོད་པར་བྱ། །

| stoṅ ṅo źes kyaṅ mi brjod de | | mi (2)stoṅ źes kyaṅ mi bya źiṅ |
| gñis daṅ gñis min mi bya ste | | gdags pa'i don du brjod par bya |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - Nothing could be asserted to be sunya, asunya, both sunya and asunya, and neither sunya nor asunya. They are asserted only for the purpose of provisional understanding.

JONES (Skt):
[11] "Empty," "not empty," "both," or "neither" these should not be said, but they are said only as indicators.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
"Empty," "non-empty," "both" or "neither"—these should not be declared. It is expressed only for the purpose of communication.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
I am not saying that "what is open" or "what is not open" could exist
or "both" or "neither." They are said only for the purpose of teaching.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. [???]

SPRUNG (Skt):
11 The terms'devoid','non-devoid','both'and'neither' should not be asserted as predicates; But such terms are used to teach the truth.

STRENG (Skt):
11. One may not say that there is "emptiness" (sunya) (1) nor that there is non-emptiness. (2)" Nor that both exist simultaneously (3), nor that neither exists (4); the purpose for saying "emptiness" is for the purpose of conveying knowledge.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XXII.11 "Empty" should not be asserted, "non-empty" should not be asserted, both or neither should not be asserted, since these are only said for the purpose of designation.

ROBINSON (Skt):
It should not be said that [the Tathagata] is empty, or that he is non-empty, or that he is both empty and non-empty, or that he is neither empty nor nonempty. But it is said for the sake of designation.

BOCKING (Ch):
22v11 Emptiness cannot be expressed
Non-emptiness cannot be expressed.
Both, and neither, cannot be expressed
They are discussed merely as conventional names.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Do not say "empty," or "not empty," or "both," or "neither:" these are mentioned for the sake of [conventional] understanding.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Do not say "empty,"
And do not say "not empty" either.
Do not say "both" and do not say "neither."
These are to be stated for the sake of designation. [XXII.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. "Empty" should not be asserted.
"Nonempty" should not be asserted.
Neither both nor neither should be asserted.
They are only used nominally.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. We do not assert "Empty."
Nor do we assert "Nonempty."
We neither assert both nor neither.
They are asserted only for the purpose of designation.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
"Empty," 'non-empty," "both," "neither"—these should not be declared. They are asserted only for the purpose of provisional understanding.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
The Tathagata cannot be called "empty," nor "not empty," nor both, nor neither.
Use these terms as mere conventional designations. (11)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/11 The emptiness of dharmas cannot be expressed. The non-emptiness of dharmas cannot be expressed either. That dharmas are both empty and not empty and that dharmas are neither empty nor non-empty cannot be expressed either and why? Because they are merely for refuting their opposites and are taught only as conventional names. If you correctly contemplated and reflected in this way, then you would not make difficulties out of difficulties within the true character of dharmas, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

11abc The terms'devoid','non-devoid','both'and'neither' should not be asserted as predicates;

we should not assert these terms as predicates in any of the four modes (*sarvam etan na vaktavyam*).

One cannot, however, enter into a comprehension of the true nature of a perfectly realized one as it really is without using words (*anukte*). That is why we employ the term 'devoid of being' in a special and secondary sense (*aropatah*). We base ourselves wholly in the transactional reality of the everyday (*vyavaharamtya*) in an everyday transactional way as it suits those who are to be guided. We employ as well, the terms 'non-devoid', 'both-devoid-and-non-devoid' and 'neither-devoid- nor-non-devoid'.

So Nagarjuna says:

11d *But such terms are used to teach the truth.*

(fn 9 *Prajnaptyartham*. *Kārikā* 11 and its commentary are seminal for Madhyamika thought.)

To quote the words of the illustrious one: 'All elements of existence are devoid because without self-being, all elements of existence are uncaused being based in causelessness; all elements of existence are unattainable being unthinkable; all elements of existence are translucent by nature because of the utter purity of the surpassing awareness.'

Elsewhere non-devoidness has been taught: 'If, o monks, a past body does not exist in the future, the noble learned disciple will not acknowledge his past body. But as the past body exists, the noble learned disciple acknowledges his past body. If, o monks, a future body' and so on, up to, 'If, o monks, past consciousness is not real in the future' and so on as before.

In the thought of the Sautrantikas the past and the future are devoid of being but everything else is non-devoid; non-veridical mental acts are devoid. In the Vijnanavada school mental constructs are devoid of self-existence because they do not arise causally; they are like such things as the two moons seen by the ophthalmic.

'Therefore all things are not to be taken either as devoid of being or as non-devoid; individuals are neither real beings nor unreal beings; this is the middle way.' One wishing to know for what purpose devoidness and the other concepts are taught may be enlightened by the Enquiry into the Self (MMK XVIII).

To quote the sutra, 'This world is like magician's work, you say, illustrious one, like the pretence of an actor or a vision in a dream. There is no self, no real person, no birth. The elements of existence are like a mirage, like a moon reflected; this world is devoid of being, at peace, unborn and without ground.

'By your compassion you will save by many means, in many ways, and by many teachings. You contemplate this world in perpetual turmoil from countless passions and ills; you move on earth as the incomparable healer. Oh Sugata [Buddha], bring deliverance to the countless creatures. The entire world revolves like the wheel of a chariot; you reveal the supreme way to those fallen among animals, wickedness and hell fires, who are ignorant and without teacher or guide.'

But none of these terms holds good for the perfectly realized one who is not of the nature of a named thing. And it is not only the four assertions concerning devoidness which do not hold good for the perfectly realized one, but:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Note again the use of the iti-formula. Nagarjuna is rejecting any theorizing regarding either the "empty" or the "non-empty" or both or neither. Neither the empty nor the non-empty should be reified. These terms are used only for the sake of communicating or expressing an experience which, being dependent (pratityasamutpanna), has no static self-nature (svabhava), and as such cannot be demarcated and reified. The subtle difference between vaktavya ("should be declared") and kathyate ("is spoken of, is expressed") should not go unnoticed. For Nagarjuna, declaration and expression are two different activities, the former calling for unquestioned acceptance, a sort of categorical imperative, the latter leaving room for modification depending upon the context.

This statement of Nagarjuna is better understood in the light of the analysis of concepts provided by a modern philosopher like William James who recognizes a pragmatic view of language and truth, in contrast to substantialist philosophers like Plato for whom "concepts" are the incorruptible reals.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. This negative tetralemma is a crucial verse for understanding the relation between discourse on the conventional level and the understanding of emptiness or the ultimate truth. Nāgārjuna has been urging all along that ultimately all things are empty. It would be easy to interpret him to mean that from the ultimate standpoint, we can say of phenomena that they are empty. But here he quite deliberately undermines that interpretation, claiming instead that nothing can be literally said of things from such a standpoint. For ultimately there is no entity of which emptiness or nonemptiness can be predicated. Nor can we say that things are neither empty nor nonempty. For that would contradict the fact that from the standpoint of one using conventional language and cognition, it is correct to characterize phenomena as empty. The central claim in this verse is that all assertion, to the extent that it is true at all, is at best nominally true. Discourse about the ultimate character of things is not exempt from this generalization. Predication always requires an entity of which the predicate can be true; and the emptiness of phenomena guarantees that from the ultimate standpoint, there are no phenomena to be empty. The language is hence at best only ostensive. (fn 103. See Padhye (1988), esp. pp. 79-82, for further useful· discussion of the import of this and other negative tetralemmas for Nāgārjuna's philosophy of language. Padhye correctly emphasizes that Nāgārjuna and his Prasangika-Madhyamika followers reject any kind of Fregean or other realistic semantics that would require the independent existence of· properties, including emptiness or nonemptiness, or of individuals, as the semantic values of predicates or subject terms, respectively, arguing for a more pragmatic view of linguistic meaning. Huntington (1989) emphasizes this point as well. I discuss this issue at greater length in connection with the interpretation of *Vigrahavyavartani* in Garfield (unpublished).) The next verse generalizes this observation:

Kārikā XXII.12

शाश्वताशाश्वताद्या कुतः शान्ते चतुष्टयम्।
अन्तानन्तादि चाप्यत्र कुन्तः शान्ते चतुष्टयम्॥१२॥

寂滅相中無 常無常等四
寂滅相中無 邊無邊等四

|རྟག་དང་མི་རྟག་ལ་སོགས་བཞི||ཞི་བ་འདི་ལ་ག་ལ་ཡོད|
|མཐའ་དང་མཐའ་མེད་ལ་སོགས་བཞི||ཞི་བ་འདི་ལ་ག་ལ་ཡོད||

śāśvatāśāśvatādy atra kutaḥ śānte catuṣṭayam |
antānantādi cāpy atra kutaḥ śānte catuṣṭayam ||12||

jì miè xiāng zhòng wú cháng wú cháng děng sì
jì miè xiāng zhòng wú biān wú biān děng sì

| rtag daṅ mi rtag la sogs bźi | | źi ba ’di la ga la yod |
| mtha’ daṅ mtha’ med la sogs bźi | | źi ba ’di la ga la yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - How could the fourfold possible natures of permanence, impermanence, etc., manifest in quiescence? Again, how could the fourfold limit, limitless, etc., manifest in quiescence? - Note: Reference is again to the elements of the four-cornered logic.

JONES (Skt):
[12] Here in what is pacified (i.e., free of conceptual projection), how can the fourfold scheme of “eternal,” “not eternal,” and so forth be? So too, in what is pacified, how can the fourfold scheme of “finite,” “infinite,” and so forth be?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can the tetralemma of eternal, non-eternal, etc., be in the peaceful? How can the tetralemma of finite, infinite, etc., be in the peaceful?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where within fourfold permanence, impermanence, etc., is peace?
Where within fourfold finitude, infinity, etc., is happiness?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. What is called Eternity, or what is called Non-eternity, and so forth, exist here in front us.
Where are the Four, Reason, the external world, Action at the present moment, and Reality?
The End and No-end, and so forth, are just manifesting themselves in front of us.
Where exist there the One Group of four, the Reason, the External World, Action at the present moment, and Reality?

SPRUNG (Skt):
12 How could the four assertions concerning the eternal and the non-eternal be made of what is at peace? How could the four assertions concerning the finite and the infinite be made of what is at peace?

STRENG (Skt):
12. How, then, will "eternity," "non-eternity," and the rest of the Tetralemma apply to bliss (santa)? How, then, will "the end," "without end," and the rest of the Tetralemma apply to bliss?

BOCKING (Ch):
22v12 Within the characteristic of calm quiescence,
The four (view4 of permanence, impermanence etc., do not exist.
Within the characteristic of calm quiescence,
The four (views) of limit, no limit etc., do not exist.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Where can the four such as permanence and impermanence exist in this peaceful one? Where can the four such as end and no-end [of the world] exist in this peaceful one?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Permanence, impermanence, and the other two—
How could they pertain to this peace?
Limited, limitless, and the other two—
How could they pertain to this peace? [XXII.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. How can the tetralemma of permanent and impermanent, etc.,
Be true of the peaceful?
How can the tetralemma of finite, infinite, etc.,
Be true of the peaceful?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. How can the tetralemma of permanent, impermanent, etc.,
Be true of the pacified?
How can the tetralemma of finite, infinite, etc.,
Be true of the pacified?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[axiomatic] How can the tetralemma of permanent, impermanent, etc., be made of the peaceful? How can the tetralemma of the finite, infinite, etc., be made of the peaceful?

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Permanent, impermanent, and so forth, the four—
Where are they in this peace?
Finite, infinite, and so forth, the four—
Where are they in this peace? (12)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/12 The true character of all dharmas is subtle, calm quiescence, but we produce four kinds of erroneous views on account of the past; that the world is permanent, that the world is impermanent, that the world is both permanent and impermanent, and that the world is neither permanent nor impermanent. In calm quiescence none of these exist at all, and why? The true character of all dharmas is utter clarity and purity, and cannot be grasped. If even emptiness is not accepted, how much less these four kinds of views? These four views all arise on account of reception, but within the real character of all dharmas there is nothing which is caused by receiving.

(30c7) Through these four kinds of views we regard ourselves as noble and regard others as base, but in the true character of dharmas there is no 'you' or 'I', and this is why it is said that in calm quiescence the four views do not exist.

(30c9) Just as with the four views which exist in regard to the past, so it is with the four views which exist in regard to the future; that the world has limits, the world has no limits, that the world both has and does not have limits, and that the world neither has nor does not have limits.

Question: If you refute the Thus-Come in this way, doesn't this mean that there is no Thus-Come?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

("Peace": fn 10 *Santa*, what is not subject to determination in time and space.)

The fourteen questions on which no stand may be taken (*avyakrtavastuni*) are given by the revered one in the following way. Existence (*loka*) (fn 11 'World', but understood as personal world, or existence. This is not so much a cosmological problem, as an existential one.) is eternal [without beginning]; existence is non-eternal; existence is both eternal and non-eternal; existence is neither eternal nor non-eternal. Thus the first tetralemna. Existence has an end [in time]; existence is without end; existence both has and has not an end; existence neither has nor has not an end. Thus the second tetralemna. The perfectly realized one exists after his decease; the perfectly realized one does not exist after his decease; the perfectly realized one both exists and does not exist after his decease; the perfectly realized one neither exists nor does not exist after his decease. Thus the third tetralemna. The living person (*jiva*) is identical with the body; the living person is one thing and the body another. (fn 12 There is no formal reason why the fourth tetralemna is incomplete, but, traditionally, it is.)

These fourteen topics are called the fourteen unresolved questions because they are by nature unresolvable. According to the argument already given, none of the four assertions concerning devoidness has any relevance (fn 13 *na sambhavati*: logically and really impossible.) for the perfectly realized one who is without ontic existence and who is by nature at peace. Similarly the four assertions concerning the eternal and the non-eternal have no relevance; because they are without relevance, as the predicates 'light' and 'dark' are without relevance for the son of a barren woman, the illustrious one did not resolve, did not take a stand (*na vyakrta*) on the four questions concerning existence. In the same way the four assertions are without relevance for the perfectly realized one. Thus the four assertions concerning an end or no end to existence are not relevant to the perfectly realized one, who is at peace (*santa*).

And now Nagarjuna proclaims the effective irrelevance of the four possibilities 'the perfectly realized one exists after death' and so on.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Santa is an appeased one. It is the tathagata who has appeased the dispositions, obsessions as well as the object (see comments on V.8). For him, the fourfold metaphysical alternatives either regarding the duration of phenomena such as eternality (sasvata) and non-eternality (asasvata) or regarding the extent of phenomena such as the finite (anta) and the infinite (ananta) do not exist. He has stopped brooding over the past and running after the future.

Kārikā XXII.13

येन ग्राहो गृहीतस्तु घनोऽस्तीति तथागतः।
नास्तीति स विकल्पयन्निर्वृतस्यापि कल्पयेत्॥१३॥

ghanagrāho gṛhītas tu yenāstīti tathāgataḥ |
nāstīti sa vikalpayan nirvṛtasyāpi kalpayet ||13||

邪見深厚者 則說無如來
如來寂滅相 分別有亦非

xié jiàn shēn hòu zhě zé shuì wú rú lái
rú lái jì miè xiàng;xiāng fēn bié yǒu yì fēi

།གང་གིས་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་ཡོད་ཅེས།།འཛིན་པ་སྟུག་པོ་བཟུང་གྱུར་པ།
།དེ་ནི་མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་ལ།།མེད་ཅེས་རྣམ་རྟོག་རྟོག་པར་བྱེད།།

| gaṅ gis de bźin gśegs yod ces | | (3)'dzin pa stug po bzuṅ gyur pa |
| de ni mya ṅan 'das pa la | | med ces rnam rtog rtog par byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - One who is firmly entrenched in asserting (or grasping) the existence and non-existence of the Tathagata will, in turn, even discriminate on the existence and non-existence of the Tathagata in the nirvanic realm.

JONES (Skt):
[13] A person who has conceived the thought "The Buddha exists or does not exist" would also conceive in their thinking the same thought of one who has achieved nirvana.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Discriminating on the basis of grasping or the grasped, and firmly insisting that a *tathāgata* "exists" or "does not exist," a person would think similarly even of one who has ceased.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
You are grasped and destroyed by grasping false imaginings that the Tathāgata "exists"
or "does not exist." He would be imagined to the same as one who is deceased.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. Now full of Murder, Restraint, and Confinement,
Nowadays, relying upon those facts, it is called the Arrival of Reality.
Actually speaking, it is said that the real situation does never change at all.
And furthermore the situation of stopping might continue for the length of Kalpa.

SPRUNG (Skt):
13 One who holds the crude notion that the perfectly realized one 'exists', must speculate, 'he does not exist' after his enlightenment.

STRENG (Skt):
13. That image of nirvana in which the Buddha (Tathágata) either "is" or "is not"— By him who so imagines nirvana the notion is crudely grasped.

BOCKING (Ch):
22v13 One whose false views are deeply entrenched
Will say that there is no Thus-Come.
The Thus-Come's characteristic of calm quiescence
He will distinguish as existing, and as not.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Those who hold the dense apprehension, "the tathagata exists" conceive the thought, "he does not exist in nirvana."

DOCTOR (Tb):
One seized by the dense fixation
That the Thus-Gone exists
Will think that, upon his transcendence,
The Thus-Gone no longer exists. [XXII.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. One who grasps the view that the Tathagata exists,
Having seized the Buddha,
Constructs conceptual fabrications
About one who has achieved nirvana.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. One who holds firmly
That the Tathāgata exists
Will have to fabricate his nonexistence
After having achieved nirvana.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
One who is fixed on asserting the existence or non-existence of the Tathagata will construct such conceptual fabrications even of one who has ceased.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/13 False views are of two kinds; the first denies worldly bliss, the second denies the path to nirvana.

Denying worldly bliss is the false view of the coarse, immature man. He says that there is no sin and no merit, and no saints and sages such as Thus-Comes etc. Generating such false views, he forsakes good and does evil, and thus denies the bliss of the world. The one who denies the path to nirvana is deeply attached to self, and discriminates between existent and nonexistent, developing good and extinguishing evil. Since he develops goodness, he obtains worldly bliss, but because he discriminates between being and nonbeing he does not attain nirvana. Therefore, if you say that the Thus-Come does not exist, this is a deeply entrenched false view, and you lose even worldly bliss - how much more so nirvana? But if you say that the Thus-Come exists this is also a false view, and why? Because the Thus-Come has the characteristic of calm quiescence yet you are making various distinctions, differentiating within the characteristics of calm quiescence, the Thus-Come as existing or not existing.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

One who holds to the very crude notion — an illusory conjecture — 'the perfectly realized one exists' must imagine that the perfectly realized one does not persist in final enlightenment after his death; that is, the perfectly realized one, being destroyed, does not persist in the time following his death, as he has ceased to exist in any sense. One so speculating would be forming a false view.

However, one for whom the perfectly realized one neither exists nor does not exist in any definite state (avastha), because he is devoid of self-existence will think:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Buddha's reasons for the rejection of the notion of tathagata in the Samyutta passage referred to above (see comments on XXII. 1-2) are clearly emphasized by Nagarjuna. The Buddha rejected a tathagata because his existence was asserted in a real and absolute sense (saccato thetato). When Nagarjuna speaks of a dogmatic grasping (graha) on to something as the real or substantial (ghana) existence or non-existence (astiti . . . nastiti) of the tathagata, he was expressing the sentiments similar to those of the Buddha. Furthermore, arguing in a similar way as the Buddha did, Nagarjuna maintains that the same sort of substantialist speculations lead to the views regarding the existence and nonexistence of the tathagata even after his death.

Here there is no denial of a tathagata, but only of a substantial entity. The verse that follows is unequivocal in this regard.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

13. Here Nāgārjuna returns to the problem of ascribing inherent existence to the Buddha in the context of thinking about phenomena from the ultimate standpoint. The problem is that, as Nāgārjuna has argued above, the only grounds for asserting the inherent existence of the Buddha would be on the grounds of the inherent existence of the aggregates and some view about the relations of the self to the aggregates. And we have seen that to be untenable. Moreover, since upon achieving nirvāṇa, on most Buddhist doctrine, one ceases to identify a self and aggregates, it would follow that upon achieving nirvāṇa one would cease to exist. This is doubly problematic. On the one hand, it forces one to see nirvāṇa as complete annihilation, which doesn't make it look quite so attractive. On the other hand, it forces the conclusion that the Buddha is either not in nirvāṇa (since he exists), which is paradoxical in that buddhahood should guarantee nirvāṇa, or that he both exists (as a genuine buddha) and does not exist (in virtue of being in nirvāṇa), which is contradictory.

Kārikā XXII.14

स्वभावतश्च शून्येऽस्मिंश्चिन्ता नैवोपपद्यते।
परं निरोधाद्भवति बुद्धो न भवतीति वा॥१४॥

svabhāvataś ca śūnye ’smiṃś cintā naivopapadyate |
paraṃ nirodhād bhavati buddho na bhavatīti vā ||14||

如是性空中 思惟亦不可
如來滅度後 分別於有無

rú shì xìng kōng zhōng sī wéi yì bù kě
rú lái miè dù hòu fēn bié yū;yú;wū yǒu wú

།རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་ནི་སྟོང་དེ་ལ།།སངས་རྒྱས་མྱ་ངན་འདས་ནས་ནི།
།ཡོད་དོ་ཞེའམ་མེད་དོ་ཞེས།།བསམ་པ་འཐད་པ་ཉིད་མི་འགྱུར།།

| raṅ bźin gyis ni stoṅ de la | | saṅs rgyas mya ṅan ’das nas ni |
| yod do źe’am med do źes | | bsam pa ’thad pa ñid mi ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 14 - As the Tathagata in its self-existence is in the nature of sunya, it is not possible to reason that the Buddha exists or does not exist after liberation.

JONES (Skt):
[14] Since he is empty by nature, the thought that the Buddha “exists” or “does not exist” after nirvana should not occur.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When he is empty in terms of self-nature, the thought that the Buddha exists or does not exist after death is not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
In what is open by nature, this thought:
“The Buddha exists or does not exist after death” does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
14. When the state, which is based on subjective existence, is in the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system,
Following upon the situations, a worry does never appear at all.
When a long distance exists from the self-regulation,
It is also said that a Person, who has realized the Truth, does not exist too.

SPRUNG (Skt):
14 As he is by nature devoid it is not intelligible to say, ‘After his death the Buddha exists or does not exist.’

STRENG (Skt):
14. Concerning that which is empty by its own nature (svabhava), the thoughts do not arise that: The Buddha "exists" or "does not exist" after death.

BOCKING (Ch):
22v14 Within the emptiness of such a nature
One may speculate yet not discover
Whether, after the passing of the Thus-Come
He can be distinguished as existent or non-existent.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
For that one empty of own-nature, it is entirely inappropriate to think that once the buddha has nirvana-ed he either “exists” or “does not exist.”

DOCTOR (Tb):
As for a Buddha empty of nature,
To declare that, upon transcendence,
He exists or does not exist
Would not make any sense. [XXII.14]

GARFIELD (Tb):
14. Since he is by nature empty,
The thought that the Buddha
Exists or does not exist
After nirvana is not appropriate.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
14. Since he is essentially empty,
Neither the thought that the Buddha exists
Nor that he does not exist
After having achieved nirvana is tenable.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
As the Tathagata is Empty of self-nature, the thought that the Buddha exists or does not exist after liberation is unintelligible.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/14 Since the nature of the true character of all dharmas is emptiness we should not speculate as to whether the Thus-Come exists, -or does not exist, or both does and does not exist after his passing. From the very beginning the Thus-Come was utterly empty; how much more so after his decease?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna means that this is an illusory attribution (*kalpana*) like the illusory attribution of colours to the sky. As the perfectly realized one is beyond all named things, is without self- existence and is by nature at peace, it is thinking of but feeble insight which speculates 'he is eternal', 'he is not eternal', etc., 'he is imperishable', 'he is perishable', 'he exists', 'he does not exist', 'he is devoid', 'he is not devoid', 'he is omniscient', 'he is not omniscient', and so on.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here the term asmin, in the locative absolute construction (asmin svabhavatas ca sunye), refers to the tathagata. If the tathagata who is alive is empty of self-nature, then it is not appropriate to assume that he exists or does not exist after death. It is only the substantialist thinking (cinta) that leads to the metaphysical questions which were left undeclared (avyakrta) by the Buddha.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

14. Nāgārjuna here draws on the results of XXII: 11, 12 to point out that one can evade all of these paradoxes by simply rejecting the language of existence and nonexistence when these are read inherently. Empty things exist conventionally; but about their ultimate status, nothing can be literally said. Of course we can say that the Buddha is empty and, hence, neither really existent nor completely nonexistent. But that, Nāgārjuna is arguing in this chapter, can be only understood in a purely negative sense. The ultimate nature of things is perhaps *shown* by it, to use a Wittgensteinian metaphor; but cannot be *said* in this language. (fn 104. Nagao (1991) puts this point nicely: "... [F]or one whose point or departure is *sunyata*, even the claim that all is *sunyata* is absurd, for non-assertion or nonmaintenance of a position is the real meaning of *sunyata"* (p. 42).)

Kārikā XXII.15

प्रपञ्चयन्ति ये बुद्धं प्रपञ्चातीतमव्ययम्।
ते प्रपञ्चहताः सर्वे न पश्यन्ति तथागतम्॥१५॥

prapañcayanti ye buddhaṃ prapañcātītam avyayam |
te prapañcahatāḥ sarve na paśyanti tathāgatam ||15||

如來過戲論 而人生戲論
戲論破慧眼 是皆不見佛

rú lái guò xì lùn ér rén shēng xì lùn
xì lùn pò huì yǎn shì jiē bù jiàn fú;fó

|གང་དག་སངས་རྒྱས་སྤྲོས་འདས་ཤིང||ཟད་པ་མེད་ལ་སྤྲོས་བྱེད་པ|
|སྤྲོས་པས་ཉམས་པ་དེ་ཀུན་གྱིས||དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་མཐོང་མི་འགྱུར||

| gaṅ dag saṅs rgyas spros 'das śiṅ | | zad (4)pa med la spros byed pa |
| spros pas ñams pa de kun gyis | | de bźin gśegs pa mthoṅ mi 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 15 - Those who resort wholly to provisional descriptions in speaking of the Buddha, which is actually beyond description and destruction, are impaired by the descriptions themselves and cannot understand the Tathagata. - Note: This verse clearly indicates the non-identity of thought (discriminative knowledge) and reality.

JONES (Skt):
[15] Those who project concepts onto the enlightened, who is forever beyond such projections, are impaired by these projections and fail to see the Buddha.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Those who generate obsessions with great regard to the Buddha who has gone beyond obsessions and is constant, all of them, impaired by obsessions, do not perceive the *tathāgata.*

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Those who imagine the Buddha, who is beyond being described by false statements,
are all destroyed by idle fancy. They do not see the Tathāgata.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
15. The person, who promotes his or her own Personality, has realized the Truth.
The people, who have promoted the Past, are eternal.
They, people, who expand destructions to everything,
Do never look at the Arrival of Reality.

SPRUNG (Skt):
15 Those who assert names of the Buddha who is beyond named things and is unchanging — are all victims of their own naming and do not see the perfectly realized one.

STRENG (Skt):
15. Those who describe in detail the Buddha, who is unchanging and beyond all detailed description—
Those, completely defeated by description, do not perceive the "fully completed" being.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Those who fantasize about the Buddha, who is beyond fancies and imperishable, are all slain by fancy and do not see the Tathagata.

BOCKING (Ch):
22v15 The Thus-Come transcends sophistries
Yet men still produce sophistries.
Sophistries destroy the eye of insight,
Such as these do not see the Buddha.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Those who make fixations about Buddha who is beyond fixations and without deterioration -- all those who are damaged by fixations do not see the tathagata.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Those who create constructs about the Buddha,
Who is beyond construction and without exhaustion,
Are thereby damaged by their constructs;
They fail to see the Thus-Gone. [XXII.15]

GARFIELD (Tb):
15. Those who develop mental fabrications with regard to the Buddha,
Who has gone beyond all fabrications,
As a consequence of those cognitive fabrications,
Fail to see the Tathagata.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
15. Those who develop fabrications with regard to the Buddha—
The unextinguished one who has gone beyond all fabrication—
And are impaired by those fabrications,
Fail to see the Tathāgata.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[axiomatic] Those who develop mental fabrications with regard to the Buddha who has gone beyond such obsessions and is constant, fail to *see* the Tathagata due to being impaired by such obsessions.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/15 'Sophistries' means recollected thoughts, grasping of characteristics, distinguishing this from that, saying that the Buddha is extinct or is not extinct, and so forth. Since man in order to pursue sophistries inverts his eye of insight, he is unable to see the dharma-body of the Thus-Come. In this chapter on the Thus-Come, we have considered, from beginning to end, (the idea of) a fixed nature of the Thus-Come, and we have been unable to discover one. Therefore, the verse says:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Because names (*prapanca*) are bound to objects and the perfectly realized one is not an object, how could naming be efficacious? Therefore the perfectly realized one surpasses names. And, as he is by nature not causally produced and does not alter his nature, he is unchanging.

As this is the character of the perfectly realized one, those who discourse speculatively about the illustrious Buddha by means of various fancied non-existent distinctions stemming from the conceit of tainted and impure imagination and from self-induced error, such victims of their own discourse are turned away from and completely lose sight of the true characteristics of the perfectly realized one. So, like dead creatures, those of this school do not see the perfectly realized one as those blind from birth do not see the sun.

This is why the illustrious one said: 'Those who saw me in the body and who hung on my voice, such people, committed to erroneous notions, do not see me. Buddhas are to be seen as the truth of things; for they are of the substance of truth (*dharmakaya*); but the truth is not to be sought intellectually for it is incapable of being known intellectually.'

Mere, in this enquiry into the perfectly realized one,, the entire world of living creatures — gods, demons and men has been investigated; and even as it is without a being of its own, so the inanimate world — from the wind and the sun to the great palace of Akanista — is also without being of its own.

Nagarjuna expounded this saying:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here we radically differ from the prevailing explanations that prapañca means thought distinct from reality (see Inada,). Having rejected the more widespread view that Buddhism recognizes an "unspeakable" (avacya) and "indefinable" (anirvacaniya) truth or reality (tattva), which leads to the above interpretation of prapañca, we have rendered the term as "obsession."

The Buddha remains aloof from obsessions (prapancatitam). As such, he is not understood or grasped by those who are obsessed. A person who is obsessed with the idea of identity will understand the Buddha in a way different from one who is obsessed with the idea of difference. One will say that he "exists" (asti) and the other will insist that he "does not exist" (nasti).

The Buddha who has overcome such "obsessions" is "not so variable" (avyayam). HIS perceptions are not variable in the same way as those of the unenlightened ones who are dominated by obsessions. Nagarjuna could not have been unaware of the definition of the Buddha as "one who has become stable and steady" (thitam anejjappattam, A 3.377; thitam cittam, S 5.74). The term avyaya in the present context expresses the same idea of stability and steadfastness achieved by a Buddha. This is not to assume his permanent existence.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

15. To see buddhahood for what it is - to see things as a buddha sees them - one must see things independently of the categories that determine an ontology of entities and a dichotomy of existence and nonexistence. That this is inconceivable to us, for Nāgārjuna, only indicates the fact that we are trapped in conventional reality through the force of the delusion of reification. But we can, through using the Madhyamika dialectic, come to see the nature of our predicament, the possibility of transcending it, and even the nature of that transcendence. That, however, requires us to acknowledge the merely nominal character of conceptual imputation.

Kārikā XXII.16

तथागतो यत्स्वभावस्तत्स्वभावमिदं जगत्।
तथागतो निःस्वभावो निःस्वभावमिदं जगत्॥१६॥

tathāgato yatsvabhāvas tatsvabhāvam idaṃ jagat |
tathāgato niḥsvabhāvo niḥsvabhāvam idaṃ jagat ||16||

如來所有性 即是世間性
如來無有性 世間亦無性

rú lái suǒ yǒu xìng jí shì shì jiān xìng
rú lái wú yǒu xìng shì jiān yì wú xìng

།དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་རང་བཞིན་གང་། །དེ་ནི་འགྲོ་འདིའི་རང་བཞིན་ཡིན། །
།དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་རང་བཞིན་མེད། །འགྲོ་བ་འདི་ཡི་རང་བཞིན་མེད། །

| de bźin gśegs pa'i raṅ bźin gaṅ | | de ni 'gro 'di'i raṅ bźin yin |
| de bźin gśegs pa raṅ bźin med | | 'gro ba 'di yi raṅ bźin med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 16 - The Tathagata 's nature of self-existence is also the nature of this worldly existence. The Tathagata, (strictly speaking), is without the nature of self-existence and this worldly existence is likewise so.

JONES (Skt):
[16] Whatever is the essence (i.e., self-nature) of the Buddha, that is the essence of this world. But the Buddha is without any essence, and this world is without any essence.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever is the self-nature of the *tathāgata*, that is also the self-nature of the universe. The *tathāgata* is devoid of self-nature. This universe is also devoid of self-nature.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What self-nature is the Tathāgata, that self-nature is the world.
The Tathāgata is without self-nature and the world is without that selfnature.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
16. The Arrival of Reality is some kind of subjective Existence.
And such a kind of subjective Existence is just the motion of this world.
The Arrival of Reality is never a lacking of subjective existence,
But the negation of subjective existence is just the motion of this world.

SPRUNG (Skt):
16 The self-existence of a perfectly realized one is the self-existence of this very cosmos. The perfectly realized one is without a self-existent nature; the cosmos too is without a self-existent nature.

STRENG (Skt):
16. The self-existence of the "fully completed" being is the self-existence of the world. The "fully completed" being is without self-existence and the world is without self-existence.

ROBINSON (Skt):
The own-being of the Tathagata is the own-being of this world; the Tathagata is without own-being, and this world is without own-being.

BOCKING (Ch):
22v16 The nature of the Thus-Come
Is the very nature of the world
The Thus-Come has no nature
The world, also, has no nature.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Whatever is the own-nature of the tathagata, that is the own-nature of this world. The tathagata has no own-nature. This world has no own-nature.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which is the nature of the Thus-Gone
Is also the nature of this world.
There is no nature of the Thus-Gone.
There is no nature of the world. [XXII.16]

GARFIELD (Tb):
16. Whatever is the essence of the Tathagata,
That is the essence of the world.
The Tathagata has no essence.
The world is without essence.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
16. Whatever is the essence of the Tathāgata,
That is the essence of the transmigrator.
The Tathāgata has no essence.
The transmigrator has no essence.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[axiomatic] Whatever is the self-nature of the Tathagata is the self-nature of the world. The Tathagata is without self-nature. The world is without self-nature.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Whatever is the nature of the Tathagata,
That is the nature of wandering beings.
The Tathagata has no inherent nature;
Wandering beings have no inherent nature. (16)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

22/16 In this chapter we have considered and earnestly investigated the nature of the Thus-Come, which is in fact the nature of all the worlds.

Question: What kind of thing is this nature of the Thus-Come?

Reply: The Thus-Come has no nature. Equally, the world has no nature.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

16ab *The self-existence of a perfectly realized one is the self-existence of this very cosmos.*

'Cosmos' means the universe without living beings. In what sense the perfectly realized one is self-existent Nagarjuna explains:

16cd *The perfectly realized one is without a self-existent nature; the cosmos too is without a self-existent nature.*

In what way the cosmos is without a nature of its own has been dealt with in the enquiry into causality and other chapters.

This is why it can be said in the sutra: 'The perfectly realized one is ever independent of the elements of existence; all elements of existence are akin to the perfectly realized one; those of puerile intellect are subject to the notion of cause, and err about in the world among putative elements of existence, which are unreal. The perfectly realized one is of the nature of a reflection; he is of pure elements which cause no harm; here there is no perfection and no perfectly realized one; he is beheld in all the worlds as a reflection.'

To quote the illustrious *Prajnaparamita*: 'The sons of the gods said to venerable, revered Subhuti, "O noble Subhuti, are all beings not like magic (*mayopama*), are they not magic?" On this being said the venerable Subhuti said to the son of the gods, "All beings are like magic, all beings are like a dream (*svapnopama*); magic and beings are not two things, they are not by nature different; because dreams and beings are not two things; they are not by nature different. All the elements of existence, o sons of the gods, are like magic, like a dream. The one on his way to *nirvāṇa* is like magic and a dream. The spiritual achievement of one on the way to *nirvāṇa* is like a magic and a dream. And so too one to be born only once more and his spiritual achievement are like magic and a dream; so too one who is not to be born again and his spiritual achievement; the realized saint as well is like magic and a dream; the spiritual achievement of sainthood is like magic and a dream; the perfectly enlightened individual is like magic and a dream; perfect individual enlightenment itself is like magic and a dream. Even the ultimate Buddha is like magic and a dream as is ultimate Buddhahood like magic and a dream. Thus I say." '

Thereupon the sons of the gods said to venerable Subhuti, 'You say, o noble Subhuti, that the perfectly enlightened individual is like magic and a dream and that even perfect enlightenment itself is like magic and a dream.' Subhuti replied, 'Even *nirvāṇa* is like magic and a dream; how much more other truths.'

The sons of the gods said, 'You say, o noble Subhuti, that even *nirvāṇa* is like magic and a dream.' Subhuti replied, 'Whatever other truth there might be even more excellent than *nirvāṇa* that also I would say was like magic and a dream, because *nirvāṇa* and magic are not two things, they are not by nature different.'

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The first statement of Nagarjuna may be taken to mean that there is a self-nature of the tathagata which is identical with that of the universe. This would be justification for the belief in a permanent entity which is identical with the reality of the universe, comparable to the atman and brahman of the Hindu tradition. However, Nagarjuna immediately sounds the warning that there is not such self-nature either in the tathagata or in the universe. This would mean that non-substantiality (nairatmya) applies not only to the individual (pudgala = tathagata) but also to all phenomena (dharma = jagat).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

16. This crucial final verse emphasizes again the lack of any fundamental nature of entities. Emptiness is the final nature of all things, from rocks to dogs to human beings to buddhas. (fn 105. See also Kalupahana (1986), pp. 310-11, and Ng (1993), pp. 26-28, for a similar reading.) This fact entails, for Mahayana philosophers, the possibility of any sentient being to be fundamentally transformed - to attain enlightenment. But this is so, paradoxically, because ultimately there is no fundamental transformation, because there is nothing to transform. In Chapters XXIV and XXV below, we will see the dramatic consequences of this line of reasoning.

Chapter XXIII

विपर्यासपरीक्षा त्रयोविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀顛倒品第二十三(二十四偈)

།ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་གསུམ་པའོ།།

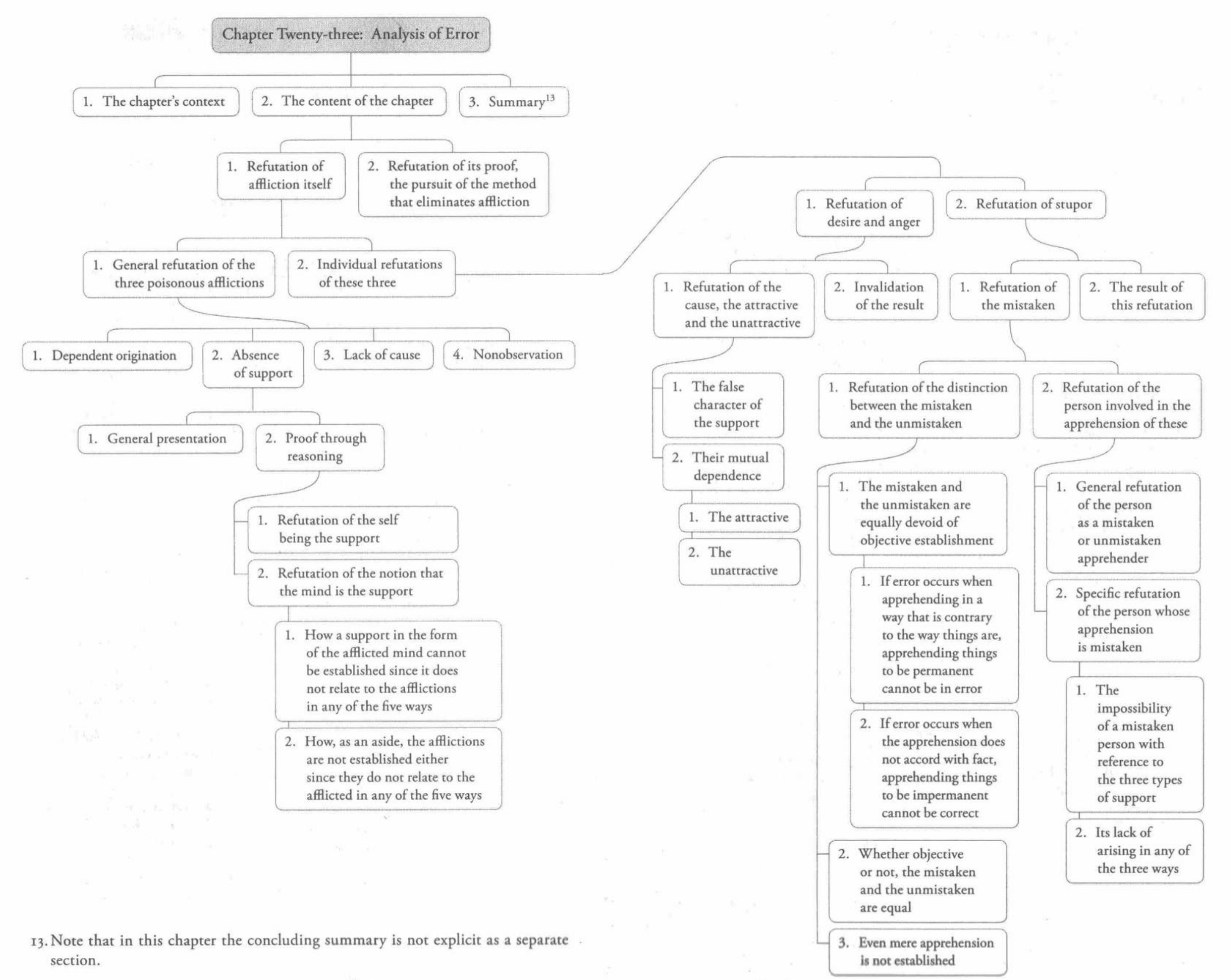
viparyāsaparīkṣā nāma trayoviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XXIII: Examination of Errors

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter XXIII

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



13. Note that in this chapter the concluding summary is not explicit as a separate section.

TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We are still in the fifth section of the extensive explanation of selflessness: the presentation of the essential emptiness of the continuum of life.We have completed the first of its two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the Tathagata. **[382:19]** This chapter constitutes the second of those two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of afflictions.

EXPLANATION:

Here someone might argue as follows: the cause of cyclic existence exists essentially, because *its* causes exist essentially. Action arises from the afflictions; the continuous series of birth and death following one another arises as an effect from action and the afflictions, and that is the continuum of cyclic existence. The principal cause is the afflictions, because when they are eliminated, even though there is karma, the continuum of cyclic existence is terminated.

If the afflictions existed essentially, the continuum of cyclic existence would exist essentially. However, this is not the case. The refutation of this assertion has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the afflictions and the refutation of the essential existence of the methods of their elimination as arguments for their existence.

SUMMARY:

So, according to those who think that things exist through their own characteristics, it is not possible that afflictions arise from such things as pleasant objects and from conceptualizing them; nor can they distinguish between the erroneous and the nonerroneous in the context of grasping things as permanent, etc.; nor can they abandon the afflictions. One should ascertain, however, that for those according to whom things are empty of inherent existence, all of this is completely tenable.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XXIII - Examination of the Perversion of Truth

This chapter discusses the interesting question of perversion or false perception of truth or reality. The term itself is a central concept in Buddhism for in and through it all our false views are said to evolve. And in this sense it belongs to the conceptual or ideational process in man. Nagarjuna attempts to show at the outset that the origin of all false views lies in the adulteration and complication of what is pure and what is impure. All perversions, in this sense, mean confusing the pure with the impure. With purity of experience in the background, he then goes through the usual process of arguing that elements or matters attached or related to the process of perversion do not exist in the real sense. He finally brings out the concept of perversion for direct examination and shows that the concepts of perceiver, the perceived, that which depends on perception, and perception itself are all false constructions. On the other hand, from the basic standpoint of truth or reality, they are all of the nature of quiescence. What is then to be done? He concludes that the perversion itself must cease in order to destroy ignorance and that by the destruction of ignorance all devious functions of the five skandhas, such as, samskara and vijnana, will be extinguished, thus arriving at ultimate quiescence or nirvana.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

23. *Confusions (viparyasa*). The reasons for the misunderstandings that prevail regarding the nature of the enlightened one (*buddha*) or the "thus gone one" (*tathagata*) as well as anything that takes place in the universe (*jagat*) are then taken up for examination. Once again the nucleus of the chapter can be traced back to the early discourses.

A discussion of the four types of confusions (*vipallasa*) relating to perceptions (*sanna*), thought (*citta*), and views (*ditthi*) is met with in the *Anguttaranikaya*.118 The basic confusions relating to these three different functions are given as follows:

1. Perceiving, thinking and viewing what is impermanent as permanent.

2. Perceiving, thinking and viewing what is not suffering as suffering.

3. Perceiving, thinking and viewing what is non-substantial as being substantial.

4. Perceiving, thinking and viewing what is impure as pure.

The first three of these, in that particular order, are generally referred to as the three characteristics (*lakkhana*) of human existence, that is, impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-substantiality (*anatta*). Nagarjuna has already dealt with these concepts at length (see Chapters II, XII and XVIII). Hence, he begins his analysis with the last, namely, the pure (*subha*) and impure (*asubha*). These indeed are value judgments made by the human beings and serve as the foundation of the religious and spiritual life. However, in the eyes of the substantialist philosophers, these were ultimate qualities, each having its own nature (*svabhava*). With the first two verses, Nagarjuna sets the tone of his criticism of these qualifies, which allows him to move on to other types of confusions subsequently. While the interplay between the qualities of *subha* and *asubha* are mentioned in verse 11, Nagarjuna's refutation of the ultimate reality of these qualifies is based initially upon his recognition of the dependent arising of both, The notions purity and impurity, like any other entities, have no ultimate substantial standing. They are based upon lust (*raga*), hatred (*dvesa*), and confusion (*moha*), which in turn are the products of thought or conceptualization (*samkalpa*). The cessation of lust, hatred, and confusion is generally equated with "freedom" (*nirvana*). Hence, it is generally assumed that *nirvana* is beyond *any* conceptualization or thought. This seems to be the manner in which the notion of a "non-conceptual" and ultimate reality (*paramartha*) came to be attributed to Nagarjuna and, hence, to all Madhyamika philosophy.

Early Buddhism refers to two forms of thought or conceptualization (*samkappa*), the more comprehensive and, therefore, right thought or conceptualization (*samma-samkappa*) and the more restricted and, therefore, wrong thought (*miccha-samkappa*). This is in no way different from what Nagarjuna discussed in Chapter XVII (12-13), where he distinguished thoughts (*kalpana*) that are proper (*yojyate*) from those that are inappropriate (*nopapadyate*).

In many instances, "thoughts" (*samkalpa*) and "dispositions" (*samskara*), two terms that are semantically related, function in similar ways. This is attested to by Nagarjuna's treatment of them. We have already noted how he characterized "dispositions" as "confusions" (*mrsa*)(XIII.1 - 2). This definition was, in fact, attributed to the Buddha himself. In the present context, speaking of "confusions" (*viparyasa*), Nagarjuna introduces the notion of *samkalpa* and proceeds to define it in terms of its consequences, namely, the generation of lust, etc.

A careful analysis of the notions of *samkalpa* and *samskara* in relation to freedom or *nirvana* may clarify an important epistemological problem, both in early Buddhism and in Nagarjuna. We have already referred to the function of dispositions (*sankhara*) in the context of early Buddhism. They cannot be eliminated except at death, and are, therefore, to be appeased (*samatha*, *upasama*). This process of appeasement is to be achieved by not clinging on to any of the past dispositions when one has to deal with the problem of understanding any situation. Hence, *nibbana* came to be designated *asankhata*.

When speaking of the thoughts or concepts (*samkalpa*), however, we are presented with two types, the right and the wrong. The right ones are to be cultivated and the wrong ones eliminated, a process not recommended in relation to dispositions. This dichotomy between right and wrong thoughts could have unsatisfactory implications. Right thoughts may be taken as pointing to true events or phenomena, while the wrong ones may indicate the absence of such events or phenomena. This, indeed, was the substantialist trap which both the Buddha and Nagarjuna were attempting to avoid. Therefore, without taking right thoughts in the sense of absolutely true ideas corresponding to ultimate facts, that is, as having substance or self-nature (*svabhava*), Nagarjuna wants them to be treated as empty (*sunya*), not in the sense of absolute nonexistence (*abhava*) but in a more pragmatic sense of being able to produce consequences. Thus, while wrong thoughts (*mithya samkalpa*) are productive of lust (*raga*), hatred (*dvesa*), and confusion (*moha*), right thoughts (*samyak samkalpa*) give rise to freedom from lust (*vairagya*), compassion (*karuna*, *advesa*), and knowledge (*prajna).*

The entire chapter on "confusion" (*viparyasa*), is therefore, devoted, not to an outright rejection of the simple discriminations of purity and impurity, etc., but to a vehement criticism of such discriminations based upon the notions of absolute existence (*astitva*) and absolute non-existence (*nastitva*).

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Confusion

Concepts are at the root of it:
Greed, hatred, bewilderment
Depend on what is conceived
As desirable, despicable or confusing.

How can such things trouble me
If they are not what they seem?
Without anyone to trouble,
Compulsions would be no one's.

The concept "body"
Is not inside my flesh and bones,
Just as these compulsions
Are not inside my troubled soul.
Nor are my flesh and bones
Inside the concept "body";
Nor is my troubled soul
Inside its compulsions.

If what is "desirable,"
"Despicable" and "confusing"
Have no nature of their own,
Why do they trouble me?
I may believe that objects of the senses
Are the foundations of desire –
But they are like invisible cities,
Mirages and dreams.

Are they desirable or despicable?
"Desirable" and "despicable"
Depend on each other;
Neither stands alone.
If nothing is desirable,
How can I covet it?
If nothing is despicable,

How can I hate it?

Manners of conception,
Conceptuality itself,
Conceived and conceiver
Arc all at ease.
When there is no confusion
And no unconfusion,
Who is confused and who is not?
Work that out for yourself.

If self, incorruptibility,
Eternity and happiness were real,
They would not confuse me.
Were they unreal,
Nor would selflessness,
Corruption, transience or anguish.
In ending confusion, ignorance stops
And compulsive acts cease.

If there were a problem,
How could I be rid of it?
Who can destroy what is real?
If there were no problem,
How could I be rid of it?
Who can destroy the unreal?

JONES (COMMENTARY)

23. Errors

The three roots of unskillfulness are desiring what is undesirable, hating what is not real and thus not hatable, and errors about what is ultimately real (thinking there is permanence in the impermanent, thinking there is happiness in what can only bring unhappiness, thinking what is unpleasant is pleasant, and thinking there is a self in what is without a self).

Under Nagarjuna's analysis there are no real afflictions and no real self to afflict. If afflictions existed through their own self existence, they could not be eliminated since we cannot eliminate what is self-existent (v. 24). And if the afflictions do not exist through their own self-existence, they are not real, and so there is nothing that could be eliminated. Either way, there is nothing to eliminate. So too, if there is no real entity who grasps and no real thing to be grasped, then there is no real clinging. Even "impermanence" does not ultimately apply to what is empty (vv. 15-16) since there is nothing permanent to contrast it with. Nor, if an error and a person are real, can an error arise in someone who is not in error (since an error as a self-existent entity cannot enter the self-existent person), nor can it arise in a person who is already in error (vv. 16-20). (The analysis of motion and mover in Chapter 2 applies here.) When the idea of errors as real entities ceases, the fundamental root-ignorance of the ontological nature of things *(avidya)* ceases; and when this ignorance ceases, then dispositions cease, and so forth (v. 23).

Verses 23-25 deal with the consequences for the religious way of life, which are also continued in the next chapter. In a standard Nagarjunian analysis, the afflictions are said not to be eliminatable: if they exist through self-existence, then they cannot be changed in any way and so cannot be removed; if are empty, then there is no reality called "afflictions" to remove.

In verse 5, Nagarjuna uses the word *"drishtivat,"* but he is not using it here in the technical philosophical sense of a *drishti;* instead, he means only the everyday sense of "viewing" something.

23

An Examination of Mistakes

In the Prajnaparamita Sutras, the Buddha taught:

Desire is perfectly pure, and therefore forms are perfectly pure.

CONNECTING THIS WITH other mental afflictions and confused concepts:

Aversion is perfectly pure, and therefore forms are perfectly pure. Pride is perfectly pure, and therefore forms are perfectly pure. Stupidity is perfectly pure, and therefore forms are perfectly pure. Jealousy is perfectly pure, and therefore forms are perfectly pure. Wrong views are perfectly pure, and therefore forms are perfectly pure. Doubts are perfectly pure, and therefore forms are perfectly pure.

Thus the Buddha taught about perfect purity in a vast way.

The reason Nagarjuna composed this chapter was that there were those who said, "Samsara exists because the mistakes that produce it exist. Mental afflictions cause sentient beings to accumulate karma, and as a result they take birth again and again in samsara." In order to help these people overcome their confused belief in the reality of samsara, Nagarjuna had to present an analysis of the mistakes that produce samsara: mistaken concepts about reality; the mental afflictions arising from these mistaken concepts; and the karmic actions motivated by these mental afflictions. Nagarjuna had to demonstrate that none of these things truly exist.

In general, people have a tendency to believe that being mistaken and being unmistaken, being right and being wrong, are real. People conceive of right and wrong as being opposites that truly exist. If we are not able to reverse this tendency to think that right and wrong are truly existent, it will be impossible for us to realize emptiness. This is why it is very important for us to analyze mistakes and determine their true nature.

It is also the case that sometimes people think, "I really do not understand this stuff and all my views are wrong. I am constantly thinking about things wrongly, I have all these bad thoughts, and I have so many doubts. I am never going to attain enlightenment." In this way, they get very discouraged. At other times people think, "Look at that guy. He does everything wrong. His views are completely wrong. His conduct is completely wrong." This type of thought is wrong in itself, though, for how could anyone know for certain what is inside another person's mind? Therefore, in order to reverse our tendency to get discouraged ourselves, as well as our tendency to have wrong views concerning others, it is important for us to examine the true nature of mistakes.

To put this into verse:

So that we are no longer discouraged by our own bad thoughts, and / So that we no longer incorrectly judge others to have bad thoughts, / Let us examine mistakes' true nature.

We can begin by examining the mental afflictions that arise as a result of mistaken thoughts and that cause us to take mistaken actions. The main mental afflictions are desire or attachment, aversion, and stupidity. Desire's referent object, what it focuses on, is something we consider pleasant. Aversion's referent object is something we find unpleasant, and stupidity's referent object is a mistake, a wrong view. Therefore, what we need to examine are these three objects: those we consider pleasant, those we consider unpleasant, and mistakes.

When we examine these objects, however, we cannot find anything really there at all. Whatever object we analyze, we find that it is merely imputed to exist in dependence upon its parts. Analyzing the parts themselves, we find that they too are imputed to exist in dependence upon their own parts. Down to the subtlest particles of matter imaginable, nothing has any type of existence other than as a mere dependent imputation. Therefore, since there really is no object out there, no reference point for any notions of pleasant or unpleasant, pleasant and unpleasant themselves cannot exist. This is what Nagarjuna teaches in the ninth verse:

How could it be possible for
Sentient beings who are like illusions
Or objects that are like reflections
To be either pleasant or unpleasant?

To put this in the form of a logical reasoning: Pleasant and un-pleasant do not truly exist, because the bases for the respective notions of pleasant and unpleasant are individuals and objects that themselves are appearance-emptiness, like illusions and reflections. If there is no support or basis that can have these qualities of pleasant and unpleasant, then how can the qualities themselves really exist? They cannot.

Another way to analyze is to look at the very notions of pleasant and unpleasant themselves. Pleasant and unpleasant could truly exist only if they did so independent of each other. However, pleasant cannot inherently exist before there is any notion of unpleasant, because it would have no reference point. Pleasant has no reference point in the absence of unpleasant. Similarly, unpleasant cannot exist in the absence of pleasant, because it would have no reference point. You cannot have a thought of something being unpleasant without a thought of what pleasant means as well. Therefore, pleasant depends for its existence on unpleasant, but unpleasant itself depends on pleasant to exist. Therefore,

neither one truly exists, as Nagarjuna teaches beginning with the tenth verse:

We imagine something to be pleasant
Based on our idea of what is unpleasant.
But unpleasant too does not exist independent of pleasant.
Therefore, for pleasant to truly exist would be impossible.

Pleasant does not truly exist because the concept of unpleasant that it must depend upon for its existence in turn depends upon it— pleasant—for its existence. The very thing pleasant exists in dependence upon must depend upon pleasant itself in order to exist. Therefore, pleasant is not real.

The eleventh verse demonstrates the lack of inherent existence of unpleasant:

We imagine something to be unpleasant
Based on our idea of what is pleasant.
But pleasant too does not exist independent of unpleasant.
Therefore, for unpleasant to truly exist would be impossible.

Unpleasant has no nature of its own because the concept of pleasant that it must depend upon for its existence in turn depends upon it in order to exist. So the very thing that unpleasant depends on in fact depends upon it. Therefore, unpleasant is not real either.

We can examine clean and unclean in the same way. Clean exists only in dependence upon unclean. Unclean exists only in dependence on clean. So they exist only in dependence upon each other, and therefore they cannot truly exist. If one thing depends upon something else, but that other thing must depend upon it, then neither one can really exist. Long and short, hot and cold, good and bad, happiness and unhappiness are all exactly the same. They are dependently existent and therefore they are not truly existent (fn For another analysis of how it is that things existing in mutual dependence cannot truly exist, see chapter 10, “An Examination of Fire &Firewood.”).

In the twelfth verse, Nagarjuna describes how it is that since neither pleasant nor unpleasant exists, neither do the afflictive emotions of desire and aversion that appear to arise from contact with pleasant and unpleasant things:

Since pleasant does not exist, how could desire exist?
Since unpleasant does not exist, how could aversion exist?

To put this in the form of a logical reasoning: Desire and aversion have no inherent existence because their reference points, pleasant and unpleasant, do not truly exist, just as is the case with the desire and aversion that appear in dreams.

The chapter goes on to look at what are commonly known as the four mistaken views in the twenty-second verse:

If, however, self, clean,
Permanence, and happiness do not exist,
Then their opposites—selfless, unclean,
Impermanent, and suffering do not exist either!

The four mistaken views are: to look at the five aggregates, which are empty of self, and see them as the self; to look at the unclean body and take it to be clean; to look at things that arise due to causes and conditions, which are impermanent, and see them as permanent; and to look at samsara, which is of the nature of suffering, and take any part of it to be happiness. Their opposites—the views of selflessness, unclean, impermanence, and suffering—-are called the four correct views.

When Nagarjuna analyzes, however, he finds that neither mistaken nor correct views truly exist. For if self, clean, permanent, and happiness existed, then the views of these four would not be mistaken views after all, because when one had these views one would be focusing on things that existed, so there would not be any mistake in that. On the other hand, if these four do not exist—and their nonexistence is said to be what makes the views of them mistaken— then in fact their opposites (selfless, unclean, impermanent, and suffering) could not exist either, because they would have no reference point to depend upon for their existence. If there is no self, there can be no selflessness, because they are dependency existent; if there is no clean, there can be no unclean, because they are dependently existent; if there is no permanence, there can be no impermanence, because they are dependency existent; and if there is no happiness, there can be no suffering, because they are dependently existent. Thus, since the “correct” views’ objects do not exist, the views themselves do not exist either.

Therefore, all eight of these views need to be abandoned. If we are going to posit some views as mistaken, then we have to posit all eight of these as equally mistaken. This is the ultimate view of the Middle Way, which points out that the true nature of reality transcends self, selflessness, both, and neither; transcends clean, unclean, both, and neither; transcends permanence, impermanence, both, and neither; and transcends happiness, suffering, both, and neither. That is how genuine reality is.

It is important to analyze what the true nature of mistakes really is. If we can gain certainty that essential reality transcends both being mistaken and being unmistaken, transcends both being right and being wrong, we will be able to realize that all phenomena that are opposites are really of the nature of equality. Resting within that equality, free from any mental fabrications about it, is the practice of meditative equipoise; rising up from that meditation, to view all appearances of opposites as appearance-emptiness, illusory and dreamlike, is the practice of postmeditative awareness.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XXIII

विपर्यासपरीक्षा त्रयोविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

viparyāsaparīkṣā nāma trayoviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀顛倒品第二十三(二十四偈)

zhōng lùn guān diān dào;dǎo pǐn dì èr shí sān (èr shí sì jié;jì)

ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་གསུམ་པའོ།།

| phyin ci log brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa ñi śu gsum pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XXIII - Examination of the Perversion of Truth

JONES (Skt):
23. Errors

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Perversions

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
23. Analysis of Error

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[23] Examination of Delusion (25 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
The Basic Afflictions and the Four Misbeliefs

STRENG (Skt):
Section 23 - An Analysis of Errors (the perverted views) In 25 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
23. the misconceptions.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 23 Contemplation of Perverted Views 24 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Error

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER - Analysis of Error

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XXIII: Examination of Errors

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XXIII - Examination of Errors

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 23: AN EXAMINATION OF MISTAKES

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter Twenty-three - Examination of Errors

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/0 Question:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter XVII]

Stopped here – pdf pg 111

Relation of affliction and misbelief

Some argue that the round of birth and death (*bhavasamtati* - a synonym for *saṃsāra*) exists in fact because its cause exists in fact. They argue, that is, that action (karma) proceeds from the basic afflictions, and that the unbroken succession of birth and death follows as the effect of action which arises from the basic afflictions. This unbroken succession of birth and death is what is meant by the round of birth and death. The basic afflictions are the factual, material cause (*pradhanam karanam*) of this because the round of birth and death ceases when they have been eradicated. Hut the basic afflictions desire and the rest — are fact. Therefore the unbroken succession of birth and death, the round of birth and death, being the factual effect (*karyabhuta*), will, by virtue of the necessary connection, exist also.

We reply. There would be the round of birth and death if the basic afflictions, as its cause, existed. But they do not. How is that? The illustrious Buddhas, who destroy their enemy, the afflictions of beings in all the three worlds, and who emerge triumphant from the struggle with their adversaries, the four Maras,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Twenty Three Examination of Perversions (Viparyasa-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XXIII Examination of Errors

This chapter continues the investigation of the relation between cyclic existence and nirvāṇa by asking whether the fundamental defilements and the four basic cognitive errors, which according to orthodox Buddhist doctrine bind us to saṃsāra, themselves inherently exist and by asking how it is possible to abandon them and enter nirvāṇa. The fundamental defilements are desire, hatred, and confusion: the desire for things that are not desirable, the aversion to things to which it is not reasonable to be averse, confusion about the actual nature of entities. These, according to most strains of Buddhist philosophy, are the bases of afflicted action, which in turn leads to further grasping and error. The four basic errors or erroneous philosophical theses are: (I) There is a permanent self among the five personal aggregates. (2) There is real happiness in saṃsāra. (3) The body is pure - that is, that it is a real source of happiness. (4) There is a permanent self distinct from the aggregates.

If these defilements and errors were inherent properties of the self, that might serve as a ground for the inherent existence of saṃsāra and its phenomena, to the extent that saṃsāra is ,grounded in these phenomena. Moreover, though, if these defilements and errors were inherently existent, it is hard to see how nirvāṇa is possible since it requires their elimination. But on the other hand, if these defilements do not exist, it is hard to see why there is saṃsāra at all and why we are not already in nirvāṇa. And if they are merely illusions, why isn't the distinction between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa merely an illusion; why isn't suffering merely an illusion? In short, why isn't illusion merely an illusion? This chapter is devoted to answering these fundamental questions in Buddhist soteriological theory.

Kārikā XXIII.1

संकल्पप्रभवो रागो द्वेषो मोहश्च कथ्यते।
शुभाशुभविपर्यासान् संभवन्ति प्रतीत्य हि॥१॥

LVP 451,9-10 - LVP 474,11-12
saṃkalpaprabhavo rāgo dveṣo mohaś ca kathyate |
śubhāśubhaviparyāsān saṃbhavanti pratītya hi ||1||

從憶想分別 生於貪恚癡
淨不淨顛倒 皆從眾緣生

T1564: vol 30, pg 31a11
cóng yì xiǎng fēn bié shēng yū;yú;wū tān huì chī
jìng bù jìng diān dào;dǎo jiē cóng zhòng yuán shēng

།འདོད་ཆགས་ཞེ་སྡང་གཏི་མུག་རྣམས།།ཀུན་ཏུ་རྟོག་ལས་འབྱུང་བར་གསུངས།
།སྡུག་དང་མི་སྡུག་ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག།བརྟེན་པ་ཉིད་ལས་ཀུན་ཏུ་འབྱུང་།

Tg tsa 13b5 - Tg tsa 14b3
|| ’dod chags źe sdaṅ gti mug rnams | | kun tu rtog las ’byuṅ bar gsuṅs |
| sdug daṅ mi sdug phyin ci log | | brten pa ñid las kun tu ’byuṅ |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - Covetousness, enmity, and delusion are said to arise from false ideation or conceptualization. Indeed, they come about in virtue of the perverse relational play of purity and impurity.

JONES (Skt):
[1] It is said that desire, hatred, and delusion - the three roots of unskillful action - arise from thought, for they arise respectively from the pleasant, the unpleasant, and errors.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Lust, hatred, and confusion are said have thought as their source. Perversions regarding the pleasant and the unpleasant arise depending upon these.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Desire, hatred, and delusion are said to rise from false discrimination.
They develop depending on errors of purity and impurity.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. What has been born from desire is violent emotion,
Hatred and charm, are actually talked.
Because both good omens and bad omens are manifesting themselves together,
It seems clear that both are going to occur clearly.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 Explain that desire, aversion and illusion are born of volitive thought and that they arise in dependence on the ‘good’, the ‘bad’ and misbelief.

STRENG (Skt):
1. It is said that desire (raga), hate, and delusion are derived from mental fabrication (samkalpa), Because they come into existence presupposing errors as to what is salutary and un-salutary.

BOCKING (Ch):
23v1 As a result of conceptual discrimination
Lust, anger and delusion arise
Perverted conceptions of purity and impurity
Are all produced from conditions.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is said that desire, hatred, stupidity arise from conceptuality; they arise in dependence on the pleasant, the unpleasant and confusion. [they arise in dependence on confusion about the pleasant and unpleasant]

DOCTOR (Tb):
It is taught that desire, anger, and stupor-
Originate in dependence on thought.
Their arising depends
On the attractive, unattractive, and mistaken. [XXIII.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Desire, hatred and confusion all
Arise from thought, it is said.
They all depend on
The pleasant, the unpleasant, and errors.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. Desire, hatred, and confusion
Arise completely from conceptualization, it is said.
They all arise in dependence on
The pleasant, the unpleasant, and errors.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.1 [axiomatic] It is said that desire, aversion, and confusion arise from thought. Errors regarding what is good and bad arise depending upon these.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/1 The sutras say that because of the conceptualized discrimination of the perverted ideas of purity and impurity, lust, anger and delusion arise. Therefore we know that lust, anger and delusion must exist. Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

‘Volitive thought’ (*samkalpa*) means conceptual activity (*vitarka*); ‘born of means arising directly from. As the verse expresses it, ‘O desire I know thy roots, thou art born of volitive thought. I will not will thee in my thought and thou willst exist no more for me.’ ‘Desire (raga), aversion (dvesa) and illusion (*moha*) are said to be born of volitive thought.’ Only these three afflictions are named because they are the roots of the others and are primary. ‘And these three basic afflictions arise in dependence on the “good” (*subha*) the “bad” (*asubha*) [the ‘bad’ is the ‘not-good’] and misbelief (*viparyasa*).’ That is, desire arises in direct dependence on what takes the form of the ‘good’; aversion is dependent on the ‘bad’; and illusion arises in direct dependence on misbelief. However, volitive thought is the common cause of these three arising.

How is it that illusion is born of volitive thought? We explain. The illustrious one said in the *Pratityasamutpada Sutra*, ‘Even primal ignorance, o monks, has its reason, its conditions, its cause. What is the cause of ignorance? A groundless act of consciousness, o monks, is the cause of ignorance. A confused act of consciousness, born of illusion, is the cause of ignorance.’ Thus ignorance comes into being born of volitive thought (fn 2 This is not quite lucid. It appears that the ‘good’, the ‘bad’ and the four misbeliefs are posited and that conceptual activity carried by volition then results in desire, aversion and illusion or ignorance, respectively. In Buddhist thought, however, good, bad and misbelief themselves presuppose ignorance. The circle is obvious and quite acceptable to Madhyamika which abjures lineal explanation.).

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Following upon a discussion of the tathagata in relation to the world, a discussion that avoided absolute identity and absolute difference, Nagarjuna takes up the question regarding perversions (viparyasa) which makes a difference between a person in bondage and one who is freed.

The four perversions are discussed by the Buddha at Anguttara 2.52. They pertain to perceptions (sanna), thoughts (citta), and views (dittbi). Perversion (vipallasa) of perception or thought or view occurs with the identification of

i. the impermanent with the permanent (anicce niccan ti),

ii. the not unsatisfactory with the unsatisfactory (adukkhe dukkhan ti),

iii. the non-substantial with the substantial (anattani atta ti), and

iv. the unpleasant with the pleasant (asubhe subhan ti).

It is important to note that perversion ii is based upon perversion i, and perversion iv is based upon perversion iii. While perversions ii and iv relate to subjective attitudes, perversions i and iii are cognitive in nature. The recognition of subjective perversions (i.e. ii and iv) does not mean that those experiences relating to which perversions arise do not exist. Indeed, experiences of the pleasant (subha = manapa) and unpleasant (asubha = amanapa) sensations occur even in the enlightened ones (Itivuttaka 38). Perversion is the wrong identification of these experiences. However, the same cannot be said of the cognitive perversions, for the Buddha would be reluctant to assume that there is an experience corresponding to something that is either permanent or substantial.

For Nagarjuna, perversions ii and iv are not due to purely intellectual or cognitive incapacity on the part of the individual. They are due more to the subjective elements dominating thoughts such as lust and hatred, which arise along with thoughts (samkalpa-prabhavo), even though these latter are not part of the world of experience. This explanation of Nagarjuna is based upon a passage in the Samyutta wherein the Buddha identifies desire (kama) with thoughts of lust (samkappa-raga) without confusing it with whatever is beautiful (citrani) in the world (see S 2.22; Tsa 48.20 [Taisho 2.345b]).

As such, it is not surprizing to see Nagarjuna beginning his analysis with the last of the perversions, namely, the identification of the pleasant with the unpleasant (asubhe subhan ti), a subjective perversion that is based upon the cognitive confusion (i.e., anattani atta ti). Nagarjuna was probably interested in beginning his analysis with the subjective perversion because the metaphysicians, who carried the analytical process beyond its limit, had difficulty in accounting for the emergence of sensations such as the pleasant and the unpleasant.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. Without reifying entities, a cognitive operation, there is no basis for desire for those entities, of aversion from them, and no confusion regarding their mode of existence. Seeing things as pleasant or unpleasant in themselves depends upon confusing our desire or aversion with respect to them with properties they have in themselves. The desire and aversion in turn depend upon our attributing pleasantness and unpleasantness to the entities. It is a tight and vicious circle of attribution and emotional reaction, all depending upon reification.

Kārikā XXIII.2

शुभाशुभविपर्यासान् संभवन्ति प्रतीत्य ये।
ते स्वभावान्न विद्यन्ते तस्मात् क्लेशा न तत्त्वतः॥२॥

śubhāśubhaviparyāsān saṃbhavanti pratītya ye |
te svabhāvān na vidyante tasmāt kleśā na tattvataḥ ||2||

若因淨不淨 顛倒生三毒
三毒即無性 故煩惱無實

ruò yīn jìng bù jìng diān dào;dǎo shēng sān dú
sān dú jí wú xìng gù fán nǎo wú shí

།གང་དག་སྡུག་དང་མི་སྡུག་དང་།།ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་ལས་བརྟེན་འབྱུང་བ།
།དེ་དག་རང་བཞིན་ལས་མེད་དེ།།དེ་ཕྱིར་ཉོན་མོངས་ཡང་དག་མེད།།

| gaṅ dag sdug daṅ mi sdug daṅ | | phyin ci log las brten 'byuṅ ba |
| (6)de dag raṅ bźin las med de | | de phyir ñon moṅs yaṅ dag med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - That which comes about in virtue of the perverse relational play of purity and impurity cannot possibly have self-existence or self-nature. Therefore, defilements are not in the nature of thatness or truth. - Note: Defilements (klesa) take on two aspects, i.e., physical and mental, and the verse makes reference to them in the inclusive sense.

JONES (Skt):
[2] Things that arise dependent upon errors about what is auspicious and what is inauspicious are not found existing from self-existence. Therefore, from the point of view of reality, there are no afflictions.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever perversions of the pleasant and the unpleasant that occur dependently are not evident in terms of serf-nature. Therefore, the defilements ate not in themselves.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Whichever develop depending on errors of purity and impurity, they do
not occur as self-natures. Therefore, in truth, the defilements do not exist.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. A good omen and a bad omen are producing miscellaneous delusions.
But miscellaneous things and phenomena are manifesting themselves clearly together.
And so they do not manifest their subjective existence,
Therefore miscellaneous pains are never Real Facts.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 What arises in dependence on the 'good', the 'bad' and misbelief cannot be self-existent; therefore the basic afflictions do not exist in truth.

STRENG (Skt):
2. Those things which come into existence presupposing errors as to what is salutary and un-salutary Do not exist by their own nature (svabhava); therefore the impurities (klesa) do not exist in reality.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Those that come into being in dependence on the pure, on the impure, and on misconception do not occur by own-being; therefore the passions (klesas) do not [occur] in reality (tattvatas).

BOCKING (Ch):
23v2 If you say that perverted views of purity and impurity
Produce the three poisons,
Then the three poisons are without self-nature.
Consequently, the defilements have no reality.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Whatever arises in dependence upon the pleasant, the unpleasant and confusion, (whatever arises in dependence on confusion about the pleasant and unpleasant) they have no own-nature, therefore, afflictions do not really exist (do not exist in themselves).

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which originates in dependence
On the attractive, unattractive, and mistaken
Cannot be due to its own nature.
Hence, the afflictions are not real. [XXIII.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. Since whatever depends on the pleasant and the unpleasant
Does not exist through an essence,
The defilements
Do not really exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. Since whatever arises in dependence on the pleasant, the unpleasant,
Or error does not exist through an essence,
The afflictions
Do not exist in reality.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.2 What arises due to errors regarding what is good and bad occurs dependency and is not evident in terms of self-nature. Therefore, defilements are not such in themselves.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/2 If the defilements arise on account of the conceptualization of perverted views of purity-and impurity, then they have no self-nature. Consequently, the defilements are unreal.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If desire and the other afflictions were, indeed, self-existent they would not arise in dependence on the 'good', the 'bad' and misbelief, bccause what is self-existent is neither created nor related to anything other than itself. But they do arise in dependence on the 'good', the 'bad' and misbelief; they are therefore wholly lacking in self-existence and are not real in truth (tattvatah). That is, they do not exist in the higher sense (*paramarthatah*), in the sense of self-existence.

Afflictions of a self are unintelligible What is more,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The perversions of the pleasant and the unpleasant are dependently arisen. As mentioned before, they are the products of lust and hatred; they arise within the individual. For this reason, they are not found in themselves (na svabhavatah). Whatever defilments (klesa) occur as a result of such perversions cannot be part of the experienced world. Rather they related to the way in which the world is perceived by the individual. It is only in this sense that they are looked upon as being unreal (na tattvatah).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. But it follows from this that the defilements, in virtue of depending on these attributions and upon our relation to pleasant and unpleasant things, all of which are themselves empty, are empty of inherent existence. Indeed, they are not only dependently arisen, but depend upon things or features of those things already shown to be empty.

———

Kārikā XXIII.3

आत्मनोऽस्तित्वनास्तित्वे न कथंचिच्च सिध्यतः।
तं विनास्तित्वनास्तित्वे क्लेशानां सिध्यतः कथम्॥३॥

ātmano 'stitvanāstitve na kathaṃ cic ca sidhyataḥ |
taṃ vināstitvanāstitve kleśānāṃ sidhyataḥ katham ‖3‖

我法有以無 是事終不成
無我諸煩惱 有無亦不成

wǒ fǎ yǒu yǐ wú shì shì zhōng bù chéng
wú wǒ zhū fán nǎo yǒu wú yì bù chéng

།བདག་གི་ཡོད་ཉིད་མེད་ཉིད་ནི།།ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ཡང་གྲུབ་པ་མེད།
།དེ་མེད་ཉོན་མོངས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ནི།།ཡོད་ཉིད་མེད་ཉིད་ཇི་ལྟར་འགྲུབ།།

| bdag gi yod ñid med ñid ni | | ji lta bur yaṅ grub pa med |
| de med ñon moṅs rnams kyi ni | | yod ñid med ñid ji ltar 'grub |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - The existence and non-existence of atman can never be established. How then could the existence and non-existence of defilements be established apart from the atman?

JONES (Skt):
[3] The existence and nonexistence (i.e., "is-ness" and "is-not-ness") of the self are in no way established. Without the existence and nonexistence of the self, how are the existence and nonexistence of the afflictions established?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The existence or the non-existence of the self is not established in any way. Without that, how can the existence or the non-existence of defilements be established?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where the existence or nonexistence of the self is not in any way even established,
without it in existence or not in existence, how are the defilements established?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Souls do not belong to the problems, whether they really exist, or not.
Therefore how is it possible for Souls to be the perfectly realized as Things, or Phenomena.
The Souls are never included in the problem, whether they really exist, or not.
And so how is it possible for miscellaneous pains actually to be concrete things, or substance at all?

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 The existence or non-existence of the personal self has not been established in any way at all; but, without a self, how can the existence or non-existence of the basic afflictions be established?

STRENG (Skt):
3. The existence or non-existence of the individual self (atma) is not proved at all. Without that individual self, how can the existence or non-existence of the impurities be proved?

BOCKING (Ch):
23v3 Whether or not there exists a dharma of self
Is something which can never be established
Without a self, the existence or nonexistence of defilements
Cannot be established either.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The existence or non-existence of self is not established in any way. Without that, how can the existence or non-existence of afflictions be established?

DOCTOR (Tb):
The existence or nonexistence of the self
Is not established in any way.
How can the existence or nonexistence
Of the afflictions be established without it? [XXIII.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. The self's existence or nonexistence
Has in no way been established.
Without that, how could the defilements,
Existence or nonexistence be established?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. The self 's existence or nonexistence
Has in no way been established.
Without that, how could the afflictions'
Existence or nonexistence be established?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.3 The existence or the non-existence of the self is not established in any way. Without that, how can the existence or the non-existence of defilements be established?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/3 Whether the self does or does not exist in causes and conditions cannot be established. Now, if there is no self, how can the existence or nonexistence of the defilements be established? Why is this?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In what way the existence or non-existence of a personal self (*atman*) is not established has been explained in detail. That being so, how can there be existence or non-existence of a putative element of existence which presupposes a self?

If someone says: Let it be agreed that the existence and non-existence of a personal self are not established, what is the consequence for the afflictions, as their existence or nonexistence have not been established?

Nagarjuna's reply:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The perversion regarding what is pleasant and unpleasant has been traced back to the perversion where the non-substantial (anatman) is identified with the substantial (atman). The substantial and the non-substantial, in the eyes of the metaphysician, pertain to existence (astitva) and non-existence (nastitva) respectively (see V.8; XV.7, 11). The discourse to Katyayana rejects both these views as being metaphysical.

Nagarjuna is here insisting that neither the existence nor the non-existence of a metaphysical self can be proved. If there were to be no such self, then the defilements associated with such a self also cannot exist. In the absence of a substantial self, if only the defilements were to exist, then they should have self-existence, which was an idea denied at XXIII.2. Thus, neither the substantial existence of a self nor the substantial existence of defilments can be established.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. Moreover, the defilements are meant to be defilements of the self. But the self - the putative basis of those defilements - cannot exist inherently. So the defilements, being attributes of an empty phenomenon, cannot be nonempty. The following verse reiterates that position:

Kārikā XXIII.4

कस्यचिद्धि भवन्तीमे क्लेशाः स च न सिध्यति।
कश्चिदाहो विना कंचित्सन्ति क्लेशा न कस्यचित्॥४॥

kasya cid dhi bhavantīme kleśāḥ sa ca na sidhyati |
kaścid āho vinā kaṃcit santi kleśā na kasyacit ||4||

誰有此煩惱 是即為不成
若離是而有 煩惱則無屬

shuí yǒu cǐ fán nǎo shì jí wéi bù chéng
ruò lí shì ér yǒu fán nǎo zé wú shǔ

།ཉོན་མོངས་དེ་དག་གང་གི་ཡིན། །དེ་ཡང་གྲུབ་པ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།འགའ་མེད་པར་ནི་གང་གི་ཡང་། །ཉོན་མོངས་པ་དག་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན། །

| ñon moṅs de dag gaṅ gi yin | | de yaṅ grub pa yod ma yin |
| ’ga’ med (7)par ni gaṅ gi yaṅ | | ñon moṅs pa dag yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - These defilements are said to exist with someone but such a person cannot be established. That is to say, separated from a person these defilements seem to exist independently without belonging to anyone.

JONES (Skt):
[4] Afflictions are afflictions of someone, but no “someone” can be established to exist - without a “someone,” the afflictions are nobody’s.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
These defilements, indeed, belong to someone. Yet, such a person is not established. In other words, in the absence of anyone, these defilments seem to exist without belonging to anyone.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, whose are these defilements since he is not established?
Who says, without anyone, defilements exist that belong to no one?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. Something, which can be acceptable as some kind of receptacle, is this world,
But pain can never be accepted as some kind of real entity.
Something, aha, it might be as if it is nothing.
Therefore even something, which is so severely painful, can never be anything at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 The afflictions must afflict someone, but this someone has not been proved to exist. Without someone as subject surely the afflictions cannot afflict anyone.

STRENG (Skt):
4. For impurities exist of somebody, and that person is not proved at all. Is it not so that without someone the impurities do not exist of anybody?

BOCKING (Ch):
23v4 Who has these defilements?
Such a one cannot be established.
If the defilements exist apart from this (self)
Then they are not part of it.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
These afflictions are someone’s. But that [someone] is not established. Without [someone], the afflictions are not anyone’s.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The one to which the afflictions belong
Is not in any way established.
When they do not pertain to anything at all,
The afflictions cannot exist in any way either. [XXIII.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. The defilements are somebody’s.
But that one has not been established.
Without that possessor,
The defilements are nobody's.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. The one to whom the afflictions belong
Has not been established as existent.
Without anyone to whom they belong,
There are no afflictions of anyone.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.4 The defilements must belong to someone, though such a one has not been established. Without a possessor, the defilements belong to no one.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/4 'Defilement' means a thing which can afflict someone. The afflicted one must be a sentient being, but such a sentient being cannot be discovered, no matter where you search for him. If you say that the defilements exist separately from the living being, then there is no entity to which the defilements belong. If you assert that, although there is no self, the defilements are located in the mind, then this is also wrong, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

It is commonly thought that desire and the other basic afflictions arise in dependence on a substrate, as a mural painting depends on a wall or ripeness and such qualities depend on a fruit. That is, they are the afflictions of someone and cannot be without someone as a substrate. This substrate is conjectured to be either a personal self or consciousness (citta). There is no such substrate of the afflictions, however, as it was rejected earlier. Without a substrate, personal or impersonal, who or what would the afflictions afflict? They belong to no one, because no one exists in fact. As the *kārikā* put it, 'Without someone as subject, surely the afflictions cannot afflict anyone.'

Some may object: We do not suppose there is any preexisting substrate of the afflictions. There is nothing called a personal self which can be determined as the substrate because such is without causal efficacy like a mango tree in the sky. Nevertheless the afflictions supervene in dependence on an afflicted consciousness; that consciousness is born simultaneously with the afflictions.

Nagarjuna says that that does not make sense either.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Not only are the defilments not established as substantial elements, they cannot be proved to exist even as attributes. If defilements are considered as belonging to someone (kascid) who is substantially existing, the absence of such a substantial entity would mean the absence of defilements as attributes.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. In the first line, an interlocutor points out that if there are defilements at all there must be somebody whose defilements they are. Nāgārjuna replies that we have already shown that there is no subject for personal attributes in the many discussions of the relation between the self and its states previous to this (Chapters III, IV, VIII, IX, XII, XIII, XVI, XVII, and XVIII). So whatever analysis of defilement we develop, it will have to be one according to which they presuppose no defiled individual.

Kārikā XXIII.5

स्वकायदृष्टिवत् क्लेशाः क्लिष्टे सन्ति न पञ्चधा।
स्वकायदृष्टिवत् क्लिष्टं क्लेशेष्वपि न पञ्चधा॥५॥

svakāyadṛṣṭivat kleśāḥ kliṣṭe santi na pañcadhā |
svakāyadṛṣṭivat kliṣṭaṃ kleśeṣv api na pañcadhā ||5||

如身見五種 求之不可得
煩惱於垢心 五求亦不得

rú shēn jiàn wǔ zhǒng qiú zhī bù kě dé;děi;de
fán nǎo yū;yú;wū gòu xīn wǔ qiú yì bù dé

།རང་ལུས་ལྟ་བཞིན་ཉོན་མོངས་རྣམས།།ཉོན་མོངས་ཅན་ལ་རྣམ་ལྔར་མེད།
།རང་ལུས་ལྟ་བཞིན་ཉོན་མོངས་ཅན།།ཉོན་མོངས་པ་ལ་རྣམ་ལྔར་མེད།།

| raṅ lus lta bźin ñon moṅs rnams | | ñon moṅs can la rnam lṅar med |
| raṅ lus lta bźin ñon moṅs can | | ñon moṅs pa la rnam lṅar med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - As in falsely viewing one's own body, the defilements do not exist in a fivefold manner with respect to the defiled person. As in falsely viewing one's own body, conversely, the defiled person does not exist in a fivefold manner with respect to the defilements. - Note: Reference is made to the five skandhas with their respective defilements.

JONES (Skt):
[5] As with the view of one's body, the afflictions are not in the afflicted, as analyzed in the fivefold way of Chapter 22. So too, the afflicted are not in the afflictions.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The defilments are like the view of one's own personality. Within the defiled, they are not found in the fivefold way. The defiled is like the view of one's own personality, for even within the defilements it is not found in the fivefold way.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Having demonstrated that one's own nature is not fivefold, where are the defilements in the afflicted one?
Having demonstrated that one's own nature is not fivefold, where is the afflicted one in the defilements?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5, Pain is similar to look at our own physical body actually.
The five kinds of Matter, ground, water, fire, air, and the space, do not belong to painful situation.
Torture is similar to look at our own physical body,
Therefore torture does not exist as severe pain at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 As with the problem of the permanent personal self, the basic afflictions cannot exist in what is afflicted in any of the five possible ways (fn They cannot be identical with it, nor other than it; they cannot be in it, nor it in them; and they cannot possess it.), nor can what is afflicted exist in the afflictions in any of the five ways.

STRENG (Skt):
5. In reference to the view of having a body of one's own, the impurities do not exist in what is made impure according to the five-fold manner. In reference to the view of having a body of one's own, that which is made impure does not exist in the impurities according to the five-fold manner.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Like the views of own-body, the passions do not exist in any of the five ways in the impassioned. Like the views of own-body, the impassioned does not exist in any of the five ways in the passions.

BOCKING (Ch):
23v5 Just as in the five ways of viewing the body (as self
You seek it but cannot find it
So with the defilements in the defiled mind,
You can seek five ways but cannot find them.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Like [the self apprehended in] the view of one's own body, the afflictions do not exist in five ways in the afflicted. Like [the self apprehended in] the view of one's own body, the afflicted does not exist in five ways in the afflictions.

DOCTOR (Tb):
As in the case of the view regarding one's body,
The afflictions are absent in the afflicted in five ways.
As in the case of the view of one's body,
The afflicted is absent in the afflictions in five ways. [XXIII.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. View the defilements as you view your self:
They are not in the defiled in the fivefold way.
View the defiled as you view your self:
It is not in the defilements in the fivefold way.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. Just as one views one's own body, the afflictions are
Not in the afflicted in the fivefold way.
Just as one views one's own body, the afflicted is
Not in the afflictions in the fivefold way.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.5 As with the problem of the permanent personal self, the defilements are not found in what is defiled in the fivefold way, nor is the defiled found in the defilements in any of the five ways.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/5 Just as with the view of body-as-self - you can look for it in five ways in the five skandhas but cannot find it - so it is with the defilements in the defiled mind. You can look for them in five ways but you will not be able to find them.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The designation 'permanent personal self refers to the factors of personal existence, body, feelings, dispositions and so on. The theory of the permanent personal self is the view that the factors of personal existence are the self; this theory takes the form of the persistent belief in the reality of the 'mine'. That this personal self, on being thought through in the five ways, is not possible in terms of the factors of personal existence, Nagarjuna said earlier. 'The perfectly realized one is not identical with the factors of personal existence, nor other than them; he is not in them, nor they in him; and the perfectly realized one is not the possessor of the factors of personal existence. What then is the perfectly realized one?'(MMK XXII.1)

Similarly, the afflictions, on being examined critically in the fivefold way, cannot exist in the afflicted consciousness, because the afflictions afflict, and the afflicted consciousness is afflicted. In that case the very thing afflicted would be the afflictions. This makes no sense because it involves the identity of the agent of burning and the fuel. That the afflicted consciousness is one thing and the afflictions another makes no sense, because, being separate and unrelated to each other, it involves an affliction which does not afflict anything. Therefore, because neither their identity nor their difference holds, and because neither can be subject or attribute to the other, what is afflicted (*klista*) is not based in the afflictions. Nor are the afflictions based in what is afflicted. Nor is what is afflicted the possessor of the afflictions. Thus, after critical examination of the five possibilities, the afflictions cannot possibly be based in what is afflicted.

Similarly the afflictions cannot possibly be the cause of what is afflicted. And, critically examined in the five ways, what is afflicted, taken as the cause of the afflictions, cannot possibly be based in the afflictions.

What is afflicted cannot be the afflictions, because that would entail the identity of doer and deed; nor can the afflicted be one thing and the afflictions another because that would entail that they were unrelated (nirapeksakatva); nor can what is afflicted be based in the afflictions nor these in that; nor is what is afflicted possessed by the afflictions. Thus, analogously to the personal self, what is afflicted is not based in the afflictions in any of the five ways. From this it follows that neither what is afflicted nor the afflictions can be established by reciprocal reference (*parasparapeksa*). (MMK VI)

The afflictions have no objective basis

You may object: Even though you have refuted the afflictions, none the less the 'good', the 'bad', and the misbeliefs, which cause the afflictions, exist and because they are solid fact, the afflictions exist.

Our reply is: The afflictions would exist if the 'good', the 'bad' and the misbeliefs existed. However,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is a further criticism of the substantialist notions of "defilements" (klesa) as well as of the "defiled" (klista). Such substantialist perspectives are comparable to the views regarding an "embodied person" (svakaya-drsti), who is not obtainable when that personality is analysed into the five aggregates.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. This verse recalls and applies the fivefold analysis of the self developed in the previous chapter to the analysis of the defilements and the defiled. They are not identical to the aggregates, completely different from the aggregates, present as a basis of the aggregates, contained in the aggregates as a core, or separate from or dependent upon the aggregates. The arguments concerning the relation of the self to the aggregates can simply be applied directly either to the defilements or to the defiled.

Kārikā XXIII.6

स्वभावतो न विद्यन्ते शुभाशुभविपर्ययाः।
प्रतीत्य कतमान् क्लेशाः शुभाशुभविपर्ययान्॥६॥

svabhāvato na vidyante śubhāśubhaviparyayāḥ |
pratītya katamān kleśāḥ śubhāśubhaviparyayān ||6||

淨不淨顛倒 是則無自性
云何因此二 而生諸煩惱

jìng bù jìng diān dào;dǎo shì zé wú zì xìng
yún hé yīn cǐ èr ér shēng zhū fán nǎo

|སྡུག་དང་མི་སྡུག་ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག||རང་བཞིན་ལས་ནི་ཡོད་མིན་ན|
|སྡུག་དང་མི་སྡུག་ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག||བརྟེན་ནས་ཉོན་མོངས་གང་དག་ཡིན||

| sdug daṅ mi sdug phyin ci log | raṅ bźin las ni yod min na |
| (14a1)sdug daṅ mi sdug phyin ci log | | brten nas ñon moṅs gaṅ dag yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - The perversions of purity and impurity cannot exist from the standpoint of self-existence. In virtue of what type of perverse relational plays of purity and impurity do defilements exist?

JONES (Skt):
[6] The pleasant, the unpleasant, and the errors are not seen to exist through their own self-existence. Upon what pleasant, unpleasant, and erroneous things are the afflictions then dependent?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The perversions regarding the pleasant and the unpleasant are not evident from the standpoint of selfnature. Depending upon which perversions of the pleasant and the unpleasant are these defilements?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Errors of purity and impurity do not occur naturally.
How are defilements dependent on errors of purity and impurity?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. The real fact of the subjective existence, is not recognized.
Facts of the favorable and facts of the unfavorable are not being.
The severest pain is usually the strongest one between the two,
And the tendencies between the favorable and the unfavorable are changing reciprocally with each other.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 The 'good', the 'bad' and the misbeliefs are not self-existent; On which 'good', 'bad' and misbelief could the afflictions be dependent?

STRENG (Skt):
6. The errors as to what is salutary and non-salutary do not exist as self-existent entities (svabhavatas) Depending on which errors as to what is salutary and non-salutary are then impurities?

ROBINSON (Skt):
The pure, the impure, and misconceptions do not occur by own-being; dependent on what pure [things], impure [things], and misconceptions do the passions [exist]?

BOCKING (Ch):
23v6 The perverted views of purity and impurity
Therefore have no self-nature
How, then, can the defilements arise
With these two as their cause?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If confusion about the pleasant and unpleasant does not exist from its own nature, what afflictions can depend on confusion about the pleasant and unpleasant?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the attractive, unattractive, and mistaken
Are not due to their own nature,
7hen what are those afflictions that depend
On the attractive, unattractive, and mistaken? [XXIII.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. The pleasant, the unpleasant, and the errors
Do not exist through essence.
Which pleasant, unpleasant, and errors
Could the defilements depend upon?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. The pleasant, the unpleasant, and the errors
Do not exist through essence.
What afflictions could depend
On the pleasant, unpleasant, or errors?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.6 Errors regarding what is good and bad are not evident in terms of self-nature. Depending upon which error regarding good and bad are the defilements?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/6 'The perverted views of purity and impurity'; 'perverted' means vain and illusory. Being vain and illusory (such views) have no self-nature, and since they have no nature the perverted views do not exist. If there are no perverted views, how can you assert that the defilements arise on the basis of perverted views? Question:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

6ab *The 'good', the 'bad' and the misbeliefs are not self-existent;*

that is because of the dependent arising of all things and because of the refutation to follow. As, however, they are not self-existent,

6cd *On which 'good', 'bad' and misbelief could the afflictions be dependent?*

You may object: The afflictions do exist because their objective basis (*alambana*) is fact. The assumption is that what does not exist has no objective basis, like the son of a barren woman. But the sixfold objective basis — sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and mind objects (*dharmas*) — does exist. So because the objective basis exists the afflictions exist as well.

Our reply is: Your theory is as follows:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Just as much as both the defilements (klesa) and the defiled (klista) are not evident in substantial form, so are the perversions that give rise to defilements. They too are not found in any substantial way. The question then is: What is the nature of the perverson relating to the pleasant and the unpleasant depending upon which defilements are said to arise? Here there is no denial of perversions nor the defilements. What has been questioned is only the way in which these are conceptualized.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. Nor can we say that the defilements are inherently existent in virtue of being grounded in inherently existent pleasantness, unpleasantness, and error. While it is true that the latter are the basis of the defilements, they, too, Nāgārjuna will argue, are empty.

Kārikā XXIII.7

रूपशब्दरसस्पर्शा गन्धा धर्माश्च षड्विधम्।
वस्तु रागस्य द्वेषस्य मोहस्य च विकल्प्यते॥७॥

rūpaśabdarasasparśā gandhā dharmāś ca ṣaḍvidham |
vastu rāgasya doṣasya mohasya ca vikalpyate ||7||

色聲香味觸 及法為六種
如是之六種 是三毒根本

sè shēng xiāng wèi chù jí fǎ wéi liù zhǒng
rú shì zhī liù zhǒng shì sān dú gēn běn

|གཟུགས་སྒྲ་རོ་དང་རེག་པ་དང་||དྲི་དང་ཆོས་དག་རྣམ་དྲུག་ནི|
|གཞི་སྟེ་འདོད་ཆགས་ཞེ་སྡང་དང་||གཏི་མུག་གི་ནི་ཡིན་པར་བརྟགས||

| gzugs sgra ro daṅ reg pa daṅ | | dri daṅ chos dag rnam drug ni |
| gźi ste 'dod chags źe sdaṅ daṅ | | gti mug gi ni yin par brtags |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - Material form, voice, taste, touch, smell, and the various factors of existence are conceptualized as the sixfold objects of covetousness, enmity, and delusion.

JONES (Skt):
[7] Material forms, sounds, tastes, touches, smells, and the basic components of the experienced world - these six are thought to be the foundation of desire, hatred, and delusion.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Material form, sound, taste, touch, smell and conceptsthese are discriminated as the sixfold foundations of lust, hatred, and confusion.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Physical form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and events are imagined as
six substantially existing things having desire, hatred, and delusion.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Color, sound, taste, feeling,
Smell, and the Rule of the Universe, all are the six kinds of sense perceptions.
Matter is much related with desire, and much related with darkness.
What are related with confusion, are actually prone to change their places with other places

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 Sights, sounds, touches, smells, tastes and mind objects are conceived of as the sixfold external reality of the afflictions — desire, aversion and illusion.

STRENG (Skt):
7. Form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and the dharmas: this six-fold Substance (vastu) of desire, hate, and delusion is imagined.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and dharmas, the sixfold object of lust, hatred, and folly, are [merely] conceived.

BOCKING (Ch):
23v7 Form, sound, scent, taste, touch and the other dharmas
Make up six kinds (of dharma)
These six kinds (of dharma)
Are the root of the three poisons.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Colour/shape, sound, taste, tactile sensation, smell and dharmas: these six are conceived as the basis of desire, hatred and stupidity.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Form, sound, taste, tactility, smell,
And phenomena—these six
Are believed to be the bases
For desire, anger, and stupor. [XXIII.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. Form, sound, taste, touch,
Smell, and concepts of things: These six
Are thought of as the foundation of
Desire, hatred, and confusion.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. Material form, sound, taste, touch,
Smell, and phenomena: These six
Are thought of as the foundation of
Desire, aversion, and confusion.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.7 Sights, sounds, tastes, touches, smells, and mind objects - these are conceptualized as the sixfold foundation of desire, aversion, and confusion.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/7 These six avenues are the root of the three poisons. Perverted views of purity and impurity arise because of these six avenues (of the senses). Desire, anger and delusion arise on account of perverted views of purity and impurity.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

'External reality' (*vastu*) stands for 'objective basis', that is, desire and the other afflictions are based in it when they arise. And that objective basis is sixfold, according to the distinctive perceptual judgments of the six senses, namely sights, sounds, tastes, touches, smells and mind objects.

Sight determines 'here' and 'there' and is a resort in proof. Sound is that by virtue of which things are named and revealed. Smells are smelled or suffered by being perceived elsewhere than where they have come from. Tastes are tasted or savoured immediately. Touch is what is touched; mind objects are so called because based in the putative elements of existence from *nirvāṇa* on down and because they are self-defining. That is what is meant by the sixfold objective reality or basis.

But the basis of what? Of desire, aversion and illusion. Desire is the act of desiring, it is liking and actualized effort; it is also the desirous state of mind. Aversion is vitiating, it is the annihilation of either creatures or things; again, it is a vitiated state of mind. Illusion is the being deluded, it is befuddlement (*sammoha*), it is the faulty understanding of the true nature of things; again, illusion is a deluded state of mind.

Thus are sights, sounds, and so on, the sixfold objective basis of the afflictions. Desire supervenes by the gratuitous projection (*adhyaropa*) of the quality of 'good' onto them; aversion by the gratuitous projection of the quality of 'bad'; the misbeliefs arise from the gratuitous projection of the imperishability of things and of the permanence of the personal self, and so on. This sixfold objective basis is considered by the simple-minded to be reality (*satyam*). Its true nature (*svabhava satta*) is that it is non-self-existent (*avidyamana*); but it is erroneously considered by you to be the objective basis of desire and the other afflictions, as those with an optical defect erroneously imagine hairs, mosquitoes, flies, double moons, and so on.

Nagarjuna expounds:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Analysing lust, hatred, and confusion in terms of the four perversions, it may be maintained that lust and hatred are subjective attitudes, while confusion refers to the cognitive aspect of understanding (see comments on XXIII. 1), even though the cognitive and attitudinal aspects are dependent upon one another. The present statement of Nagarjuna implies the dependence of the attitudinal as well as the cognitive aspects of experience upon the sixfold objects of sense experience.

Kārikā XXIII.8

रूपशब्दरसस्पर्शा गन्धा धर्माश्च केवलाः।
गन्धर्वनगराकारा मरीचिस्वप्नसंनिभाः॥८॥

rūpaśabdarasasparśā gandhā dharmāś ca kevalāḥ |
gandharvanagarākārā marīcisvapnasaṃnibhāḥ ||8||

色聲香味觸 及法體六種
皆空如炎夢 如乾闥婆城

sè shēng xiāng wèi chù jí fǎ tǐ liù zhǒng
jiē kōng rú yán mèng rú qián tà pó chéng

།གཟུགས་སྒྲ་རོ་དང་རེག་པ་དང་།དྲི་དང་ཆོས་དག་འབའ་ཞིག་སྟེ།
།དྲི་ཟའི་གྲོང་ཁྱེར་ལྟ་བུ་དང་།སྨིག་རྒྱུ་རྨི་ལམ་འདྲ་བ་ཡིན།།

| gzugs sgra ro daṅ reg pa daṅ | | dri daṅ chos dag (2)'ba' źig ste |
| dri za'i groṅ khyer lta bu daṅ | | smig rgyu rmi lam 'dra ba yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - Material form, voice, taste, touch, smell, and the various factors of existence are all merely like an imaginary city in the sky, a mirage, or a dream.

JONES (Skt):
[8] Material forms, sounds, tastes, touches, smells, and the basic components - these are entirely like the castle in the sky of the Gandharvas, a mirage, or a dream.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Material form, sound, taste, touch smell as well as conceptsall these are comparable to the city of the *gandharvas* and resemble mirages and dreams.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Physical form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and events are made-up imaginary cities in the sky, like dreams and mirages.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Color, sound, taste, feeling,
Smell, and the Rule of the Universe, each is individually independent from matter or phenomena..
And they are very similar to a fantastic city called Gandharva, which is not necessary in having jail.
Those are corpuscles of light, a mirage, or a sleep, and the similarities.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 Sights, sounds, tastes, touches, smells and mind objects are abstractions; They manifest themselves as does a fabled city, they are like a mirage, a dream.

STRENG (Skt):
8. Form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and the dharmas are Merely the form of a fairy castle, like a mirage, a dream.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and dharmas are all nothing but appearances like fairy castles, resembling a mirage or a dream.

BOCKING (Ch):
23v8 Form, sound, scent, taste and touch
And dharmas; these six kinds
Are all empty, like flames or dreams
Or like a magic Gandharva-city.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Colour/shape, sound, taste, tactile sensation, smell and dharmas: these are like gandharva-cities and similar to mirages, dreams.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Form, sound, taste, tactility, smell,
And phenomena are all without exception
Like a city of scent-eaters,
Like an optical illusion, like a dream. [XXIII.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. Form, sound, taste, touch,
Smell, and concepts of things: These six
Should be seen as only like a city of the Gandharvas and
Like a mirage or a dream.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. Material form, sound, taste, touch,
Smell, and phenomena: These six
Are only like a city of gandharvas or
Like a mirage or a dream.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.8 Sights, sounds, tastes, touches, smells, and mind objects - these are all comparable to a city of the Gandharvas. They are like a mirage, or a dream.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

8ab *Sights, sounds, tastes, touches, smells and mind objects are abstractions;*

by 'abstractions' (kevala) he means they are mere thought constructs, lacking self-existence. But if they lack self-existence, how is it they are taken to be objects (upalabhyante). He answers:

8cd *They manifest themselves as does a fabled city, they are like a mirage, a dream.*

They are perceived as objects; yet only in misbelief (vipar- yasa), as is a fabled city and so on.

Desire and aversion are not based in good and bad

So,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The similes of the "dream" (svapna) and the "city of the gandharvas" (gandharva-nagara) have already been employed, along with "illusion" (maya), to refute the substantialist explanation of the dispositionally conditioned phenomena (samskrta)(see VII.34). The six objects of experience referred to at XXIII.7 are indeed dispositionally conditioned. They are not objects that are found in themselves (svabhavatah). Nor are they absolutely nonexistent.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. Sensory contact, perception, and cognition are the causal grounds of the defilements. But as was shown in Chapter III, they are empty as well.

Kārikā XXIII.9

अशुभं वा शुभं वापि कुतस्तेषु भविष्यति।
मायापुरुषकल्पेषु प्रतिबिम्बसमेषु च॥९॥

aśubhaṃ vā śubhaṃ vāpi kutas teṣu bhaviṣyati |
māyāpuruṣakalpeṣu pratibimbasameṣu ca ||9||

如是六種中 何有淨不淨
猶如幻化人 亦如鏡中像

rú shì liù zhǒng zhōng hé yǒu jìng bù jìng
yóu rú huàn huà rén yì rú jìng zhōng xiàng

།སྒྱུ་མའི་སྐྱེས་བུ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་། །གཟུགས་བརྙན་འདྲ་བ་དེ་དག་ལ།
།སྡུག་པ་དང་ནི་མི་སྡུག་པ། །འབྱུང་བར་ཡང་ནི་ག་ལ་འགྱུར། །

| sgyu ma'i skyes bu lta bu daṅ | | gzugs brñan 'dra ba de dag la |
| sdug pa daṅ ni mi sdug pa | | 'byuṅ bar yaṅ ni ga la 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - How could there be assertions of purity and impurity when, like the conceptions of a deluded mind, they are similar to shadowy representations?

JONES (Skt):
[9] How could the pleasant or unpleasant arise in those six things that are like an illusory phantasm or a reflection?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can the pleasant and the unpleasant come to be in people who are fabrications of illusion or who are comparable to mirror images?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where will purity or impurity be in these
people equal to illusions and like shadows?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. Even in a bad case of omen, or even in a good case of omen,
How is it possible for what kind of place to exist for the first time?
How is it possible for a human being, who has super power over than human beings, to have actually?
And even the images of the Sun or the Moon on the surface of water, are just the same as the Sun or the Moon themselves.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 How can 'good' or 'bad' be based in such, which are analogous to a man created by magical power or are like a reflection?

STRENG (Skt):
9. How will "that which is salutary" or "that which is non-salutary" come into existence In a formation of a magical man, or in things like a reflection?

ROBINSON (Skt):
How can there be purity or impurity among them, since they are like a phantom man and like a reflection?

BOCKING (Ch):
23v9 In six things of this kind,
How can there be purity and impurity?
They are just like an illusionary man
Or a reflection in a mirror.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How can the pleasant and unpleasant occur in those [things] which are like phantoms and similar to reflections?

DOCTOR (Tb):
They resemble an illusory person
And are similar to reflections.
How could there be any real element
Of the attractive or unattractive in them? [XXIII.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. How could the
Pleasant and unpleasant arise
In those that are like an illusory person
And like a reflection?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. How could the
Pleasant and unpleasant arise
In those that are like an illusory person
And like a reflection?

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
How could it be possible for
Sentient beings who are like illusions
Or objects that are like reflections
To be either pleasant or unpleasant? (9)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.9 How can "good" and "bad" arise in things that are illusory and appear like reflections in a mirror?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/9 The own-substances of form, sound, scent, taste, touch and the dharmas, at the time when they are not yet combined in the mind, are empty: there is nothing which exists. They are like fire, like a dream, like an illusory man or an image in a mirror. They are merely deceptions in the mind and have no fixed characteristics. In six avenues such as these, how can purity and impurity exist?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

From this it follows that, because 'good' and 'bad' arise from an illusory basis (*mithyasraya*), they are utterly false (*mrsatvam eva*) if taken as objective. To quote from the Ratna- vali: 'The factors of personal existence arise from the sense of "I", but this "I" is, in truth, false. If the seed of something is false how can the resulting thing itself be true? Having seen that the factors of personal existence are unreal the sense of "I" is expelled. When the sense of "I" has been abandoned the factors of personal existence are no longer possible.'

Not only because 'good' and 'bad' have an illusory basis are they illusory taken as objective, but they are illusory for the following reason, as Nagarjuna expounds it:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

What Nagarjuna has been criticizing so far is a substantialist theory of the pleasant and the unpleasant (svabhavato . . . subhasubhaviparyayan XXIII.6). His argument in the present verse is directed against the belief that such substantial experiences can occur in thoughts of human beings who are themselves nonsubstantial, and who are comparable to mirror images or reflections (see commentary on XVII.31-32).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. Since the self and others have been demonstrated to be empty and pleasantness and unpleasantness must be properties of one, the other, or both, there can be no inherently existent basis for pleasantness or unpleasantness. They themselves must also therefore be empty.

Kārikā XXIII.10

अनपेक्ष्य शुभं नास्त्यशुभं प्रज्ञपयेमहि।
यत्प्रतीत्य शुभं तस्माच्छुभं नैवोपपद्यते॥१०॥

anapekṣya śubhaṃ nāsty aśubhaṃ prajñapayemahi |
yat pratītya śubhaṃ tasmāc chubhaṃ naivopapadyate ||10||

不因於淨相 則無有不淨
因淨有不淨 是故無不淨

bù yīn yū;yú;wū jìng xiàng;xiāng zé wú yǒu bù jìng
yīn jìng yǒu bù jìng shì gù wú bù jìng

།གང་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་སྡུག་པ་ཞེས།།གདགས་པར་བྱ་བ་མི་སྡུག་པ།
།སྡུག་ལ་མི་ལྟོས་ཡོད་མིན་པས།།དེ་ཕྱིར་སྡུག་པ་འཐད་མ་ཡིན།།

| gaṅ la brten nas sdug pa źes | | gdags par bya ba mi sdug pa |
| sdug (3)la mi ltos yod min pas | | de phyir sdug pa 'thad ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - We provisionally assert that impurity cannot exist without being mutually dependent on purity and that, in turn, purity exists only as related to impurity. Therefore, purity per se is not possible.

JONES (Skt):
[10] We make known that the unpleasant is dependent upon the pleasant, and that the pleasant is in turn dependent upon that. Therefore, the pleasant does not arise.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
We make known that the unpleasant does not exist without being contingent upon the pleasant, and that the pleasant, in its turn, is dependent upon that [i.e. the unpleasant]. Therefore, the pleasant [in itself] is not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, we teach that purity is to depend on impurity not existing
and purity depends on that. Therefore, purity does not happen.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. Without directing our care to the object, there is no good omen.
Because in such situations, even a bad omen cann't be recognized intuitively.
Such a kind of fact is just clear as a good omen,
And so if it were in the case of good omen, nothing cann't be recognized at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 Without relation to 'good' there is no 'bad', in dependence on which we form the idea of 'good'. Therefore 'good' is unintelligible.

STRENG (Skt):
10. We submit that there is no non-salutary thing unrelated to a salutary thing. And in turn depending on which, there is a salutary thing; therefore, a salutary thing does not obtain.

BOCKING (Ch):
23v10 No impurity can exist
Independently of the characteristic of purity.
Impurity depends on purity
Therefore, there is no impurity.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Something is called "pleasant" in dependence on the unpleasant. Since that would not exist without relation to the pleasant, therefore, the pleasant is not tenable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The unattractive upon which
The designation "attractive" depends
Does not exist independently of the attractive.
Hence, the attractive does not make sense. [XXIII.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. We say that the unpleasant
Is dependent upon the pleasant,
Since without depending on the pleasant there is none.
It follows that the pleasant is not tenable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. The unpleasant, depending on which
The pleasant is imputed,
Cannot exist without depending on the pleasant.
Therefore, the pleasant is not tenable.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
We imagine something to be pleasant
Based on our idea of what is unpleasant.
But unpleasant too does not exist independent of pleasant.
Therefore, for pleasant to truly exist would be impossible. (10)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.10 We provisionally assert that "bad" is not found without reference to "good," nor "good" without reference to "bad." Therefore goodness, in and of itself, is not evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/10 Independent of purity, there can be no pre-existing impurity, for on what basis could one speak of impurity? Therefore impurity does not exist.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

That is, if there were anything called 'good' (*subha*), 'bad' (*asubha*) would necessarily be related to it. It is like the near and the far, the seed and the seedling or the long and the short. Because 'good' is dependent on a relation to something outside itself, and as that on which it is to be dependent, the 'not-good' - the 'bad' - does not exist apart from it, there is no 'not-good' unrelated to 'good'. The thought is that 'not-good' cannot stand outside of all relationship to 'good'. The good we conceive of and determine is dependent on and related to what is not-good. In the *kārikā* the word 'which' refers to the word 'not-good' which precedes it ; the expression 'form the idea of refers to 'good' which follows it. It follows that there is no other category of thing, the not-good, to which the idea of good would have to relate, as a relation to something other than itself. The good, therefore, is unintelligible, even as the long and the farther shore are unintelligible because of the impossibility of the short and the near shore. This is the idea.

And now Nagarjuna expounds how the not-good — the bad — as well, is not possible:

Kārikā XXIII.11

अनपेक्ष्याशुभं नास्ति शुभं प्रज्ञपयेमहि।
यत्प्रतीत्याशुभं तस्मादशुभं नैव विद्यते॥११॥

anapekṣyāśubhaṃ nāsti śubhaṃ prajñapayemahi |
yat pratītyāśubhaṃ tasmād aśubhaṃ naiva vidyate ||11||

不因於不淨 則亦無有淨
因不淨有淨 是故無有淨

bù yīn yū;yú;wū bù jìng zé yì wú yǒu jìng
yīn bù jìng yǒu jìng shì gù wú yǒu jìng

།གང་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་མི་སྡུག་པར། །གདགས་པར་བྱ་བ་སྡུག་པ་ནི།
།མི་སྡུག་མི་སྟོས་ཡོད་མིན་པས། །དེ་ཕྱིར་མི་སྡུག་འཐད་མ་ཡིན།།

| gaṅ la brten nas mi sdug par | | gdags par bya ba sdug pa ni |
| mi sdug mi stos yod min pas | | de phyir mi sdug 'thad ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - We provisionally assert that purity cannot exist without being mutually dependent on impurity and that, in turn, impurity exists only as related to purity. Therefore, impurity per se does not exist.

JONES (Skt):
[11] We make known that the pleasant is dependent upon the unpleasant and that the unpleasant is in turn dependent upon that. Therefore, the unpleasant does not arise.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
We make known that the pleasant does not exist without being contingent upon the unpleasant, and that the unpleasant, in its turn, is dependent upon that [i.e., the pleasant]. Therefore, the unpleasant [in itself] is not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, we teach that impurity is to depend on purity not existing
and Impunty depends on that. Therefore, impurity does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. A bad omen, which is not cared by people, does never exist at all.
Because in the case of good omen, people are usually expecting so much to notice it with intuition.
Such a kind of situations are also clear even in the case of bad omen too.
Therefore the actual situations of bad omens do not have even a scarce chance to be recognised at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
11 There is no 'good' unrelated to 'bad'; yet we form our idea of 'bad' in dependence on it. There is therefore, no 'bad'.

STRENG (Skt):
11. We submit that there is no salutary thing unrelated to a non-salutary thing, And in turn depending on which, there is a non-salutary thing; therefore a non-salutary thing does not obtain.

BOCKING (Ch):
23v11 There is no purity
Except in relation to impurity
Purity exists on account of impurity
Therefore purity does not exist.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Something is called "unpleasant" in dependence on the pleasant. Since that would not exist without relation to the unpleasant, therefore, the unpleasant is not tenable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The attractive upon which
The designation "unattractive" depends
Does not exist independently of the unattractive.
Hence, the unattractive does not make sense. [XXIII.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. We say that the pleasant
Is dependent upon the unpleasant.
Without the unpleasant there wouldn't be any.
It follows that the unpleasant is not tenable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. The pleasant, depending on which
The unpleasant is imputed,
Cannot exist without depending on the unpleasant,
Therefore, the unpleasant is not tenable.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
We imagine something to be unpleasant
Based on our idea of what is pleasant.
But pleasant too does not exist independent of unpleasant.
Therefore, for unpleasant to truly exist would be impossible. (11)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.11 We provisionally assert that "good" is not found without reference to "bad," nor "bad" without reference to "good." Therefore evil, in and of itself, is not evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/11 There can be no pre-existent purity, independent of impurity. How can you assert (the existence of) purity? Therefore, there is no purity.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

That is, if there were something called 'bad' - 'not-good' it would necessarily be correlated to the good, as the far shore is correlated to the near shore and the long to the short. It is because the not-good is dependent on a correlation with a different category of thing. And that, too, the good on which it is to be dependent, would not exist in the absence of the not-good. The good does not exist unrelated to the not-good. The idea is that the good is not possible out of all relationship to the not-good. We form our idea of the not-good and define it in correlation with and dependence on what is good. In the *kārikā* the word 'it' designates the word 'good' in the first line; the verb 'form an idea' is connected with the following word, 'bad'. It follows that there is no other category of thing, the good, to which the idea of not-good would have to relate, as a relation to something other than itself. It follows that the not- good cannot exist. Thus neither good nor not-good is possible.

So:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is a clear refutation of the substantialist views of both the pleasant and the unpleasant. Nagarjuna insists that they are dependent upon one another. They are not independent experiences where one is replaced by another, as in the case of the theory of "attainment" (prapti) and "non-attainment" (aprapti)(see comments on XVI. 10, XXIV.32).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. Moreover, pleasant and unpleasant are mutually dependent. Nāgārjuna here claims that "pleasant" and "unpleasant" are not absolute but rather comparative terms and, hence, essentially interdefined. If this is SO, then since their referents depend upon each other for their satisfaction of these descriptions, neither property can exist inherently.

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Kārikā XXIII.12

अविद्यमाने च शुभे कुतो रागो भविष्यति।
अशुभेऽविद्यमाने च कुतो द्वेषो भविष्यति॥१२॥

avidyamāne ca śubhe kuto rāgo bhaviṣyati |
aśubhe ’vidyamāne ca kuto dveṣo bhaviṣyati ||12||

若無有淨者 何由而有貪
若無有不淨 何由而有恚

ruò wú yǒu jìng zhě hé yóu ér yǒu tān
ruò wú yǒu bù jìng hé yóu ér yǒu huì

|སྡུག་པ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན||འདོད་ཆགས་ཡོད་པར་ག་ལ་འགྱུར|
|མི་སྡུག་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན||ཞེ་སྡང་ཡོད་པར་ག་ལ་འགྱུར||

| sdug pa yod pa ma yin na | | ’dod chags yod par ga la ’gyur |
| mi (4)sdug yod pa ma yin na | | źe sdaṅ yod par ga la ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - When there is no purity per se, how could covetousness arise? Also, when there is no impurity per se, how could enmity arise?

JONES (Skt):
[12] When the pleasant is not found, how can these be desire? When the unpleasant is not found, how can there be hatred.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When the pleasant is not evident, whence can there be lust? When the unpleasant is not evident, whence can there be hatted?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where purity is present, from where will passion arise?
Where impurity is not present, from where will hatred arise?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. Without noticing the actual Reality, and in the case of only recognizing the good omens,
Where does it possible for life to exist even in future?
When a bad omen hasn't been noticed,
Where is it possible for deep malice to be maintained even in future?

SPRUNG (Skt):
12 As ‘good’ is non-existent how can there be desire? As ‘bad’ is non-existent how can there be aversion?

STRENG (Skt):
12. If "what is salutary" does not exist, how will there be desire for it? And if "what is non-salutary" does not exist, how will there be hatred for it?

BOCKING (Ch):
23v12 If there is no purity
How can there be lust?
If there is no impurity
How can there be anger?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the pleasant does not exist, how can desire exist? If the unpleasant does not exist, how can hatred exist?

DOCTOR (Tb):
When there is nothing attractive,
How could there possibly be desire?
When there is nothing unattractive,
How could there possibly be anger? [XXIII.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. Where there is no pleasant,
How can there be desire?
Where there is no unpleasant,
How can there be anger?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. If there is no pleasant,
How could there be desire?
If there is no unpleasant,
How could there be aversion?

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Since pleasant does not exist, how could desire exist?
Since unpleasant does not exist, how could aversion exist? (12)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.12 When "good" is not evident, how can there be desire for it? Where "bad" is not found, how is there aversion to it?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/12 Where there is no purity and impurity, lust and anger do not arise.

Question: The Sutras teach that there are four perverted views of permanence, etc. If we see permanence within impermanence, this is called a perverted view. If we see impermanence in impermanence, this is not a perverted view, and the same goes for the other three perverted views. Since the perverted views exist, the one who has perverted views must exist. Why do you say that none of this exists?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The thought is that desire and aversion, which are evoked by the good and the not-good, are not possible if the good and the not-good as what evokes them, do not exist, because then they would be without cause.

The four misbeliefs are unintelligible

Even as the non-existence of desire and aversion is established by the non-existence of what evokes them — the good and the bad - so now Nagarjuna expounds that illusion (*moha*) too is non-existent as such (*svabhavabhava*) by showing that misbelief (*viparyasa*) does not exist as such.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

In addition to being mutually dependent, the pleasant and the unpleasant provide a foundation for the subjective tendencies such as lust and hatred. Thus, lust would be non-existent if the pleasant were not evident. Similarly, hatred would be non-existent, if the unpleasant were not evident. This, indeed, is the conclusion of the Samyutta passage referred to at XXIII.1. In that context, the Buddha was not denying the pleasant and the unpleasant experiences in the world. He was simply insisting that when such experiences occur a wise man restraints his yearning (chanda) for it.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

12. And since these are the bases for desire and anger, desire and anger, arising from empty phenomena, must themselves be seen as empty.

Kārikā XXIII.13

अनित्ये नित्यमित्येवं यदि ग्राहो विपर्ययः।
नानित्यं विद्यते शून्ये कुतो ग्राहो विपर्ययः॥१३॥

anitye nityam ity evaṃ yadi grāho viparyayaḥ |
nānityaṃ vidyate śūnye kuto grāho viparyayaḥ ||13||

於無常著常 是則名顛倒
空中無有常 何處有常倒

yū;yú;wū wú cháng zhù;zhuó;zhāo cháng shì zé míng diān dào;dǎo
kōng zhōng wú yǒu cháng hé chǔ yǒu cháng dào;dǎo

|གལ་ཏེ་མི་རྟག་རྟག་པ་ཞེས||དེ་ལྟར་འཛིན་པ་ལོག་ཡིན་ན|
|སྟོང་ལ་མི་རྟག་ཡོད་མིན་པས||འཛིན་པ་ཇི་ལྟར་ལོག་པ་ཡིན||

| gal te mi rtag rtag pa źes | | de ltar ’dzin pa log yin na |
| stoṅ la mi rtag yod min pas | | ’dzin pa ji ltar log pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - If perception is a perversion such that permanence is in impermanence, then it is not possible for impermanence to be in sunya. How then could that perception be a perversion? - Note: graha is translated as perception in the sense of a static grasp of an object in an otherwise dynamic function. This is the basis of all ills or duhkha.

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection:*13] But since the impermanent is not found in what is empty, how is holding the claim “The permanent is in the impermanent” an error?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If there were to be grasping on to the view, "What is impermanent is permanent," then there is perversion. The impermanent is not evident in the context of the empty. How can there be grasping or perversion?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the error “there is permanence in impermanence” is so seized
impermanence does not occur. Where is error seized in what is open?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. A fact, that a moment is just the eternity, exists in such a manner.
What we are always keeping, has also the character to change its direction reversely at once.
What is perfectly eternal, can be seen in the state of balanced autonomic nervous system.
Where can we find any existence of the situation, which are having the tendency to separate to the two opposite directions in separation?

SPRUNG (Skt):
13 If the belief that the imperishable is immanent in the perishable is held to be a misbelief, but there is nothing perishable in the absence of being, how can this belief be a misbelief?

STRENG (Skt):
13. Even if the notion "What is permanent is in something impermanent" is in error, How can this notion be in error since "what is impermanent" does not exist in emptiness?

BOCKING (Ch):
23v13 To cling to permanence in impermanence
Is called perverted perception.
There is no permanence in emptiness,
So where can the perverted perception of permanence exist?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If such an apprehension as “the impermanent is permanent” is confused, since impermanence does not exist in the empty, how can such an apprehension be confused?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If thinking the impermanent
To be permanent is an error,
Then why, since the empty is not impermanent,
Would that thought be in error? [XXIII.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. If to grasp onto the view
"The impermanent is permanent" were an error,
Since in emptiness there is nothing impermanent,
How could that grasping be an error?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. If to grasp onto the view
“The impermanent is permanent” were an error,
Since that which is empty is not impermanent,
How could that grasping be an error?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.13 If the notion "the permanent is in the impermanent" is in error, since the impermanent is not evident in Emptiness, where is the error?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/13 If you cling to permanence in impermanence, this constitutes perverted perception. But in the emptiness of dharmas' natures, there is no permanence. What place is there in this for a perverted view of permanence? The other three (views) are also like this.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The assumption here is that there are four misbeliefs. First, the belief that there is something imperishable (*nitya*) in the five perishable (*anitya*) factors of personal existence which undergo destruction in every moment, is a misbelief.

Second, 'The very nature of whatever is perishable is suffering: that is not happiness; so everything that is perishable is afflicted existence.'(*Catuhsataka,* II, 25) According to this argument what is perishable is afflicted existence and all compounded things as such are perishable. So the perverted belief (*viparitagraha*) in happiness (*sukham*) within the five factors of personal existence whose very nature is afflicted existence, is another misbelief.

461.3 Further, 'You, who know well that the seed of the body is blood and sperm, that it grows by voiding urine and excrement, that it is like faeces, how could desire attract you to it?' The body is, in its ownmost nature, and in every respect, the quintessence of impurity. It is the idea, born of illusion, that the body is pure (*suchi*) and the persistent belief in this, that constitutes the third misbelief.

Again, one distinguishes an enduring self among the five factors of personal existence, which are lacking in substance and are devoid of a person who exists as such because they are in constant change and because it is their nature to arise and to vanish. In this case it is the idea of an enduring self (*atman*) and the persistent belief in it — that is the persistent belief in an enduring self in what does not endure - that is the fourth misbelief.

These four misbeliefs are the root causes of complete illusion (fn 2 Thus far the orthodox view of the four misbeliefs.).

And now an analysis of this. If we define the theory or the belief (*graha*) that the imperishable exists in what is devoid of self-existence, as a misbelief, it is equally true that there can be nothing perishable in the factors of personal existence, which are devoid of self-existence, either. 'There is nothing perishable in the absence of being; how can this view be a misbelief.' Imperishability is defined as a misbelief in relation to its opposite, the perishable; however, the perishable does not exist in the absence of being. But if there is no imperishability how could its opposite, perishability, exist and how could the theory of the imperishable exist as a perverted belief? It follows that this is not a misbelief.

As the perishable is not possible in the absence of being, that is, where self-existence is lacking, where nothing arises as self-existent, so afflicted existence is not possible either, nor is there impurity nor absence of self. If these, lacking self- existence, do not exist, how can there be misbeliefs in imperishability, happiness, purity and enduring self, as they are the counter-concepts to these? It follows that misbeliefs do not truly exist (*svarupatah*). But if they do not exist how can there be primal ignorance, as it will have no cause?

As the illustrious one said: 'There has never been primal ignorance nor anything dependent on it; it does not exist as such anywhere in the world; and for this reason I have called it primal ignorance.' Again Manjusri asks, 'What., o illustrious one, is illusion in the mystical verse?' The illustrious one answered: 'Illusion, Manjusri, is to be utterly lost; which is why it is called illusion.' In this and the following passages misbelief is defined.

Let it be so, you may say, that it is not tenable that what is perishable can be in something which is not self-existent; but why is that not just what is meant by misbelief? Nagarjuna expounds:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

So far Nagarjuna has endeavored to show that the perversion regarding the pleasant and the unpleasant is the result of a cognitive confusion which led to the belief in a substance or self (atman). With the present statement, Nagar- juna begins to analyse the conception of impermanence (anitya) in order to explain the tathagata's cognitive understanding of the world of experience. This understanding enables the tathagata to eliminate the perversion relating to happiness and suffering.

Here, the perversion pertains to grasping of the impermanent as the permanent. If so, the perspective in which the tathagata looks at the world should be one of impermanence. Unfortunately, the notion of impermanence that dominated the Buddhist tradition during Nagarjuna's day was more a metaphysical one (see commentaries on Chapter VII) than an empirical one. For the metaphysician, the absence of permanence implied the reality of the momentary. Nagarjuna rightly believes that as much as grasping after permanence is a perversion, so is grasping after the reality of the momentary (= ksanika). The denial of permanence does not commit oneself to the other extreme of momentary destruction (ksana-bhana). Emptiness (sunyata) does not imply any such momentariness.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

13. This verse adverts to the first of the four principal errors - that one of the five aggregates, typically consciousness, is permanent. The reason that it is held by Buddhists to be an error, of course, is that all of the aggregates are analyzed as impermanent - hence the formulation in the second line, whose definite description must be read de reo But, Nāgārjuna argues, since there are no actual impermanent phenomena from the ultimate point of view, this can’t actually be seen as the false attribution of a property (permanence) to a real entity that actually has a contrary property (impermanence). The point here is simply that in calling this an error, one must be very careful not to commit a corresponding error - to suggest that calling the impermanent *impermanent* constitutes the assertion of an ultimate truth or of the presupposition of the ultimate reality of impermanent phenomena. That is at best a true conventional assertion that indicates the ultimate nature of things. This claim is made explicit in XXIII: 14:

Kārikā XXIII.14

अनित्ये नित्यमित्येवं यदि ग्राहो विपर्ययः।
अनित्यमित्यपि ग्राहः शून्ये किं न विपर्ययः॥१४॥

anitye nityam ity evaṃ yadi grāho viparyayaḥ |
anityam ity api grāhaḥ śūnye kiṃ na viparyayaḥ ||14||

若於無常中 著無常非倒
空中無無常 何有非顛倒

ruò yū;yú;wū wú cháng zhōng zhù;zhuó;zhāo wú cháng fēi dào;dǎo
kōng zhōng wú wú cháng hé yǒu fēi diān dào;dǎo

།གལ་ཏེ་མི་རྟག་རྟག་གོ་ཞེས། །དེ་ལྟར་འཛིན་པ་ལོག་ཡིན་ན།
།སྟོང་ལ་མི་རྟག་པའོ་ཞེས། །འཛིན་པའང་ཇི་ལྟར་ལོག་མ་ཡིན།།

| gal te mi rtag rtag go źes | | de ltar ’dzin pa log yin na |
| stoṅ la mi rtag (5)pa’o źes | | ’dzin pa’aṅ ji ltar log ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 14 - If perception is a perversion such that permanence is in impermanence, then again, how is it that the perception of impermanence with respect to sunya is not a perversion?

JONES (Skt):
[14] If the claim "The permanent is in the impermanent" is an error, why is holding the claim "The impermanent is in the empty" not also an error?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If grasping on to the view, "What is impermanent is permanent," is perversion, how is it that even the grasping after the view, "What is empty is impermanent," does not constitute a perversion?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the error "there is permanence in impermanence" is so seized,
"impermanence" is also grasped. What is without error in what is open?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
14. The insistence that what is innate is never lasting, might be connected with concrete fact.
And at that time the grasp might be the contradiction.
If the idea that there is nothing, which is eternal, has been maintained completely,
How is it possible for the balanced state of autonomic nervous system not to unbalanced state at all?,

SPRUNG (Skt):
14 If the view that the imperishable is in the perishable is held to be a misbelief; why is the view that the perishable exists in what is devoid of being not also a misbelief? (fn This, of course, confounds the orthodox view.)

STRENG (Skt):
14. Even if the notion "what is permanent is in something impermanent" is in error, Is not then the notion concerning emptiness, i.e., that it is impermanent, in error?

BOCKING (Ch):
23v14 If clinging to impermanence
Within impermanence is not a perverted view,
Since there is no impermanence in emptiness,
Why is this not a perverted view?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If such an apprehension as "the impermanent is permanent" is confused, how would the apprehension "there is impermanence in the empty" also not be confused?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If thinking that which is not permanent
To be permanent is an error,
Then why would thinking the empty
To be impermanent not also be in error? [XXIII.14]

GARFIELD (Tb):
14. If to grasp onto the view
"The impermanent is permanent" were an error,
Why isn't grasping onto the view
"In emptiness there is nothing impermanent" an error?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
14. If to grasp onto the view
"The impermanent is permanent" were an error,
Why is grasping onto the view
"That which is empty is impermanent" not an error?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.14 If the notion "the permanent is in the impermanent" is in error, why isn't the notion that "the impermanent is evident in Emptiness" an error? It is in error because it is still grasping.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/14 Suppose that a person clings to impermanence, saying that this impermanence is not to be termed a perverted view; in the emptiness of dharmas' natures, there is no impermanence. Since impermanence does not exist there, who is there to call it a non-perverted view? It is the same with the other three views.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

As the imperishable and the perishable are exclusive contrary terms, there is no third term, apart from them, which would not be a misbelief. As nothing is free of misbelief, in relation to what would misbelief exist? According to this reasoning as well, then, there can be no misbelief (fn 3 If no truth, no falsehood.). Because there is no misbelief there can be, in truth, no primal ignorance. As the misbelief consisting of the view that the imperishable is in the perishable is not possible, it will follow that, in the same sense, the other misbeliefs are not possible either.

That is exactly why the illustrious one said, in the *Drdhasayapariprceha*, 'It is thus, worthy youth, for one searching for an end to the birth-death cycle on the Buddhist way. Even though the realized one has abandoned the appropriative elements of existence he does not teach a theory of the annihilation of aversion or illusion. Why does he not? The realized ones, o worthy youth, do not teach the truth for the sake of getting rid of or acquiring any elements of existence at all, nor for the sake of the clear knowledge of afflicted existence, its overcoming, and the final realization, nor for the sake of clear understanding nor for escaping from the birth-death cycle nor for the sake of the way to *nirvāṇa*, nor for the sake of casting out nor discrimination. Because, o worthy youth, the true nature of a realized one is to be free of the dominance of duality. Those who live in dualities are said not to strive in the correct way, but to strive mistakenly. What, o worthy son, is meant by duality? It is duality when one says, "I will annihilate desire"; it is duality when one says, "I will annihilate aversion"; it is duality when one says, "I will annihilate illusion". Those who strive in this way, it should be realized, are 463.9 not striving in the correct way, but are striving mistakenly.'

Belief is unintelligible

Someone may object: Although the perverted belief (*graho viparyaya*) consisting of the belief that the imperishable is in the perishable does not in the end make sense (*na sambhavati*), none the less the belief itself is a fact. What is called belief is the act of believing and this is an existent thing. There must necessarily be an appropriate element, for example imperishability, which is the effective basis of believing, also an independent agent, either a permanent self or a mind. There must be, further, an act of the agent, and an external or internal object immediately intended. If the object, the agent, the act and the effectuating basis are accepted as facts, then everything we wished to establish is established.

We reply. This is an illusory hope. According to the reasoning we have given,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

It is possible for someone to raise the question as to whether grasping after the empty would itself be a perversion, just as much as grasping after the permanent or the impermanent would constitute perversions. Nagarjuna is here raising this question and then proceeds to answer it in the following verse.

Kārikā XXIII.15

येन गृण्हाति यो ग्राहो ग्रहीता यच्च गृह्यते।
उपशान्तानि सर्वाणि तस्माद्ग्राहो न विद्यते॥१५॥

yena gṛhṇāti yo grāho grahītā yac ca gṛhyate |
upaśāntāni sarvāṇi tasmād grāho na vidyate ||15||

可著著者著 及所用著法
是皆寂滅相 云何而有著

kě zhù;zhuó;zhāo zhù zhě zhù;zhuó;zhāo jí suǒ yòng zhù;zhuó;zhāo fǎ
shì jiē jì miè xiàng;xiāng yún hé ér yǒu zhù;zhuó;zhāo

།གང་གིས་འཛིན་དང་འཛིན་གང་དང༎འཛིན་པ་པོ་དང་གང་གཟུང་བ།
།ཐམས་ཅད་ཉེ་བར་ཞི་བ་སྟེ༎དེ་ཕྱིར་འཛིན་པ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན༎

| gaṅ gis ’dzin daṅ ’dzin gaṅ daṅ | | ’dzin pa po daṅ gaṅ gzuṅ ba |
| thams cad ñe bar źi ba ste | | de phyir ’dzin pa yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 15 - That which depends on perceiving, the perception, the perceiver, and that which is perceived are all of the nature of quiescence. Therefore, perception in itself does not exist.

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply:*15] That by which one clings to an idea, the clinging itself, the one who clings, and what is clung to - all of these are pacified by emptiness. Therefore, no clinging is found.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
That through which there is grasping, whatever grasping there is, the grasper as well as that which is grasped - all these are appeased. Therefore, no grasping is evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What is grasped by the grasper and whoever is grasped by means of grasping
are all calmed. Therefore grasping does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
15. With what kind of method shall we rely upon to do something, is just something to do it actually.
Having something accomplished is just the grasping itself.
Being perfectly peaceful is just the Real Existence of everything,
Therefore the situations of perfectly having been grasped, is difficult to recognize.

SPRUNG (Skt):
15 The effectuating basis, the believing itself, the believer and an external reality are all unreal; therefore belief itself does not exist.

STRENG (Skt):
15. That by which a notion is formed, the notion, those who have notions, and that which is grasped in the notion: All have ceased; therefore, the notion does not exist.

BOCKING (Ch):
23v15 That which is clung to, the clinger and the clinging
And also the dharma which clinging employs;
All these have the characteristic of calm quiescence.
How can clinging possibly exist?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
[The means] by which one apprehends, the apprehension [itself], the apprehender and the apprehended: all are completely pacified, therefore there is no apprehending.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The means for apprehending, the apprehension,
That which apprehends, and what is apprehended
Are all completely pacified.
Hence, there is no apprehending. [XXIII.15]

GARFIELD (Tb):
15. That by means of which there is grasping, and the grasping,
And the grasper, and all that is grasped:
All are being relieved.
It follows that there is no grasping.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
15. That by means of which there is grasping, and the grasping,
And the grasper, and all that is grasped:
All are being alleviated.
It follows that there is no grasping.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.15 That through which a notion is formed, the notion, the grasper as well as that which is grasped - all these are appeased. Therefore, no grasping is evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/15 'That which is clung to' means the object. 'The clinger' means the doer. 'Clinging' means the deed. The dharma is the thing which clinging employs. All these things are empty in nature and have the characteristic of calm quiescence, as explained in the chapter on the Thus-Come, and therefore there is no clinging. Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The assumption here is that there is a believing agent, who believes there is an object of action - an external reality consisting of sights, sounds, and so on; and an effectuating basis of his belief — imperishability and the other misbeliefs.

How this is not possible was expounded earlier in the *kārikā* beginning 'If the belief that the imperishable is immanent in the perishable is a misbelief' (*kārikā* 13). It was shown that imperishability, and the others as effectuating bases are not possible. And that there is no one who believes was expounded in the *kārikā* 'The existence or non-existence of the personal self has not been established in any way at all.'(*kārikā* 3) And that the object of belief does not exist was expounded in the *kārikā* 'Sights, sounds, tastes, touches, smells and mind objects are abstractions.' (*kārikā* 8) If, however, in this way, the believer, the effectuating basis of belief and the object of belief are not established, how can there be belief itself, which would lack all basis in reason (*nirhetuka*)?

Hence: 'The effectuating basis of belief, the believing itself, the believer and an external reality are all unreal.' The meaning is that all these are nought because they do not arise in self-existence. This is exactly why 'Therefore belief itself does not exist.'

Or again, in the chapter inquiring into causes and those following, it has been expounded that in no respect do means, agent and object arise in time. So, all such things, because they lack existence in their own right, are not real. And so there is no such thing as belief.

You may object: Misbeliefs do exist because of the factual existence of the one who believes amiss. That is, someone named Devadatta who persists in misbelief, exists. One who persists in misbelief is not possible if there are no misbeliefs. Therefore misbeliefs exist because of the factual existence of the one who believes amiss.

Misbelief presupposes right belief which is impossible

We reply. We have explained that there is no belief itself because there is no effectuating basis, no agent and no object . And so,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The middle path enunciated in the discourse to Katyayana avoided the two extremes relating to philosophical understanding and explanation. This was achieved through the appeasement of dispositions and the elimination of grasping. Because of non-grasping, all the metaphysical questions relating to the faculties (yena grhnati), the process of understanding (graha), the person involved in such understanding (grahita) as well as the object of understanding (yac ca grhyate), come to be appeased. The appeased one (santa) does not continue to raise questions or doubts beyond a certain limit, not because he knows everything nor because he does not care to know, but because he is aware of the conflicts generated by any pursuit of knowledge that goes beyond experience.

The fact that grasping for emptiness can constitute a sort of perversion (sunyata drsti) has already been explained by Nagarjuna (XIII.8). This does not mean that the very conception of emptiness is invalidated in the same way as the concepts of permanence and momentariness would be invalidated. The reason for this is that the notions of permanence and substance as well as of momentariness are not empirically grounded compared with dependent arising, non-substantiality, or emptiness. Both the Buddha and Nagarjuna would categorize the former under wrong thoughts (mithyasamkalpa), while they would consider the latter as right or appropriate thoughts (samyak samkalpa, kalpana yatra yojyate, XVII. 13). The verse that follows should be understood in such a context. This indeed is the final conclusion of Nagarjuna in the Karika (see XXVII. 30).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

15. The argument above addresses the first and fourth of the principal errors directly. This verse hints at the generalization of this argument to the other two. If there is no permanent self, there is nothing to do the grasping that generates the view that there is happiness in saṃsāra or to grasp onto the body. Since all of these errors are rooted in grasping and since any inherently existent grasping would depend on an inherently existent grasper, these errors cannot be inherently existent. The next two verses emphasize the nonexistence of both the error and the one in error from the ultimate standpoint:

Kārikā XXIII.16

अविद्यमाने ग्राहे च मिथ्या वा सम्यगेव वा।
भवेद्विपर्ययः कस्य भवेत्कस्याविपर्ययः॥१६॥

avidyamāne grāhe ca mithyā vā samyag eva vā |
bhaved viparyayaḥ kasya bhavet kasyāviparyayaḥ ||16||

若無有著法 言邪是顛倒
言正不顛倒 誰有如是事

ruò wú yǒu zhù;zhuó;zhāo fǎ yán xié shì diān dào;dǎo
yán zhèng;zhēng bù diān dào;dǎo shuí yǒu rú shì shì

།ལོག་པའམ་ཡང་དག་ཉིད་དུ་ནི།།འཛིན་པ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།
།གང་ལ་ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་ཡོད་ཅིང་།།གང་ལ་ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་ཡོད།།

| log pa'am yaṅ dag ñid du ni | | 'dzin pa yod pa ma yin na |
| gaṅ la phyin ci log yod ciṅ | (6)gaṅ la phyin ci ma log yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 16 - As there is no perception, properly or improperly, who does and who does not have the perversion?

JONES (Skt):
[16] When clinging to an idea, whether rightly or wrongly, is not found, for whom would there be an error and for whom would there be no error?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When grasping, wrongly or rightly, is not evident, for whom would there be perversion and for whom would there be non-perversion?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
And where grasping is present, either rightly or wrongly,
whose error would it be, whose nonerror would it be?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
16. When everything is not so clear yet, or when everything is just clear,
In the either cases of being opposite or being the same, they are not so different from facts.
Something, which is contradictory with each other, can exist,
And something, which is going to the same direction with each other, can exist.

SPRUNG (Skt):
16 As there is no belief, whether false or true, whose could be the misbelief, whose could be the non-misbelief?

STRENG (Skt):
16. If a notion is not existing either as false or true,
Whose is the error? Whose is the non-error?

BOCKING (Ch):
23v16 If there is no dharma of clinging
Incorrectly speaking, these are perverted views.
Correctly speaking, they are not perverted views,
For who is there to have these things?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there is neither confused nor right apprehension, who is confused and who is not confused?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Given that there is neither mistaken
Nor unmistaken apprehension,
Who could be in error?
Who could be correct? [XXIII.16]

GARFIELD (Tb):
16. If there is no grasping,
Whether erroneous or otherwise,
Who will come to be in error?
Who will have no error?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
16. Since there is no grasping,
Whether erroneous or correct,
Who will come to be in error?
Who will have no error?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.16 When grasping, wrongly or rightly, is not evident, whose is the error? Whose is the non-error?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/16 'Clinging' means discriminative conceptualizing of this and that, being and non-being, and so on. If none of this clinging exists, who is there to have wrong and perverted views, and who is there to have correct and non-perverted views?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If there is no belief, true or false, in anything, by anyone, how could there be perverted belief or non-perverted belief? There are thus, no misbeliefs.

Moreover, these misbeliefs considered to be of a subject would be conceived to be of someone who either is in error or is not in error or who is erring.

Nagarjuna shows that in every respect such ideas are not logically possible, saying

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

With grasping gone, whether it be for the right thing or the wrong thing, the enlightened one does not involved himself in any substantialist thinking relating to perversion or non-perversion. This is the state of the saint who has attained freedom from grasping (anupadaya vimukti).

Kārikā XXIII.17

न चापि विपरीतस्य संभवन्ति विपर्ययाः।
न चाप्यविपरीतस्य संभवन्ति विपर्ययाः॥१७॥

na cāpi viparītasya saṃbhavanti viparyayāḥ |
na cāpy aviparītasya saṃbhavanti viparyayāḥ ||17||

有倒不生倒 無倒不生倒
倒者不生倒 不倒亦不生

yǒu dào;dǎo bù shēng dào;dǎo wú dào;dǎo bù shēng dào;dǎo dào;dǎo zhě bù shēng dào;dǎo bù dào;dǎo yì bù shēng

།ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་ཏུ་གྱུར་པ་ལ། །ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་དག་མི་སྲིད་དེ།
།ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་ཏུ་མ་གྱུར་ལ། །ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་དག་མི་སྲིད་དེ།།

| phyin ci log tu gyur pa la | | phyin ci log dag mi srid de |
| phyin ci log tu ma gyur la | | phyin ci log dag mi srid de |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 17 - Perversions do not come about even in one who perverses. Again, they do not come about even in one who does not perverse.

JONES (Skt):
[17] Errors do not arise in one who is already in error, nor do errors arise in one who is not now in error.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Perversions do not occur to one who is already subjected to perversion. Perversions do not occur to one who has not been subjected to perversions.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The errors of an erring one do not develop.
The errors of a nonerring one also do not develop.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
17. It does not exist in the perfectly opposite situations,
But there are cases, in which so many delusions have gathered together actually.
It does not exist in the perfectly same situations,
But there are cases, in which so many delusions have gathered together actually.

SPRUNG (Skt):
17 Misbeliefs are not possible for one who is in error, nor are they possible for one who is not in error.

STRENG (Skt):
17. Nor do errors of someone who has erred come into existence. Nor do errors of someone who has not erred come into existence.

BOCKING (Ch):
23v17 Existing perverted views do not produce perverted views
Nonexistent perverted views do not produce perverted views.
The perverted viewer does not produce perverted views,
Nor does the non-perverted produce them.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Confusions do not occur for those who are [already] confused; confusions do not occur for those who are not [yet] confused;

DOCTOR (Tb):
The mistaken cannot
Become mistaken,
Nor can the unmistaken
Become mistaken. [XXIII.17]

GARFIELD (Tb):
17. Error does not develop
In one who is in error.
Error does not develop
In one who is not in error.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
17. One who is already in error
Cannot commit error.
One who is not in error
Cannot commit error.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.17 Error does not occur in one who has erred. Error does not occur in one who has not erred.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

17. And, Nāgārjuna points out, following the same pattern used in the analysis of motion and redeployed numerous times in the text, we can't think of error developing in one in whom error is arising. If the error is already arising in him, an independent error cannot be developing there. Moreover, as error develops, the person in whom it is developing changes, and no substrate for the development of error can be found. It follows that really existent error, conceive of as an independent phenomenon, is no more real than its putative subject (but of course no less real, either):

Kārikā XXIII.18

न विपर्यस्यमानस्य संभवन्ति विपर्ययाः।
विमृशस्व स्वयं कस्य संभवन्ति विपर्ययाः॥१८॥

na viparyasyamānasya saṃbhavanti viparyayāḥ |
vimṛśasva svayaṃ kasya saṃbhavanti viparyayāḥ ||18||

若於顛倒時 亦不生顛倒
汝可自觀察 誰生於顛倒

ruò yū;yú;wū diān dào;dǎo shí yì bù shēng diān dào;dǎo
rǔ kě zì guān chá shuí shēng yū;yú;wū diān dào;dǎo

ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་ཏུ་གྱུར་བཞིན་ལ།།ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་དག་མི་སྲིད་དེ།
།གང་ལ་ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་སྲིད་པ།།བདག་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ནི་རྣམ་པར་དཔྱོད།།

| phyin ci log tu gyur bźin la | | phyin ci log dag mi srid de |
| gaṅ la phyin ci log srid pa | | bdag ñid kyis ni rnam (7)par dpyod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 18 - Perversions do not come about even in one who is presently perversing. Consider seriously by yourself.... in whom will the perversions arise?

JONES (Skt):
[18] Errors do not arise in one who is currently erring. Consider your own situation: in whom do errors arise?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Perversions do not occur to one who is being subjected to perversions. Reflect on your own! To whom will the perversions occur?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The errors of what is presently erring do not develop.
Consider for yourself whose errors come about.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
18. Even though those delusions are not included into the high-leveled lank,
Many delusions are collecting themselves together.
Even though it is not so clear for your reflection to be targeted to what kind of your Reflection,
Many delusions are collecting themselves together.

SPRUNG (Skt):
18 Misbeliefs are not possible for one who is just erring. Consider it yourself; to whom could misbeliefs possibly belong?

STRENG (Skt):
18. And errors of someone who is at present in error do not come into existence. Now you examine of whom do errors really come into existence!

BOCKING (Ch):
23v18 Since perverted views are not produced
In the moment of perversion either,
You can see for yourselves;
Who is there to produce perverted views?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
confusions do not occur for those who are being confused. For whom do confusions occur? Examine this by yourself!

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which is becoming mistaken
Cannot become mistaken either.
Where is error possible?
Investigate that. [XXIII.18]

GARFIELD (Tb):
18. Error does not develop
In one in whom error is arising.
In whom does error develop?
Examine this on your own!

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
18. One who is committing error
Cannot commit error.
Who can commit error?
Examine this on your own!

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.18 Error does not occur in one who is presently erring. To whom do errors occur? Think about it!

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/18 Someone who already has perverted views does not produce them again, since he already has perverted views. One who does not have perverted views does not produce perverted views either, because he has no perverted views. There are no perverted views in the moment of perverted viewing either, because this involves both errors. You should now abandon your proud and arrogant mind and perceive things properly for yourself. Who is there to have perverted views?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In the first place misbeliefs are not possible in one who is in error (*viparita*). Why not? liecause the one who is in error has already erred (fn 4 Misbelief is an 'act'); why would there be, once again, meaningless involvement in error? Nor do misbeliefs make sense attributed to one who has not erred (*aviparita*). Because it would follow that the Buddhas - those who realize the mind of enlightenment by bringing ignorance and blindness of the mind to an end - could be in error. Similarly, there are no misbeliefs in one who is just erring (*viparyasyamana*). Because such a one does not exist. Who would this third category — the one who is just erring — be, utterly other than the one who is in error and the one who is not? Do you say the one just erring is half in error? And that one such believes some things amiss and some things not amiss? In such a case, what constitutes the misbelief is not made into an error by himself because it is already an error; nor is what constitutes the non-misbelief made into an error by him, because it is not error. It follows that misbeliefs are not possible for one who is in the act of erring. In this way, then, neither the man in error nor the man not in error is possible, nor the one who is just erring. Now considering this for oneself, by one's own insight adopting a middle position: Who could be the subject of the misbeliefs? Thus, because of a lack of any base for them, there are no misbeliefs.

Further,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Upon reaching such a level of moral and intellectual development (as referred to in the previous verse), one does not get involved in metaphysical speculations such as whether perversions arise in one who is already afflicted by perversions, or not afflicted, or is being afflicated. The speculation that is avoided pertains not only to the past and the future but also the present. As such he avoids the metaphysics discussed in Chapter II. When perversions themselves are not perceived as being substantial, how can one consider a perverse person as a substantial entity.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

18. The next two verses mobilize a by now familiar general argument against inherent existence specifically against the inherent existence of error: Either error has arisen or it hasn't. If it has, it depends on something and so is not inherently existent. If it has not, it has not come to be and so is either nonexistent or unexplained. Moreover, if error is to be conceived as inherently existent, it must arise from one of the four possible sources: self, other, both, or neither. And all four possibilities have been refuted for inherently existent entities in the general case in Chapter I:

Kārikā XXIII.19

अनुत्पन्नाः कथं नाम भविष्यन्ति विपर्ययाः।
विपर्ययेष्वजातेषु विपर्ययगतः कुतः॥१९॥

anutpannāḥ kathaṃ nāma bhaviṣyanti viparyayāḥ |
viparyayeṣv ajāteṣu viparyayagataḥ kutaḥ ||19||

諸顛倒不生 云何有此義
無有顛倒故 何有顛倒者

zhū diān dào;dǎo bù shēng yún hé yǒu cǐ yì
wú yǒu diān dào;dǎo gù hé yǒu diān dào;dǎo zhě

ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་རྣམས་མ་སྐྱེས་ན། །ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ན་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར།
ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་རྣམས་སྐྱེ་མེད་ན། །ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་ཅན་ག་ལ་ཡོད།

| phyin ci log rnams ma skyes na | | ji lta bur na yod par ’gyur |
| phyin ci log rnams skye med na | | phyin ci log can ga la yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 19 - How could there be non-originated perversions? When perversions have not occurred, how could there possibly be one who perverses?

JONES (Skt):
[19] How could there be errors that have not yet arisen? When errors are as yet unarisen, how could there be one who is subject to error?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How could there be non-arisen perversions? When perversions are not born, whence can there be a person who is subjected to perversions?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How will whatever is nonarising be called errors?
Where error is unborn, where has error gone?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
19. How is it adequate for us to put a name to what hasn't been accomplished yet?
There might be many Delusions, which will occur in future.
Even before any kind of Delusion hasn't been born yet,
Where is it possible for the arrival of Delusions to come at all?

SPRUNG (Skt):
19 How can there be misbeliefs if they do not arise? If misbeliefs are unborn how can one commit them?

STRENG (Skt):
19. How in all the world will errors which have not originated come into existence? And if errors are not originated, how can there be someone involved in error?

BOCKING (Ch):
23v19 'Perverted views which are not-produced'.
How could this have any meaning?
When perverted views do not exist
How can there be a perverted viewer?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If confusions are not born, how can they exist? If confusions are not born, where can there be someone who has confusion?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Since they have not arisen,
How could there be errors?
Given that no error has occurred,
How could there be one that is mistaken? [XXIII.19]

GARFIELD (Tb):
19. If error is not arisen,
How could it come to exist?
If error has not arisen,
How could one be in error?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
19. If error is not arisen,
How could it come to exist?
If error has not arisen,
How could one be in error?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.19 If error is not arisen, how could it come to be? If error has not occurred, how can there be one who is in error?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/19 Because we have refuted perverted views on various grounds, you fall into non-production. Clinging to non-production you assert that 'non-production' is the true characteristic of perverted views. Therefore the verse says, how can you term perverted views non-produced'? Not even non-outflowing dharmas are regarded as having the characteristic of non-arising; how much less are the perverted views non-arising? And since the perverted views do not exist, how can the perverted viewer exist? The perverted viewer only exists by virtue of perverted views.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

And,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Picking up the argument from the previous verse, Nagarjuna is here specifically rejecting the substantialist notions of perversions as well as persons who are perverse. If perversions are substantial or having self-nature (svabhava), they cannot be considered as arisen (utpanna). When they are non-arisen or unborn (ajata), there cannot be a person in whom these would arise, for they cannot serve as attributes.

Kārikā XXIII.20

न स्वतो जायते भावः परतो नैव जायते।
न स्वतः परतश्चेति विपर्ययगतः कुतः॥२०॥

na svato jāyate bhāvaḥ parato naiva jāyate |
na svataḥ parataś ceti viparyayagataḥ kutaḥ ||20||

[n/a]

[n/a]

།དངོས་པོ་བདག་ལས་མི་སྐྱེ་སྟེ།།གཞན་ལས་སྐྱེ་བ་ཉིད་མ་ཡིན།
།བདག་དང་གཞན་ལས་ཀྱང་མིན་ན།།ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་ཅན་ག་ལ་ཡོད།།

| dṅos po bdag las mi skye ste | | gźan las skye ba ñid ma yin |
| bdag daṅ gźan las kyaṅ min na | | phyin ci log can ga (14b1)la yod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 20 - Existence does not come about by itself or by another. Nor does it come about by both serf and other. How could there possibly be one who perverses?

JONES (Skt):
[20] An entity does not arise from itself, nor does it arise from another, nor from both itself and another - how could there be one who has come into error?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
An existent does not arise from itself, nor does it arise from another, nor both itself and other. If so, whence can there be a person who is subject to perversions?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
A being is "not born from itself, not born from another,
nor from both itself and another." Where has error gone?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
20. The fact, that the subjectivity is never be born, is the existence.
And then the objectivity does never be born too.
If the subjectivity and the objectivity are not like that,
Where is it possible for the arrival of Delusions to exist actually?

SPRUNG (Skt):
20 A thing arises neither from itself nor from another; not arising either from himself nor from another, how can there be one who believes amiss?

STRENG (Skt):
20. Since no being is produced by itself, nor by something different, Nor by itself and something different at the same time, how can there be someone involved in error?

BOCKING (Ch):
[n/a]

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Things are not born from themselves, not born from others. If they are also not from self and others, where can there be someone who has confusion?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Things do not arise from themselves,
Nor do they arise from anything else.
As things do not arise from self and not from other either,
How could there be one that is mistaken? [XXIII.20]

GARFIELD (Tb):
20. Since an entity does not arise from itself,
Nor from another,
Nor from another and from itself,
How could one be in error?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
20. Since an entity does not arise from itself,
Nor from another,
Nor from another and itself,
How could one be in error?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.20 An existent does not arise form itself, from another, nor from both self and other. How can there be one who errs?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The meaning is, how could there be one in error? And so, as stated, it does not make sense to say that the misbeliefs exist because the one who misbelieves is a fact.

Further, even for the one who accepts the existence of the four misbeliefs it is impossible to determine the nature of misbelief. Why is that? Because:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This verse, which is not available in Kumarajiva's translation, represents an application of the analysis of substantial existence (bhava) in Chapter I to the problems of a substantial person or entity. It is almost identical with XXI.13.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

20. Nāgārjuna now returns to the objects of the four principal errors and points out that if they existed inherently, as the proponent of inherently existent error would have it, they would be truly existent and, hence, would be nondeceptive ultimate truths.

Kārikā XXIII.21

आत्मा च शुचि नित्यं च सुखं च यदि विद्यते।
आत्मा च शुचि नित्यं च सुखं च न विपर्ययः॥२१॥

ātmā ca śuci nityaṃ ca sukhaṃ ca yadi vidyate |
ātmā ca śuci nityaṃ ca sukhaṃ ca na viparyayaḥ ||21||

若常我樂淨 而是實有者
是常我樂淨 則非是顛倒

ruò cháng wǒ lè jìng ér shì shí yǒu zhě
shì cháng wǒ lè jìng zé fēi shì diān dào;dǎo

།གལ་ཏེ་བདག་དང་གཙང་བ་དང་།།རྟག་དང་བདེ་བ་ཡོད་ན་ནི།
།བདག་དང་གཙང་དང་རྟག་པ་དང་།།བདེ་བ་ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་མ་ཡིན།།

| gal te bdag daṅ gtsaṅ ba daṅ | | rtag daṅ bde ba yod na ni |
| bdag daṅ gtsaṅ daṅ rtag pa daṅ | | bde ba phyin ci log ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 21 - If atman, purity, permanence, and bliss are to be admitted (i.e., exist), then they are not to be considered as perversions.

JONES (Skt):
[21] If the self, the pure, the permanent, and the blissful are found, then the self, the pure, the permanent, and the blissful are not erroneous.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If either the self, the pleasant, the permanent, or the happy is evident, then neither the self, the pleasant, the permanent, nor the happy constitutes a perversion.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the self, purity, permanence, and happiness occur,
the self, purity, permanence, and happiness are not errors.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
21. Ourselves, the innate brilliance of ourselves,
Or our comfortable situations, can be recognized actually, and then,
Ourselves, the innate brilliance of ourselves,
Or our comfortable situations, can never be Delusion at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
21 If there is self, purity, imperishability and happiness, then self, purity, imperishability and happiness are not misbeliefs.

STRENG (Skt):
21. If the individual self, "what is pure," "what is eternal," and happiness really exist, Then the individual self, "what is pure," "what is eternal," and happiness are not errors.

BOCKING (Ch):
23v20 If permanence, self, bliss and purity
In reality exist
Such permanence, self, bliss and purity
Will not be perverted views.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If self and purity and permanence and happiness were existent, self and purity and permanence and happiness would not be confusions.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there is a self something clean,
Something permanent, and something delightful,
The apprehending of self, clean, permanent, and delightful
Are not mistakes. [XXIII.21]

GARFIELD (Tb):
21. If the self and the pure,
The permanent and the blissful existed,
The self, the pure, the permanent,
And the blissful would not be deceptive.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
21. If the self and the pure,
The permanent and happiness existed,
The self, the pure, the permanent,
And happiness would not be erroneous.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.21 If either the self, the pure, the permanent, or the happy were evident, they would not deceive.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/20 If these four permanence, self, bliss, and purity, have real and existent natures, then permanence, self, bliss and purity are not perverted views, and why? Because they are fixed, existent, real things, so how could you call them perverted views? If you say that these four - permanence, self, bliss and purity - do not exist, then impermanence, suffering, non-self and impurity - these four will exist as realities, and will not be termed perverted views; since they are the opposites of perverted views they will be called non-perverted views. But this is not correct, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If self, purity, imperishability and happiness are defined as misbeliefs do they exist or not? If they exist, they are hardly misbeliefs, as they are factually true in the same way that the absence of self, perishability, and so on are. If they do not exist, then, not only is there no misbelief, because they are not factual, but the non-misbeliefs — absence of self, perishability and the others — are not factual because their opposites, the misbeliefs, do not exist. Nagaijuna expounds:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna began his examination of perversions (viparyasa) utilizing the same terms used by the Buddha at A 2.52. In the present verse, he adopts a slightly different terminology in referring to the perversions. Instead of subha and asubha, he uses the pair of terms suci and asuci, and instead of adukkha he has sukha. This latter terminology was indeed utilized by the interpreters of Abhidharma when discussing the perversions (see Akb). As such, it is a clear indication that Nagarjuna was conversant withg the early discourses as much as he was familiar with the Abhidharma commentarial literature. Nagarjuna's argument in the present verse could lead to misunderstanding unless it is Seen in the context of his previous statements about the perversions, expecially at XXIII. 20. If the self, the pleasant, the permanent, and the happy are evident as self-existent entities, then, indeed, they do not constitute perversions. Unfortunately, Inada's translation does not seem to bring out this strong sense of "exist" that Nagarjuna is implying here.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

21. But why is the opponent forced to think of the objects of inherently existent error as inherently existent? That is, of course, an obviously incoherent position. But the view characterized as an error must have some ontological basis. And the self that is putatively in error has already been ruled out. So the only remaining possibility is that the error is the perception of an inherently real but at the same time deceptive object: a real but nonexistent object. It is this that Nāgārjuna claims is incoherent. Error then can neither be an objectless but inherently existent mental phenomenon, (fn 106. For one thing, Nāgārjuna has argued that there is no inherently existent mind in which it could be located. For another, the idea of error, per se, though not error about anything, is patently incoherent.) nor can it be a subjectless perception of an inherently real but nonexistent object. So in no way can error be grounded in anything substantial.

Kārikā XXIII.22

नात्मा च शुचि नित्यं च सुखं च यदि विद्यते।
अनात्माशुच्यनित्यं च नैव दुःखं च विद्यते॥२२॥

nātmā ca śuci nityaṃ ca sukhaṃ ca yadi vidyate |
anātmā ’śucy anityaṃ ca naiva duḥkhaṃ ca vidyate ||22||

若常我樂淨 而實無有者
無常苦不淨 是則亦應無

ruò cháng wǒ lè jìng ér shí wú yǒu zhě
wú cháng kǔ bù jìng shì zé yì yīng wú

།གལ་ཏེ་བདག་དང་གཙང་བ་དང༌།།རྟག་དང་བདེ་བ་མེད་ན་ནི།
།བདག་མེད་མི་གཙང་མི་རྟག་དང༌།།སྡུག་བསྔལ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| gal te bdag daṅ gtsaṅ ba daṅ | | rtag daṅ bde ba med na ni |
| bdag med mi gtsaṅ mi rtag daṅ | | sdug bsṅal (2)yod pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 22 - If atman, purity, permanence, and bliss are not to be admitted (i.e., non-existent), then likewise anatman, impurity, impermanence, and suffering are not to be admitted.

JONES (Skt):
[22] If the self, the pure, the permanent, and the blissful are not found, then what is the non-self, the non-pure, the impermanent, and suffering would not be found either.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If neither the self, the pleasant, the permanent, nor the happy is not evident, then neither the non-self, the unpleasant, the impermanent, nor the suffering would also be evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the self, purity, permanence, and happiness do not occur,
neither the nonself, impurity, impermanence, or suffering occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
22. Having no self-consciousness, and having our innate purity of ourselves,
Our comfort or our state like happiness, can be recognized ceaselessly.
What are not belonging to us, are not pure, and they are not innate.
The very severe pain can never become any kind of recognizable object at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
22 If there is no self, no purity, no imperishability and no happiness, then there is no non-self, no impurity, no perishability and no afflicted existence.

STRENG (Skt):
22. But if individual self, "what is pure," "what is eternal," and happiness do not exist, Then non-individual self, "what is impure," "what is impermanent" and sorrow (dukkha) do not exist.

ROBINSON (Skt):
If self, purity, permanence, and felicity do not occur, then non-self, impurity, impermanence, and suffering do not occur either.

BOCKING (Ch):
23v21 If permanence, self, bliss and purity
In reality do not exist,
Impermanence, suffering and impurity
Should also not exist.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If self and purity and permanence and happiness were non-existent, selflessness, impurity, impermanence and anguish would not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there is no self nothing clean,
Nothing permanent, and nothing delightful,
There cannot he any absence of self, anything unclean,
Impermanent, and painful, [XXIII.22]

GARFIELD (Tb):
22. If the self and the pure,
The permanent and the blissful did not exist,
The nonself, the impure, the permanent,
And suffering would not exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
22. If the self and the pure,
The permanent and happiness did not exist,
The nonself, the impure, the impermanent,
And suffering would not exist.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
If, however, self, clean,
Permanence, and happiness do not exist,
Then their opposites—selfless, unclean,
Impermanent, and suffering do not exist either! (22)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.22 If neither the self, the pure, the permanent, or the happy are evident, then neither would the non-self, the impure, the impermanent, nor dukkha be evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/21 If these four – permanence, self, bliss, and purity – are in reality nonexistent, then because they do not exist the other four, impermanence etc., ought not to exist either, and why? Because there is no reciprocal dependence.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If you think self, purity and imperishability do not exist because of the impossibility of holding something to be false if it exists and that non-self, impurity and so on are not to be understood as misbeliefs because they are true; this should be rejected as, there being no opposite, there is nothing to be negated. As, thus, non-self and so on are not possible, why should non-self not be a misbelief, because it does not exist as such even as self and the others do not exist as such?

Therefore all these eight misbeliefs (fn 5 To label four key beliefs, misbelief, i.e. heresy, is a stinging challenge to Buddhist orthodoxy.) are to be rejected by those desiring freedom from their fetters in the prison of endless coursing through birth, old age and death. Nagarjuna expounds the great value of the analysis of misbelief given as a means of destroying ignorance and the afflictions.

Banishing misbelief eliminates the afflictions

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Having rejected the substantial existence of the four perversions, Nagarjuna is here emphasizing their relativity. However, relativity in this context need not be understood as applying in an identical way to all the four perversions. As pointed out earlier (see comments on XXIII. 1), the four perversions deal with two different categories, the cognitive and the attitudinal. The fact that anatman and anitya are conceptually related to atman and nitya does not mean that the latter are cognitively based. They are relative only at the conceptual level. On the contrary, suci and asuci as well as sukha and duhkha are part of experience, even though there could be confusion regarding their identification.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

22. But at this point Nāgārjuna draws quite a surprising conclusion. These observations apply not only to the putative objects of the errors, but also to those of Buddhist doctrine, at least when it is given a substantialist reading. Continuing his critique of the idea that assertions made from the standpoint of conventional truth about the ultimate nature of things are literally true from the ultimate standpoint, Nāgārjuna points out that the fact that there is no permanent self, no happiness in saṃsāra, and no pure body does not entail that an impermanent self, suffering, or an impure body are in any way inherently existent. That is, the objects of correct conventional understanding are no more inherently existent than those of incorrect understanding. The truth of even Nāgārjuna's own philosophical theory is not grounded in its reference to independently existent, substantially real entities.

Kārikā XXIII.23

एवं निरुध्यतेऽविद्या विपर्ययनिरोधनात्।
अविद्यायां निरुद्धायां संस्काराद्यं निरुध्यते॥२३॥

evaṃ nirudhyate ’vidyā viparyayanirodhanāt |
avidyāyāṃ niruddhāyāṃ saṃskārādyaṃ nirudhyate ||23||

如是顛倒滅 無明則亦滅
以無明滅故 諸行等亦滅

rú shì diān dào;dǎo miè wú míng zé yì miè
yǐ wú míng miè gù zhū xíng;háng;xìng děng yì miè

།དེ་ལྟར་ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་འགགས་པས།།མ་རིག་པ་ནི་འགག་པར་འགྱུར།
།མ་རིག་འགགས་པར་གྱུར་ན་ནི།།འདུ་བྱེད་ལ་སོགས་འགག་པར་འགྱུར།།

| de ltar phyin ci log ’gags pas | | ma rig pa ni ’gag par ’gyur |
| ma rig ’gags par gyur na ni | | ’du byed la sogs ’gag par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 23 - Consequently, ignorance is destroyed by the cessation of perversion. And by the destruction of ignorance, mental conformations, etc., are also destroyed.

JONES (Skt):
[23] Thus, from the cessation of error, the fundamental root-ignorance ceases. When this ignorance ceases, then dispositions, and so forth, cease.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Thus, with the cessation of perversions, ignorance ceases. When ignorance has ceased, the dispositions, etc. come to cease.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Thus from the cessation of errors, ignorance is stopped.
Where ignorance has ceased, disposition, etc., is stopped.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
23. Following like this, what is not recognized, is excluded.
And so Delusion has been emancipated from the attitude of denying Delusion.
Relying upon ignorance might be the same as relying upon suppression.
And utilizing demonstrative vanity, and so forth, they want to suppress everything.

SPRUNG (Skt):
23 Thus by eliminating misbelief, ignorance is destroyed; ignorance being destroyed, personal dispositions and the other causes are destroyed.

STRENG (Skt):
23. From the cessation of error ignorance ceases; When ignorance has ceased, conditioning forces (samskara) and everything else cease.

BOCKING (Ch):
23v22 When perverted views cease in this way
Ignorance also ceases.
By the cessation of ignorance
Predispositions and so forth cease.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Thus by stopping confusion, ignorance will stop. If ignorance is stopped, impulsive acts etc. will stop.

DOCTOR (Tb):
As error in this way ceases,
Ignorance comes to an end.
As ignorance ceases,
Formations and so forth end. [XXIII.23]

GARFIELD (Tb):
23. Thus, through the cessation of error
Ignorance ceases.
When ignorance ceases
The compounded phenomena, etc., cease.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
23. Thus through eliminating the errors
Ignorance is eliminated.
When ignorance is eliminated,
Such things as the actions are eliminated.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.23 Thus, with the cessation of error, ignorance ceases. When ignorance ceases mental conformations, etc., cease,

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/22 'In this way' means by this kind of interpretation. When perverted views are extinguished, ignorance which is at the root of the twelve causes and conditions is also extinguished. Through the extinction of ignorance the three kinds of predispositions and actions etc. up to old age and death and so forth are all extinguished.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

When the wise one does not hold to the misbeliefs in the sense we have explained, then, no longer believing amiss, ignorance, which is caused by misbelief, is got rid of and because of the destruction of ignorance all the putative causal factors (*dharma*) (fn 6 The twelvefold cycle of birth and death: *saṃsāra*.) which result from ignorance, from personal dispositions to old age and death which are accompanied by sorrow, lamentation and despair, are done away with. For ignorance is the root cause of afflicted existence, of the entire conglomerate of afflictions from birth on. Even as all sense organs derive from a central awareness, and the central awareness being eliminated they too are removed; so all the causes in the round of existence from personal dispositions on, function with ignorance as root cause; necessarily then, if ignorance is removed they are eliminated. Nagarjuna expounds this, when he says, 'Ignorance being destroyed, personal dispositions and the other causes are destroyed.'

Someone may object: If, from the elimination of the misbeliefs, primal ignorance is removed, then, in that case, the removal of this primal ignorance, which follows from the elimination of the misbeliefs, really happens; for one does not search for the effective ways to remove a non-existent dryad in the sky. Therefore primal ignorance is, in fact, real; because, in fact, one does search for effective ways of removing it. It follows that the basic afflictions, desire and the rest, which spring from primal ignorance, are fact. Because the basic afflictions are fact, the round of existence, the coursing through births and deaths, is indeed real.

We reply. This is, in truth, the utmost in perverse learning. There are saintly persons who gird up their loins and, with their whole heart, for the sake of others, issue forth into the unredeemed world of passions, afflictions and infinite sorrows that poisonous growth so rich and thick with fruit; and they attempt to uproot it by the power of their wisdom, their skill in means and their secret knowledge. But you not only do not support them but are stolidly opposed to them as one ensconced on the rock of realism. You oppose those who, by the power of secret knowledge, are uprooting that tree which is poisonous with afflictions, whose sole fruits are ill — a flood of grief, birth, old age and death. You, in your obduracy, are devoting yourself to making that tree flourish by your stubborn belief in the reality of things.

What is more, if it were possible to eliminate primal ignorance and the other afflictions then there could be a search for a way to eliminate them. But their elimination (*prahana*) is not possible. If it were, then it would be the elimination of afflictions whose nature it was either to exist in very truth or not to so exist. What follows from that?

In the first alternative, if one thinks of eliminating afflictions whose nature it is to exist in very truth, that would not be logically possible. Why? Because,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The distinction between the two kinds of perversions mentioned earlier (XXIII. 1,22) seems to be justified by the present statement. When the perversions cease, the immediate result would be the cessation of ignorance (avidya). This would pertain to the more cognitive perversions (i and iii). The cessation of ignorance would also mean the cessation of the perversions relating to dispositions, that is, perversions ii and iv.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

23. When all error is abandoned and we see the world aright, we are no longer ignorant of the true nature of things. But this is not because we then apprehend things and their true nature. Rather we apprehend that there are no things, per se, and that those posited from our side have no nature to understand.

Kārikā XXIII.24

यदि भूताः स्वभावेन क्लेशाः केचिद्धि कस्यचित्।
कथं नाम प्रहीयेरन् कः स्वभावं प्रहास्यति॥२४॥

yadi bhūtāḥ svabhāvena kleśāḥ kecid dhi kasyacit |
kathaṃ nāma prahīyeran kaḥ svabhāvaṃ prahāsyati ‖24‖

若煩惱性實 而有所屬者
云何當可斷 誰能斷其性

ruò fán nǎo xìng shí ér yǒu suǒ shǔ zhě
yún hé dāng kě duàn shuí néng duàn qí xìng

།གལ་ཏེ་ལ་ལའི་ཉོན་མོངས་པ།།གང་དག་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་ཡོད་ན།
།ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ན་སྤོང་བར་འགྱུར།།ཡོད་པ་སུ་ཞིག་སྤོང་བར་བྱེད།།

| gal te la la'i ñon moṅs pa | | gaṅ dag raṅ bźin gyis yod na |
| ji lta bur (3)na spoṅ bar 'gyur | | yod pa su źig spoṅ bar byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 24 - If the defilements really exist in someone in virtue of self-nature, how could they be abandoned and who could abandon the self-nature?

JONES (Skt):
[24] Indeed, if someone's afflictions existed through their own self-existence, how could they be eliminated? Who could ever eliminate self-existence?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If, indeed, certain defilements of someone have come to be on the basis of self-nature, how could they be relinquished? Who ever could relinquish self-nature?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If any beings are defiled by their own nature, whose [defilements] are they?
How would they be called abandoned? Who will abandon self-nature?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
24. When real accidents are relying upon subjective ideas,
Miscellaneous strong pains exist in something obscure, and the receptacle exists at the same place.
How is it possible for only a title to make the serious problems?
What kinds of thing will produce such kinds of miscellaneous subjective ideas?

SPRUNG (Skt):
24 If there were self-existent afflictions of someone, how could they be overcome? Who can vanquish the self- existent?

STRENG (Skt):
24. If any kind of self-existent impurities belong to somebody, How in all the world would they be eliminated? Who can eliminate that which is self-existent?

ROBINSON (Skt):
For if any passions belonging to anyone were real by their own-being, how could they be abandoned? Who will abandon own-being?

BOCKING (Ch):
23v23 If the defilements have a real nature
And there is someone to whom they belong,
How can they be cut off
And who can cut off that nature?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the afflictions of some existed by their own nature, how could they be let go of? Who can let go of what exists by nature?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If someone's afflictions
Are existent by nature,
How can they be eliminated?
Who can eliminate the existent? [XXIII.24]

GARFIELD (Tb):
24. If someone's defilements
Existed through his essence,
How could they be relinquished?
Who could relinquish the existent?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
24. If any afflictions of anyone
Existed essentially,
How could they be relinquished?
Who could relinquish the existent?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.24 If defilements came to be in someone on the basis of self-nature, how could they be relinquished? Who could relinquish self-nature?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/23 If the defilements are perverted views, and have a real, existent nature, how can they be cut off?, and who can cut off that nature? If you say that the afflictions are false deceptions and have no nature, and can nevertheless be cut off, this is also wrong and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

It is not possible to bring to nought the self-existence of things whose self-nature it is to exist. The self-nature of earth solidity — and of the other elements is not nullified. So, if there were afflictions — ignorance and the rest — whose self- nature it was to exist, and they belong to some person, how could they be overcome? They will not be overcome by anyone, in any way at all. Why are they not overcome? Nagarjuna says, 'Who can vanquish the self-existent?' It is because it is impossible to bring what is self-existent to nought. The openness of space, for example, cannot be nullified.

In the second alternative the afflictions are conceived to be by nature non-existent. Nagarjuna says the elimination of afflictions is impossible in this way as well.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

24. Nāgārjuna reminds the substantialist at the end that if the defilements or errors were inherent in the person and, hence, were part of his/her essence, they would be permanent and, hence, could not be relinquished. This would constitute a direct rejection of one of the most fundamental tenets of the Buddhist outlook - the possibility of liberation.

Kārikā XXIII.25

यद्यभूताः स्वभावेन क्लेशाः केचिद्धि कस्यचित्।
कथं नाम प्रहीयेरन् कोऽसद्भावं प्रहास्यति॥२५॥

yady abhūtāḥ svabhāvena kleśāḥ kecid dhi kasyacit |
kathaṃ nāma prahīyeran ko 'sadbhāvaṃ prahāsyati ||25||

若煩惱虛妄 無性無屬者
云何當可斷 誰能斷無性

ruò fán nǎo xū wàng wú xìng wú shǔ zhě
yún hé dāng kě duàn shuí néng duàn wú xìng

།གལ་ཏེ་ལ་ལའི་ཉོན་མོངས་པ། །གང་དག་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་མེད་ན།
།ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ན་སྤོང་བར་འགྱུར། །མེད་པ་སུ་ཞིག་སྤོང་བར་བྱེད།།

| gal te la la'i ñon moṅs pa | | gaṅ dag raṅ bźin gyis med na |
| ji lta bur na spoṅ bar 'gyur | | med pa su źig spoṅ bar byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 25 - If the defilements do not really exist in someone in virtue of self-nature, how could they be abandoned and who is able to abandon non-realities?

JONES (Skt):
[25] But if someone's afflictions did *not* exist through their own self-existence, how could they be eliminated? Who could ever eliminate what does not really exist?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If, indeed, certain defilements of someone have not come to be on the basis of self-nature, how could they be relinquished? Who ever could relinquish non-existence?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If not any beings are defiled by their own nature, whose [defilements] are they?
How would they be called abandoned? Who will abandon what does not really exist?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
25. When subjective accidents are relying upon subjective ideas,
Miscellaneous strong pains exist in something obscure, and the receptacle exists in it.
How is it possible for only a title to make the serious problems?
What kinds of thing will produce such kinds of miscellaneous abstract beings?

SPRUNG (Skt):
25 If there were non-self-existent afflictions of someone how could they be overcome? Who can vanquish the non-existent?

STRENG (Skt):
25. If any kind of self-existent impurities do not belong to somebody, How in all the world would they be eliminated? Who can eliminate that which is non-self-existent?

ROBINSON (Skt):
If any passions belonging to anyone were unreal by own-being, how could they be abandoned? Who will abandon an unreal being?

BOCKING (Ch):
23v24 If the afflictions are false deceptions
With no nature, and belonging to no-one.
How can they be cut off?
For who can cut off a non-nature?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the afflictions of some did not exist by their own nature, how could they be let go of? Who can let go of what does not exist?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If someone's afflictions
Are nonexistent by nature,
How can they be eliminated?
Who can eliminate the nonexistent? [XXIII.25]

GARFIELD (Tb):
25. If someone's defilements
Did not exist through his essence,
How could they be relinquished?
Who could relinquish the nonexistent?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
25. If any afflictions of anyone
Were essentially nonexistent,
How could they be relinquished?
Who could relinquish the nonexistent?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
23.25 If defilements have not come to be in someone on the basis of self-nature, how could they be relinquished? Who could relinquish non-existence?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

23/24 If all the afflictions are false deceptions with no nature, then there is no-one to whom they belong. How can they possibly be cut off? For who can cut off a dharma without a nature?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

It is equally impossible to vanquish non-existent afflictions whose very nature it is not to exist. It is not possible to nullify the non-existent coldness of fire. Who can vanquish afflictions which by their very nature do not exist? No one at all can vanquish them.

In sum, as in neither alternative is there a possibility of elimination, afflictions cannot be eliminated. As there is no elimination, how can there be a search for the effective means of eliminating the afflictions?

Therefore the claim that the afflictions - ignorance and the others do exist in fact because of the endeavour to find a means of removing them, does not make sense.

As is said in the *Samadhiraja Sutra*, 'An existential element "desire" would be roused by something in someone; an existential element "aversion" would be aversion in someone to something; an existential element "illusion" would be illusion in someone concerning something.' Such an element of existence one cannot discover in thought nor perceive in fact. One who does not discover such an existential element in thought nor perceive it in fact is said to be free of desire, aversion and illusion, to have a mind free of misbelief, to be composed in spirit. He is said to have crossed to the other side, to have penetrated deeply, to have attained peace.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna's conclusion in this chapter is that the defilements (klesa), which are the results of the perversions discussed above, cannot be eliminated, and, therefore, there could be no tathagata, if these defilements are looked upon as being either substantial, i.e., something that has come to be (bhuta) having self-nature (svabhava) or non-substantial, i.e., something that has not come to be (abhuta) because of its having no real nature (asadbhava). In either case, there can be no abandoning of defilements and hence the achievement of the state of tathagata.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

25. On the other hand, he reminds those who may have followed the argument this far, but who may be tempted either to nihilism about the defilements or to the subtler error of asserting that their dependence and emptiness is literally their ultimate nature, that the defilements must be conventionally real in order to be relinquished. They are, from the ultimate point of view, completely unreal; from that point of view, there is no relinquishment of anything at all. This, as we shall see, is an important harbinger of the doctrines of the identity of the two truths and of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa to be developed in the next two chapters, which represent the climax of the text.

Chapter XXIV

आर्यसत्यपरीक्षा चतुर्विंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀四諦品第二十四(四十偈)

།འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་བཞི་པའོ།།

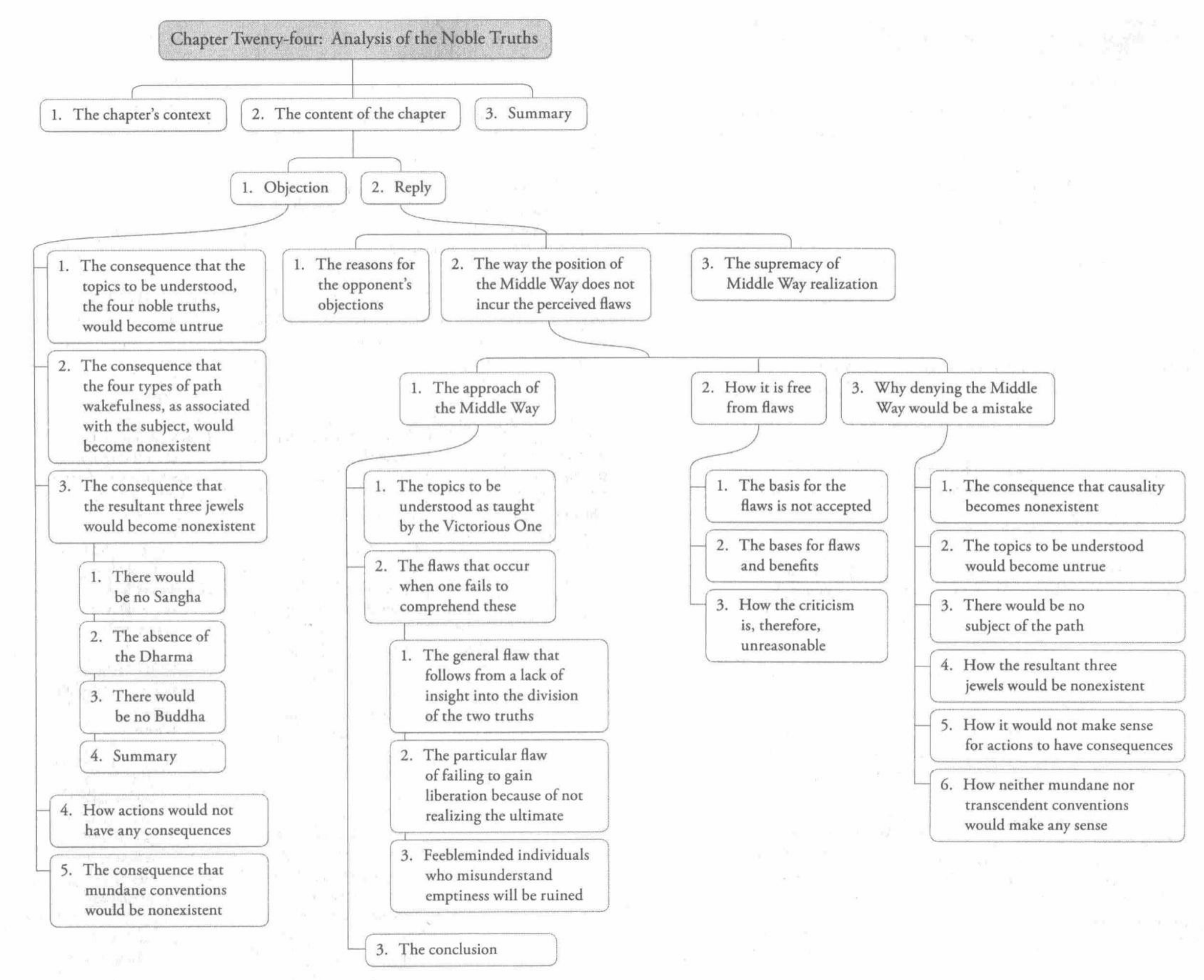
āryasatyaparīkṣā nāma caturviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XXIV: Examination of the Four Noble Truths

CHAPTER COMMENTARIES, SUMMARIES, OUTLINES

Chapter XXIV

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We have now completed the second and final part of the presentation of the main point of the demonstration that the dependently originated is empty by nature: the detailed explanation of selflessness. We now begin the second part of the demonstration that the dependently originated is empty by nature: the rebuttal of refutations. This section has two parts: the examination of the Four Noble Truths and the examination of nirvana. This chapter constitutes the first section.

EXPLANATION:

This section has two parts: the objection and the reply.

SUMMARY:

When the madhyamika shows that not even the slightest phenomenon related to samsara or nirvana exists essentially, our opponents argue that according to our system the entire framework of mundane and transcendental

phenomena makes no sense. In response to this, the present chapter explains things as follows: There is not even the slightest particle that withstands analysis through the arguments that examine and reject true existence. Therefore, while the opponent's system contains errors that make it impossible for him to assert **[438]** "this exists and this does not," not only do we not commit those errors in our own system, but this entire framework makes perfect sense.

The main point is that the meaning of "emptiness" is *dependent origination*, but emptiness does not mean the negation of things such as action and agent. Thus, one who is discerning and aspires to subscribe to the Madhyamaka system should think in that manner.

The reificationists press us hard, saying, "According to your system, the entire framework of the mundane and the transcendental makes no sense." One should not rush into a place in advance before the other one pushes, by saying that according to our system we cannot say that we cannot set out any framework within which one could say "this exists and this does not exist."

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XXIV - Examination of the Four-fold Noble Truth

In this chapter we are treated to glimpses of a real genius at work. The chapter together with Chapters I & XXV explore the crucial ideas of sunyata, pratityasamutpada, and madhyama pratipad.

The chapter begins by first listening to the opponent's view (verses 1-6) that if everything is sunya or Sunyata (voidness) then all that is of the mundane world will be destroyed. Nagarjuna quickly reminds him that he does not know the real import of Sunyata or its meaning. The various Buddhas have, after all, taught us about the dharma (Buddhist truth) by way of the twofold truths, i.e., samvrti-satya (relative or worldly truth) and paramartha-satya (absolute or supreme truth). The subtle distinction between the two truths must be clearly understood and, moreover, the absolute truth cannot be arrived at without first going through or experiencing the mundane, relative truths in everyday living. Sunyata is, after all, the basis of all dharmas (factors of experience) or of all truths. In the famous Verse 18, Nagarjuna equates sunyata with pratityasamutpada. It is also the madhyama pratipad (the middle path) and only a provisional name for the expression of truth itself. Incidentally, this verse will become the basis for the philosophical development of the Chinese T'ien-t'ai School. Moreover, Nagarjuna argues that Sunyata is not to be equated with asunya ("non-void"), for in asunya the same view held by the opponent, i.e., that everything in the mundane world will be non-existent or destroyed, will then become valid.

In exhibiting the real purpose of the chapter, i.e., the examination of the Aryan fourfold truths, he is highly critical of the opponent's adherence to the notion of a self-sustaining, self-abiding entity. Since sunyata is not amenable to any abiding or enduring treatment it therefore is the basis of all beings. Thus the Aryan truths of suffering, its extinction, the way, and final nirvana become intelligible only by and in sunyata. Indeed, sunyata is a central concept in Nagarjuna.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

24. *Truth (satya)*. Thus we are led to the most important discussions in Nagarjuna, namely, the conception of the four noble truths (*arya satya*). The contents of this chapters have generated much discussion as well as controverty during the centuries that followed its compilation. At the same time, this chapter, more than any other, will serve as a glowing testimony to the fact that Nagarjuna was simply restating the ideas expressed by the Buddha in the early discourses, rather than bringing about a Copernican revolution in Buddhist thought. In the early discourses, the four noble truths were meant to explain the nature of human existence, both in bondage and in freedom, avoiding the extremes of permanent existence (*atthita*) and nihilistic non-existence (*n' atthita*). The difficulties encountered by the Buddha in making this view of existence intelligible to the substantialist thinkers of India are evident from the kind of criticism they levelled against the Buddha. Very often they criticized him as a nihilist (*n 'atthikavada, ucchedavada*), insisting that he advocated the annihilation and destruction of the conscious being (*sato sattassa ucchedam vinasam paññapei*).119 This was not because the Buddha denied the existence of conscious human beings, but because he was not willing to accept an eternal and immutable self (*atman*) in them. For he often insisted that a conscious human being is empty (*suñña*) of a permanent and eternal self (*atta*) as well as anything pertaining to or belonging to a self (*attaniya*).120 The denial of such a self or substantiality was not only in relation to a human personality but also in connection with any experienced phenomena (*sabbe dhamma anatta).121*

Nagarjuna was placed in an identical situation as a result of his rejection of the Sarvastivada conception of self-nature (*svabhava*) and the Sautrantika theory of other-nature (*parabhava*). The theory of nonsubstantiality (*anatman*) or emptiness (*sunyata*) that he attempted to explain in the previous chapters was not palatable to the substantialist philosophers who raised the objection discussed in the first six verse of the present chapter.

In the first instance, these substantialists, who understood emptiness as "nothingness," assumed that emptiness leads to a denial of the four noble troths, including a denial of the noble fruits (*arya-phalani*). These noble fruits are elsewhere referred to as fruits of the ascetic life (*samanathasa* = *sramanyartha,*122 *samannaphala* 123). Secondly, they felt that it also leads to a denial of the fruits (*phala*) of ordinary human life (*laukika*), including fruits of all the ordinary moral and social conventions (*samvyavahara*) such as good and bad (*dharma-adharma*) (XXIV.6).

Underlying this two-fold criticism there seems to be a basic assumption. Whereas in the early discourses the four noble truths could account for the fruits of ordinary human existence (i.e., of the path, *magga*) as well as the fruits of the higher life (i.e., freedom or *nibbana*), it seems that when the above criticism of emptiness by the substantialists of the Buddhist tradition was presented, the four noble truths were looked upon as referring primarily to the higher life. Hence the need to present an additional criticism that emptiness contradicts even the worldly (*laukikan).*

Nagarjuna's attempt here is to collapse these two issues into one and treat them under one rubric, namely dependent arising (*prati tyasamutpada*) (XXIV.40), which is the central philosophy of Buddhism. For this reason, having made the initial remark that his critics were not conversant with the use or purpose of emptiness and, therefore, are troubled by both emptiness and its meaning (XXIV.7), Nagarjuna immediately proceeds to explain the two truths, instead of the four truths.

Nagarjuna sees the Buddha as expounding two truths:

1. the truth of worldly convention (*loka-samvrti*), and

2. the truth in terms of ultimate fruit (*paramarthatah).*

Nagarjuna had already devoted twenty one chapters (I-XXI) to the explication of the first of these truths. Causality, space, time, motion, the human personality, action, consequence, good and badall of these have been dealt with at length. Explanations of these in terms of absolute existence or nihilistic nonexistence were rejected in favor of dependence (*prati tyasamutpada*) and, therefore, of emptiness (*sunyata*). *Artha* or fruit of existence, whether that be good or bad, was recognized. Attempts on the part of the metaphysicians who wanted to perceive with absolute certainty how a cause produces an effect were abandoned, since such attempts led to the recognition of unacceptable entities such as self (*atman*) or substance (*svabhava*). The abandoning of such attempts did not lead Nagarjuna on to the other extreme of denying any connection between cause and effect, action and consequence. The element of uncertainty involved in the cause-effect relationship made him more cautious than either the Sarvastivadins or the Sautrantikas, and hence he was more defensive and negative in his descriptions. Yet in no way did he want to abandon that principle of explanation, Chapter XVII on "The Examination of Action and Consequence" (*Karnsa-phala-pariksa*) being the most illustrative example. The fact that a human being, having understood the nature and functioning of phenomena (*dharmah*), attempts to achieve various desired results (*artha*) by manipulating such phenomena, was well known to Nagarjuna when he spoke of both *samskaras* and *samkalpas.* However, the possibility of achieving ultimate freedom (*nirvana*) or the ultimate fruit of existence (*paramartha*)(sometimes referred to by the Theravada tradition as *agga-phala*, Sk. *agra-phala*124), has now been questioned by his opponents. Again, without falling into the extremes of existence and non-existence and recognizing the emptiness of all dependently arisen phenomena, Nagarjuna had to explain the fruits (*artha*) as well as the ultimate fruit (*paramartha*) of existence. In speaking of these two truths, if he had assumed that the latter transcended the former, he would be presenting the ideas attributed to the so-called Mahayana, rather than quoting the early discourses or referring to the teachings of the Buddhas, Pratyeka-buddhas and the Sravakas. This, however, is not the case, for his explanation of *artha* as well as *paramartha* is couched in the same language, and that was the language of dependence and emptiness. Hence his famous dictum: "Without relying upon convention, the ultimate fruit is not taught. Without understanding the ultimate fruit, freedom is not attained" (XXIV.10). *Artha* as well as *paramartha* are truths (*satya)*. The former is not presented as an un-truth (*a-satya*) in relation to the latter, as it would be in an absolutistic tradition. Neither is the former sublated by the latter. There is no indication whatsoever that these are two truths with different standing as higher and lower.

The fruits of ordinary human existence (*artha*), understood in terms of permanent existence (*svabhava*) conflicted with everything in experience: "If you perceive the existence of the existence in terms of self-nature, then you will also perceive these a non-conditions" (XXIV.16). This would lead to a denial of all phenomena such as effect (*karya*), cause (*karana*), agent (*kartr*), doing (*karana*), action (*kriya*) as well as arising (*utpada*), ceasing (*nirodha*), and fruit (*phala*) (XXIV.17). This compelled him to make the most famous of his staements: "We state that whatever is dependent arising, that is emptiness. That is dependent upon convention. That itself is the middle path" (XXIV. 18). Everything is placed in one basket, the basket of

"dependent arising" (*prati tyasamutpada*). "A thing that is not dependently arisen is not evident. For that reason, a thing that is non-empty is, indeed, not evident (ibid. 19).

With that analysis, Nagarjuna was ready to defend the four noble truths, reconciling it with his conception of emptiness (ibid. 20-21). "Whoever perceives dependent arising also perceives suffering, its arising, its ceasing and the path [leading to its ceasing]," (ibid 40).

Buddha's statement in the *Majjhima-nikaya* : "He who perceives dependent arising also perceives the *dhamma*," could not have received better confirmation from a disciple who was removed from the Buddha by at least six centuries.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Awakening

[The first two stanzas are included in a footnote and left out of the main body of the text]

[
"If everything is empty.
There would be no rising and passing.
Ennobling truths would not exist.
There would be no understanding,
Letting go, cultivation, realizing.
Without tasting the fruits of practice,
There would be no community;
With no truths, no dharma either.
With no community and dharma,
How could you awaken?
Talk of emptiness maligns what is of value.
Acts and fruits, good and evil,
Conventions fall apart."

Not knowing emptiness,
The need for it
Or the point of it,
You subvert it.
]

The dharma taught by buddhas
Hinges on two truths:
Partial truths of the world
And truths which arc sublime.
Without knowing how they differ,
You cannot know the deep;
Without relying on conventions,
You cannot disclose the sublime;
Without intuiting the sublime,
You cannot experience freedom.

Misperceiving emptiness
Injures the unintelligent
Like mishandling a snake
Or miscasting a spell.

The Buddha despaired
Of teaching the dharma,
Knowing it hard
To intuit its depths.

Your muddled conclusions
Do not affect emptiness;
Your denial of emptiness
Does not affect me.

When emptiness is possible,
Everything is possible;
Were emptiness impossible,
Nothing would be possible.

In projecting your faults onto me,
You forget the horse you are riding.

To see things existing by nature,
Is to see them without
Causes or conditions,
Thus subverting causality,
Agents, tools and acts,
Starting, stopping and ripening.

Contingency is emptiness
Which, contingently configured,
Is the middle way.
Everything is contingent;
Everything is empty.

Were everything not empty,
There would be no rising and passing.
Ennobling truths would not exist.
Without contingency
How could I suffer pain?

This shifting anguish
Has no nature of its own;
If it did, how could it have a cause?
Deny emptiness and you deny
The origins of suffering.

If anguish existed by nature,
How would it ever cease?
Absolute misery could never stop.
How could you cultivate a path
That exists by nature?
How could it lead to the end of pain?
A path on which you tread
Can have no essence of its own.

If confusion existed by nature,
I would always be confused.
How could I know anything?
Letting go and realizing,
Cultivation and fruition
Could never happen.

Who can attain absolute goals
That by nature are unattainable?
Since no one could reach them,
There would be no community;

With no truths, no dharma either.
With no community or dharma
How could I awaken?
I would not depend on awakening
Nor awakening on me.

A naturally unawakened person
Would never awaken
No matter how hard
He practiced for its sake.
He would never do good or evil;
An unempty person would do nothing.
He'd experience fruits of good and evil
Without having done good or evil deeds.
How can fruits of good and evil not be empty
If they are experienced?

To subvert emptiness and contingency
Is to subvert conventions of the world.
It engenders passivity:
Acts without an author,
Authors who do not act.
Beings would not be born or die;
They would be frozen in time,
Alien to variety.

If things were unempty,
You could attain nothing.
Anguish would never end.
You would never let go of compulsive acts.

To see contingency is to see
Anguish, its origins, cessation and the path.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

24. The Four Noble Truths

The four noble truths in Buddhism are that there is suffering, that suffering has a cause (desires based on the root-ignorance), that there is a cure (removing the root-ignorance), and a prescription (the Buddhist eightfold path). (See Dalai Lama 2009: 17-23.) The form of the four noble truths follows ancient Indic medical practice - here the disease in question is the existential "dis-ease" permeating everything in the phenomenal world.

This chapter is the very core of Madhyamaka philosophy. The opponent starts it off by imputing an ontological nihilism to Nagarjuna that would destroy the Buddhist way of life: if everything is empty, then the four noble truths and so forth do not exist. Nagarjuna corrects his opponent by claiming that the Buddha's teaching is based on two *categories of truths:* truths from a conventional point of view and truths from the highest point of view (v. 8). Truths from the highest point of view *(parama-arthatas)* give the ultimate ontological status of something. Conventional truths *(lokasamvriti)* are about what the unenlightened count as real (i.e., discrete entities), depending on our conceptual conventions. Thus, ultimate truths are stated from the ontologically correct point of view, while conventional truths still involve the idea of self-existent entities for practical purposes. Teaching ultimate truths too depends on our conventions *(vyavahara)(* v. 10). And without understanding those truths, nirvana cannot be attained (v. 10). This distinction is very important and will be discussed in the Essay.

Nagarjuna can now claim that he accepts all the worldly phenomena in the conventional sense, while denying that they exist from the highest point of view: the phenomena are empty of self-existence and there are no self-existent entities populating the world, but the phenomena still exist in some sense - this is reality as it truly is *(tattva).* In fact, he can go on to say that only if phenomena are empty do things *work* - self-existent entities cannot change, and so if the world were nothing but a collection of discrete, self-existent things nothing would occur and suffering could not end (vv. 37-39). (Notice that in verse 38, a self-existent world would also be unarisen and unceasing, like a world empty of self-existence, but in a different manner: if the world is self-existent, it is unchanging and thus does not arise or cease but is *static;* if the world is empty of self-existence, then it has no real entities that could arise or cease, and thus it is unarisen and unceasing in that sense 120.18], but it is *constantly changing.)* Thus, verse '4: "For whom emptiness is admissible, everything is admissible. For whom emptiness is inadmissible, everything is inadmissible." (See also VV 70.) This summarizes how

Nagarjuna sees the world: only if things are empty does anything work; if things were self-existent, everything would be permanent and changeless, and the change we see in the world could not occur. Nothing would exist by causes and conditions (v. 16), and we would have to reject effect, cause, actors, and so forth (v. 17).

One can see emptiness incorrectly (v. 11) by *seeing* it as a *self-existent reality* or *any type of entity* or *its absence.* Emptiness is not the *absence* of anything that exists. As long as we are thinking in terms of existent realities or their absence, we are still within a conventional point of view. Verse 12 refers to the Buddha's doubt about teaching others that he had soon after his enlightenment. (See also R118.)

Verse 15 refers to a parable: a king sitting on a horse accuses a horse seller of not delivering all the horses he promised; the king counts the horses, finding one short of the total promised, but the seller points out that the king forgot to count the horse he is seated on.

In verse 18, Nagarjuna equates "emptiness" with "dependent-arising" and with the "middle way" between the dichotomy he sees his opponent committed to: permanent, eternal realities and complete nonexistence. This is more than simply saying that there are no self-existent entities in dependent-arising and that the process itself is empty – emptiness and dependent-arising are *synonymous*. (Note that Nagarjuna offers *no defense* of *equating* "emptiness" with "dependent-arising" either here or elsewhere. He simply states that the two are the same.) This makes emptiness very uncontroversial in his eyes since *dependent-arising* is central to all schools of Buddhism. In addition, all Buddhists, starting with the Buddha himself, see their position as a middle way between "is" and "is not" - e.g., the Yogacharins see their school as a middle way between eternalism and what they see as the Madhyamaka's ontological nihilism.

In verse 18, Nagarjuna again calls "emptiness" an indicator *(prajnaptir)* dependent upon convention (see 22.11). But again, even though it is an ontological term, he does not think it indicates anything real (self-existent) in the world, either ultimately or conventionally, although the unenlightened will be misled by any term into thinking some (real) thing is indicated.

What exists by self-existence is free of suffering, coming-to-be, and ceasing (w. 21-23) and cannot be affected by action (v. 33) - it is permanent and changeless. The religious implications are again pointed out (w. 24-35). Note that the Buddha and his enlightenment are interdependent (v. 31).

In verse 40, Nagarjuna concludes by saying that those who *see* dependent-arising *see* the arising and cessation of suffering - this after arguing that nothing real arises or ceases and nothing unreal does either. But from the ultimate point of view that involves the true ontological status of things, there is no real suffering or any real arising or ceasing to be seen. That is, if we *see* in terms of the concept of "dependent-arising," then we are still viewing phenomena through a conceptual prism, and that prism must be discarded to reality as it is *(tattva).*

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

24

An Examination of the Four Noble Truths

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS were the Buddha's emphasis when he gave the teachings that compose the first turning of the wheel of Dharma. They present a basic outline of samsara and nirvana in terms of causes and results. The first, the truth of suffering, describes the condition that pervades every aspect and every moment of existence in samsara. Second, the truth of the origin of suffering consists of the mental afflictions and karmic actions that are samsara's causes. Third, the truth of the cessation of suffering is nirvana, the state that is the transcendence of samsara's miseries. Fourth, the truth of the path comprises the teachings and practices that are the causes of attaining the truth of cessation and thereby gaining liberation from samsara.

In the sutras of the second turning of the wheel of Dharma, however, the Buddha taught:

Manjushri, when you see that composite phenomena do not arise, you will understand suffering well.

Here the Buddha teaches that the best way to understand the truth of suffering is to know that composite phenomena do not arise and that therefore suffering does not arise either. Suffering does not really happen—it is of the nature of emptiness, as are the other three noble truths as well. To examine the four noble truths and not find anything there, to determine that they do not exist, is the stage of slight analysis. To understand that their nature is beyond all conceptual fabrications is the stage of thorough analysis.

There were people who did not understand this, however, and they criticized Nagarjuna, claiming that he was a nihilist. They said, "If your explanation of the Middle Way that refutes the inherent nature of everything were valid, there would be no four noble truths, no three rare and supreme ones (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha), no cause and result—in fact, no conventions or expressions would exist at all." In other words, they equated emptiness with total nonexistence. In order to help them overcome their confusion, Nagarjuna composed this chapter.

Nagarjuna gives a very clear answer to these opponents' claims in the chapter's fourteenth verse:

If emptiness is possible,

Then everything is possible,
But if emptiness is impossible,
Then nothing else is possible either.

"If emptiness is possible" means "if emptiness is the true nature of things"—but what does that mean? It means that things do not truly exist, but rather that they exist in dependence upon the coming together of causes and conditions. Emptiness does not mean complete nothingness, it means dependent origination. Emptiness and dependent arising have the same meaning. Therefore, when emptiness is possible, everything is possible. The four noble truths, the three rare and supreme ones, and everything else in samsara and nirvana are all perfectly free to arise due to the coming together of their causes and conditions. If things were not empty, however, if they were not dependently arisen, then nothing would be possible. If things truly existed, they would never change. They would have their own nature that did not depend on causes and conditions, and therefore causes and results would not exist. Nothing would ever arise or cease. There could be no perception or knowledge. This is why the four noble truths, the three rare and supreme ones, and so forth are possible only because their nature is emptiness; they would not be possible if they truly existed.

The eighteenth verse definitively teaches that emptiness, dependent arising, and the Middle Way all have the same meaning:

Whatever is dependently arisen
Is explained to be emptiness.
Its existence is imputed in dependence upon something else,
And this is the path of the Middle Way.

The insight of the Middle Way's teachings is that whatever is dependently arisen is empty of its own essence. The reason for this is that whatever thing it may be, its existence is not inherent but rather is merely imputed in dependence upon some other basis. For example, when we look at a collection of parts and give it the name "automobile," then "automobile" is a mere name, a mere imputation, that has no existence other than being merely that (fn For further explanation of how things are imputed to exist in dependence upon their parts, see chapter 20, "An Examination of Collections."). This understanding is the path of the Middle Way, free from the extremes of existence and nonexistence, permanence and extinction, realism and nihilism.

From among the sixteen emptinesses that the glorious Chandrakirti explains in Entering the Middle Way, the "emptiness of that which is beyond extremes" refers to the Middle Way, emptiness, and dependent arising. All three of these share the quality of transcending extremes. They too, however, are empty of their own nature, and that is the emptiness of that which is beyond extremes.

The nineteenth verse reads:

There is not a single phenomenon
That is not dependently arisen.
Therefore, there is not a single phenomenon
That is not empty.

This verse describes the union of dependent arising and emptiness. Emptiness pervades all dependently arisen phenomena, and from within emptiness, the great variety of dependently arisen appearances manifest.

Since it is the case that everything included in the four noble truths is dependently arisen, the four noble truths are empty. Since it is the case that everything in samsara and nirvana is dependently arisen, everything in samsara and nirvana is empty.

Since it is the case that every single thing that appears in a dream is dependently arisen, everything in the dream is empty.

Similarly, since it is the case that all inner and outer phenomena are dependently arisen mere appearances, there is not a single one of them, either on the inside or on the outside, that is not empty.

As we saw earlier, Milarepa also sang about the union of dependent arising and emptiness in his *Song of the Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range*:

When you're sure that conduct's work is luminous light,
And you're sure that interdependence is emptiness,
A doer and deed refined until they're gone—
This way of working with conduct, it works quite well!

Thus we can see that the conclusions that the noble Nagarjuna comes to through logical analysis and those that the lord of yogis Milarepa realizes with wisdom arising from meditation are exactly the same. This should help us to gain certainty in both of these great masters' teachings.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XXIV

आर्यसत्यपरीक्षा चतुर्विंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

āryasatyaparīkṣā nāma caturviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀四諦品第二十四(四十偈)

zhōng lùn guān sì dì pǐn dì èr shí sì (sì shí jié;jì)

།འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་བཞི་པའོ།།

| ’phags pa’i bden pa brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa ñi śu bźi pa’o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XXIV - Examination of the Four-fold Noble Truth

JONES (Skt):
24. The Four Noble Truths Objection:

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of the Noble Truths

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
24. Analysis of Noble Truth

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[24] Examination of The Supreme Truth (verses 40)

SPRUNG (Skt):
The Four Buddhist Truths

STRENG (Skt):
Section 24 - An Analysis of the Holy Truths (the noble truths) In 40 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
24. the Holy Truths.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 24 Contemplation of the Four Truths 40 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of the Ennobling Truths

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XXIV - Analysis of the Noble Truths

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XXIV: Examination of the Four Noble Truths

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XXIV - Examination of the Four Noble Truths

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of the Four Noble Truths

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 24: AN EXAMINATION OF THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/0 The questioner says: 'By destroying the four perverted views one penetrates the four truths and attains the four sramana-fruits.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter XVIII]

The nihilistic consequences of devoidness

At this point some object:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Twenty Four Examination of the Noble Truths (Arya-satya-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XXIV Examination of the Four Noble Truths

While Chapter XXIV ostensibly concerns the Four Buddhist Truths and the way they are to be understood from the vantage point of emptiness, it is really about the nature of emptiness itself and about the relation between emptiness and conventional reality. As such, it is the philosophical heart of *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā.* The first six verses of the chapter (XXIV: 1-6) present a reply to Nāgārjuna's doctrine of emptiness by an opponent charging the doctrine with nihilism. The next eight verses (XXIV: 7-14) are primarily rhetorical, castigating the opponent for his misunderstanding of Madhyamika. The positive philosophical work begins with XXIV: 15. From this point Nāgārjuna offers a theory of the relationship between emptiness, dependent origination, and convention and argues not only that these three can be understood as corelative, but that if conventional things (or emptiness itself) were *nonempty*, the very nihilism with which the reificationist opponent charges Madhyamika would ensue. This tactic of arguing not only against each extreme but of arguing that the contradictory extremes are in fact mutually entailing is, as we have seen in earlier chapters, a dialectical trademark of Nāgārjuna's philosophical method. In this chapter, it is deployed with exceptional elegance and acuity.

The opponent opens the chapter by claiming that if the entire phenomenal world were empty, nothing would in fact exist, a conclusion absurd on its face and, more importantly, contradictory to fundamental Buddhist tenets such as the Four Noble Truths (XXIV: 1-6) as well as to conventional wisdom:

Kārikā XXIV.1

यदि शून्यमिदं सर्वमुदयो नास्ति न व्ययः।
चतुर्णामार्यसत्यानामभावस्ते प्रसज्यते॥१॥

LVP 475,4-5 - LVP 518,7-8
yadi śūnyam idaṃ sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ |
caturṇām āryasatyānām abhāvas te prasajyate ||1||

若一切皆空　無生亦無滅
如是則無有　四聖諦之法

T1564: vol 30, pg 34c7
ruò yī qiè jiē kōng wú shēng yì wú miè
rú shì zé wú yǒu sì shèng dì zhī fǎ

།གལ་ཏེ་འདི་དག་ཀུན་སྟོང་ན།།འབྱུར་བ་མེད་ཅིང་འཇིག་པ་མེད།
།འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་པ་བཞི་པོ་རྣམས།།ཁྱོད་ལ་མེད་པར་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

Tg tsa 14b3-4 - Tg tsa 16a5
|| (4)gal te 'di dag kun stoṅ na | | 'byuṅ ba med ciṅ 'jig pa med |
| 'phags pa'i bden pa bźi po rnams | | khyod la med par thal bar 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 (The opponent contends) If everything is sunya there will be neither production nor destruction. According to your assertion it will follow that the Aryan Fourfold Truths are non-existent. - Note: Verses 1 through 6 are views expressed by the opponent. Again, sunya is left untranslated in order to gain currency in Western usage and understanding.

JONES (Skt):
[1] If all this is empty, there is neither arising nor ceasing. And then for you, it follows that the four noble truths - the truth of suffering, its cause, its prescription, and the path to ending it - do not exist.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If all this is empty, then there exists no uprising and ceasing. These imply the non-existence of the four noble truths.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If all this is open, there is neither arising nor dissolution.
The nonexistence of the four noble truths follows for you.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. When the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system pervades through the whole Universe,
The appearance of this world does never exist, and disappearance of this world does never exist.
The Four Philosophies, those are, Idealism, Materialism, Philosophy of Action, and Reality itself, are The Supreme Truth.
Because the insistence that such a Truth does never exist in this world, are the wrong human attitudes, which are attaching to their wrong idea without Reason.

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 If the entire everyday is devoid of self-existence, nothing can come to be nor cease to be. It follows inexorably that, for you, the four Buddhist truths do not hold.

STRENG (Skt):
1. If everything is empty, there is no origination nor destruction. Then you must incorrectly conclude that there is non-existence of the four holy truths.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v1 If everything is entirely empty
With no arising and no ceasing
Then there will be
No Dharma of the four holy truths.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
"If all were empty, nothing could come about or perish. It would follow for you that the four ennobling truths could not exist

DOCTOR (Tb):
If all of this were empty,
Nothing would arise or be destroyed.
For you it follows that
There are no four noble truths. [XXIV.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. If all of this is empty,
Neither arising nor ceasing,
Then for you, it follows that
The Four Noble Truths do not exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. If all this is empty,
There would be neither arising nor ceasing,
And for you, it follows that
The Four Noble Truths do not exist.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[An opponent contends:] If all of this is Empty, then there is neither arising nor ceasing. It follows that the Four Noble Truths do not exist.

If, in point of logical argument the entire everyday (*sarvam idam*) everything temporal both inner and outer — does not arise, that is lacks being (*sunya*), and this is your teaching, then many and great are the difficulties which descend upon you. Why? Because if all things were devoid of being then what is so devoid cannot be said to really be and what cannot be said to be can, like the son of a barren woman, neither come to be nor cease to be, because it does not exist (*avidya-manatva*); so nothing whatsoever would come to be or cease to be. As there is no coming to be nor ceasing to be it follows inexorably for you, who hold that things lack being, that there are no four Buddhist truths (*aryasatya*) (fn 1 These are the founding insights of earliest Buddhism and remain bedrock for all schools. They are: (1) existence is afflicted (*duhkha*); (2) afflicted existence has an origin; (3) afflicted existence has an end; (4) there is a path leading to the end. These are the *aryan* truths, often translated as the noble or holy truths. For Nagarjuna they are truths of the wise, i.e. truths for those who have penetrated Buddhism.).

Why? Because it is Buddhist doctrine that the five appropriative factors of personal existence (*skandhas*), which are interdependent and arise from causes in time are designated afflicted existence (*duhkha*) in virtue of existence itself being essentially afflicted, because all change is affliction, because all things that come to be in time are afflicted and because of the perversity and essential anguish of existence. Only the wise, whose misbeliefs have been destroyed, fully comprehend afflicted existence. The unwise do not, being in the grip of misbelief: the fixed view that things have self-existent natures even as they appear to have. Just as impaired sense organs, because of old age, sickness or disease perceive sugar and such things as bitter, though their true nature is sweet, and in this cognition bitterness, not sweetness is taken as the truth because the true nature of the object is not perceived, so it is in this matter. Even though the five appropriative factors of personal existence are by nature afflicted, still only those who clearly see the personal factors to be afflicted truly understand existence as afflicted; not those who perceive things otherwise than they are because they are in the grip of misbelief. As it is only for the wise (*arya*) that the personal factors are afflicted by nature, the truth of afflicted existence (*duhkhasatya*) is said to be a truth for the wise (*aryasatva*).

But are not painful feelings defined as afflictions by those who are not wise? How is it then that afflicted existence is a truth only for the wise? Because the truth is that not only painful feelings are afflictions but that all five appropriative personal factors are. As, therefore, only for the wise is that the truth it is called a truth of the wise.

It is said, 'One does not feel a piece of wool in the palm of the hand but if it gets into the eye it causes discomfort and torment. So the immature man, like the hand, does not know that existence is afflicted; but the wise man, like the eye, alone trembles at the torment.' Because, that existence is by nature afflicted is the truth only for the wise, it is known as a wise truth.

But if the wise truth of affliction is to make sense, things must come to be and cease to be. If, however, because all things are devoid of self-existence, nothing comes to be nor ceases to be, there can be no affliction. And if there is no affliction how can there be a truth about its origin (*samudaya-sayta*)? The cause from which afflicted existence issues and springs is called its origin and is understood as the afflictions (*klesa*) arising from actions which originate in the thirst for existence (*trsna*) conceived as cause. If, however, there is no affliction which is of the nature of an effect, then there is no origin of it because a cause without an effect is illogical.

When afflicted existence disappears never again to arise, that is known as cessation. If, however, there is no affliction, of what would there be cessation? So the cessation of affliction is not possible either. Thus if there is no affliction (*duhkha*) there can be no truth of its cessation (*nirodhasatya*). If there is no cessation of afflicted existence how will there be a way which follows the Buddhist eightfold path leading to the cessation of afflicted existence. Thus the truth of the path (*margasatva*) does not hold either.

Accordingly, if one declares all things to be devoid of a self- existent nature, it follows inexorably that the four Buddhist truths do not hold. And what harm results from that?

Nagarjuna says (fn 2 Still putting the opponent's objection),

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna's discussion of the four truths was an inevitable consequence of his analysis of perversions (Chapter XXIII) which, in its turn, was occasioned by a need to explain the perspective of a tathagata (Chapter XXII). The four truths refer to the problem of suffering, the subject matter of two of the perversions, namely, mistaking the unpleasant for the pleasant (asubhe subhan ti) and non-suffering for the suffering (aduhkhe duhkhan ti).

Verses 1-6 in the present chapter pose one major problem faced by the Buddhist (or even by the non-Buddhist) in explaining suffering (duhkha) and, therefore, the four noble truths, when placed in the context of "emptiness" (sunyata). The important questions are: Who are these Buddhists (or non-Buddhists)? Why are they faced with such a problem? The answers to these questions are found in the Abhidharmakosa-bhasya of Vasubandhu.

Vasubandhu refers to a theory proposed by some: "There indeed is no feeling of happiness" (nasty eva sukha vedana) and "Everything is suffering or unsatisfactory" (duhkhaiva tu sarvam)(Akb). There is very little doubt that this interpretation of the Buddha's teaching emerged with and was continued until modern times by thinkers and scholars belonging to the Brahmanical tradition. By ignoring a simple yet extremely important pronoun (namely, idam, "this"), the Brahmanical interpreters transformed the Buddha's teaching from an empirical to an absolutistic system. Thus, the Buddha's statement: sarvam idam duhkham ("all this is suffering") turns out to be an unqualified universal statement: sarvam duhkham ("everything is suffering"). Similarly, a specific statement such as sunyam idam sarvam ("all this is empty") turns out to be another absolutistic one, sunyam sarvam ("everything is empty," a problematic not noticed by Inada,). Threatened by such a problematic situation, the Buddhist metaphysicians were driven to the extreme position of asserting absolute forms of happiness, when they insisted: "Happy feelings do indeed exist in terms of unique character" (asty eva svalaksanatah sukha vedana, Akb). Yet, realizing that the Buddha did not present the world as a "bed of roses," they were compelled to admit that there are come experiences that are inherently unsatisfactory (svabhavenaiva duhkha, ibid.,).

Thus, not realizing that this was all due to a Brahmanical misreading of the Buddha's discourses and assuming that there is a genuine problem, the Buddhist metaphysicians came to admit both suffering or unsatisfactoriness (duhkha) and happiness (sukha) as substantially existing. Instead of correcting the Brahmanical misreading, they struggled for an explanation:

When [the Buddha] declared: 'One should perceive happy feelings as suffering,' [i.e., the perception of one who has eliminated the perversions,] both [happiness and suffering] are available therein. Happiness is inherently so, because there is pleasantness. However, eventually there is suffering, because of its changing and impermanent nature. When that [feeling] is perceived as happiness, it contributes to enlightenment, through its enjoyment. When it is perceived as suffering, it leads to release, by being non-attached to it. (Akb , Yad uktam "sukha vedana duhkhe ti drastavye" ti ubhayam tasyam asti. Sukhatvam ca svabhavatomanapatvat, dubkam ca paryayato viparinamanityadharmatvat, Sa tu sukhato drsyamana buddhaya kalpate, tad asvadanat , duhkhato drsyamana moksaya kalpate, tad vairagyad iti.)

The substance-terminology in the above passage should make it clear as to which Buddhist school was presenting this explanation. There seems to be no question that it was authored by the Sarvastivadins . Thus, it was their desire to uphold the conception of substance that made them uncomfortable with the notion of "the empty" (sunya). The substantialists were prepared to wrestle with the conceptions of substance and causation and, as shown earlier, they produced substantialist theories of causation. However, they could not do the same with the conception of "the empty" (sunya), even though "emptiness" itself may be amenable to such substantialist interpretations (see XXIV.14).

It is in order to highlight this problem that Nagarjuna begins the chapter with a reference to "the empty" (sunya, as in yadi sunyam idam sarvam) rather than to the abstract conception of "emptiness" (sunyata). In Nagarjuna's mind, to preserve the non-substantialist and non-absolutistic standpoint of the Buddha, what needs to be restored is "the empty" rather than "emptiness," because the latter is dependent upon the former, whereas any emphasis on the latter could wipe out the former, as it happened in the case of the absolutists and the substantialists. In presenting the metaphysicians dilemma in this manner, Nagarjuna was more concerned with the mistake of his Buddhist counterparts than with the misreadings of the Buddhist texts by the Brahamincal thinkers. For this reason, he makes no reference to such misreadings as "sarvam sunyam."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. The Four Noble Truths are: (1) All life in cyclic existence is suffering. (2) There is a cause of this suffering, namely, craving caused by ignorance. (3) There is a release from suffering. (4) The path to that release is the eightfold Buddhist path of right view, right concentration, right mindfulness, right speech, right effort, right action, right morality, right livelihood. The Four Noble Truths, preached by the Buddha in his first teaching after gaining enlightenment, are the fundamental philosophical tenets of Buddhism. If it were a consequence of Nāgārjuna’s doctrine of emptiness that the Four Noble Truths were in fact false or, more radically, nonexistent, that would constitute in this philosophical context an immediate refutation of the position. This is not because these assertions are articles of faith, in the sense of revealed doctrine, but because anyone arguing within this framework has accepted the arguments for them.

Kārikā XXIV.2

परिज्ञा च प्रहाणं च भावना साक्षिकर्म च।
चतुर्णामार्यसत्यानामभावान्नोपपद्यते॥२॥

parijñā ca prahāṇaṃ ca bhāvanā sākṣikarma ca |
caturṇām āryasatyānām abhāvān nopapadyate ||2||

以無四諦故 見苦與斷集
證滅及修道 如是事皆無

yǐ wú sì dì gù jiàn kǔ yǔ duàn jí
zhèng miè jí xiū dào rú shì shì jiē wú

།འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་པ་བཞི་མེད་པས། །ཡོངས་སུ་ཤེས་དང་སྤོང་བ་དང་།
།སྒོམ་དང་མངོན་དུ་བྱ་བ་དག །འཐད་པར་འགྱུར་བ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།

| ’phags pa’i bden pa bźi med pas | | yoṅs su śes daṅ spoṅ ba daṅ |
| sgom daṅ mṅon du bya ba dag | | ’thad (5)par ’gyur pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - True knowledge, relinquishing (false views), (right) practice, and (right) confirmation will not be possible because of the non-existence of the Aryan Four-fold Truths.

JONES (Skt):
[2] And since the four noble truths do not exist, then the recognition of suffering, the elimination of its cause, the cultivation of ending it through meditation, and the realization of the end of suffering cannot occur.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
In the absence of the four noble truths, understanding, relinquishing, cultivation, and realization will not be appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Knowledge, abandonment, practice, and realization do not take place by the nonexistence of the four noble truths.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. Knowledge, abandonment,
Action, and results,
Those factors are the Four Sacred Truths,
Leaving from no existence, everything exists really.

SPRUNG (Skt):
2 Because the four Buddhist truths do not hold, the clear knowledge of afflicted existence becomes unintelligible as do its overcoming, the inner acceptance of the way to its overcoming and the final intuitive realization.

STRENG (Skt):
2. If there is non-existence of the four holy truths, the saving knowledge, the elimination of illusion, The "becoming" enlightened (bhávaná), and the "realization" of the goal are impossible.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v2 And since there are no four truths,
Perception of suffering, cutting-off of the accumulation of Karma
Realizing cessation and practicing the Way;
Such things will not exist.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Since the four ennobling truths would not exist, understanding, letting go, cultivating and realizing would no longer be valid.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Since there are no four noble truths,
Complete understanding and elimination,
As well as familiarization and actualization,
Do not make any sense. [XXIV.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. If the Four Noble Truths do not exist,
Then knowledge, abandonment,
Meditation and manifestation
Will be completely impossible.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. If the Four Noble Truths did not exist,
Then understanding, abandonment,
Meditation, and realization
Would not be tenable.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
In the absence of the Four Noble Truths, understanding, relinquishing, cultivation, and realization are impossible.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Given the consequence that the four Buddhist truths do not hold it becomes logically impossible that there should be (1) clear knowledge (*parijnana*) of the truth of afflicted existence as the transience, substancelessness and ill of all things, or (2) overcoming (*prahana*) of the source of affliction, or (3) the inner acceptance of a way (*bhavana*) leading to the cessation of affliction, or (4) the final realization (*saksatkarana*) of its cessation (fn 3 These four stages constitute the structure of the Buddhist path.).

And if, because the four Buddhist truths do not hold, there is no clear knowledge of affliction and the other stages, what follows from that?

Nagarjuna says (fn 4 Still putting the opponent's objection.),

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Understanding (parijna) pertains to the first of the four noble truths, namely, that suffering exists. Relinquishing (prahana) refers to the second, namely, the cause of suffering, which is explained as craving (trsna). Realization (saksikar-ma) applies to the third, namely, the state of freedom from suffering, which is nirvana. Cultivation or practice (bhavana) involves the fourth, namely, the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. Once we reject the Four Noble Truths, the essential ingredients of Buddhist practice become unintelligible. Knowledge of the ultimate nature of things becomes impossible since all of the knowledge gained in this tradition is knowledge of things that accords with the truths. Abandonment of error and craving, and eventually of cyclic existence, becomes unintelligible without the context of the analysis ,contained in the truths. Meditation loses its point. The eightfold path becomes a path to nowhere. This all amounts to a rejection of the entire Buddhist Dharma, one of the three jewels in which Buddhists take refuge, the others being the Buddha (fn 107. Not only the historical Buddha, but also the possibility of buddhahood in general and one's own future buddhahood in particular, a point emphasized by the Most Yen. Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche in oral comments.) and the Sangha, or the spiritual community of Buddhist practitioners and teachers.

Kārikā XXIV.3

तदभावान्न विद्यन्ते चत्वार्यार्यफलानि च।
फलाभावे फलस्था नो न सन्ति प्रतिपन्नकाः॥३॥

tadabhāvān na vidyante catvāry āryaphalāni ca |
phalābhāve phalasthā no na santi pratipannakāḥ ||3||

以是事無故 則無四道果
無有四果故 得向者亦無

yǐ shì shì wú gù zé wú sì dào guǒ
wú yǒu sì guǒ gù dé;děi;de xiàng zhě yì wú

།དེ་དག་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་པས།།འབྲས་བུ་བཞི་ཡང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།འབྲས་བུ་མེད་ན་འབྲས་གནས་མེད།།ཞུགས་པ་དག་ཀྱང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| de dag yod pa ma yin pas | | ’bras bu bźi yaṅ yod ma yin |
| ’bras bu med na ’bras gnas med | | źugs pa dag kyaṅ yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - As these are non-existent, the Aryan four-fold fruits i.e., spiritual attainments, are also non-existent. As the fruits are non-existent, there will be no one who enjoys the fruits or their fruition. - Note: This verse makes reference to the four paths and fruits of attainment by the one who takes up the Buddhist principles once returner to the empirical level, the non-returner, and the enlightened worthy one (arhat).

JONES (Skt):
[3] If these four things do not exist, then the four noble fruits of the Buddhist way of life - “entering the stream” leading to nirvana, “once returning” for a final rebirth, “never returning,” and attaining nirvana in this life - are not found.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
In the absence of this [fourfold activity], the four noble fruits would not be evident. In the absence of the fruits, neither those who have attained the fruits nor those who have reached the way [to such attainment] exist.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
With that nonexistence, the four noble fruits do not occur.
Where the fruit is nonexistent, the stage in which the fruits are enjoyed and those who have arrived at the goal do not exist.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. No existence of the Four Sacred Truths are never recognized,
And no existence of the Four Kinds of Sacred Results does never exist at all.
When Result does not exist at all, the Facts of Result does not also exist.
Therefore it is difficult for the Arrival of Reality to be recognized actually. .

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 If these are nothing, then the four Buddhist spiritual attainments (fn The categories of Buddhist initiates; these are (a) the 'stream-winner', (b) the 'once-returner', (c) the 'non-returner', (d) the *arhant* (saint).) are nothing; if they are nothing, then no one can either exist in any attainment nor be on the way to it.

STRENG (Skt):
3. If there is non-existence, then also the four holy "fruits" do not exist. In the non-existence of fruit there is no "residing in fruit" nor obtaining.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v3 Because these are nonexistent,
There will be no four fruits of the Way.
And because there are no four fruits
There will also be none. who attains, or aspires.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
“Since they would not exist, the four fruits would also not exist. If the fruits did not exist, there could be no abiding in the fruits. Experiencing them would also not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Without these,
The four fruitions do not exist either.
Without fruition, there is no one abiding in that,
Nor anyone who has gained entry. [XXIV.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. If these things do not exist,
The four fruits will not arise.
Without the four fruits, there will be no attainers of the fruits.
Nor will there be the faithful.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. If these things did not exist,
The four fruits would not exist.
Without the four fruits, there would be no enjoyers of the fruits,
Nor would there be path-enterers.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
In the absence of this, the four noble fruits would not exist. In the absence of the fruits, there is no one who has attained them, nor is there anyone on the way to such attainment.

The non-absolutistic standpoint of early Buddhism is clearly embodied in the doctrine of the four fruits (arya-phala). Even though freedom without grasping (anupada vimukti) is sometimes referred to as the one goal (ekayana), yet a deliberate attempt to assert degrees of attainments where some are considered to be inferior to others is conspicuously absent. Like the relay of chariots (rathavinita), one segment of the path is as important as the other, "dispassion" (vairagya) being one dominant attitude permeating all segments. This has an important bearing on the conception of truth to be discussed soon.

Kārikā XXIV.4

संघो नास्ति न चेत्सन्ति तेऽष्टौ पुरुषपुद्गलाः।
अभावाच्चार्यसत्यानां सद्धर्मोऽपि न विद्यते॥४॥

saṃgho nāsti na cet santi te ’ṣṭau puruṣapudgalāḥ |
abhāvāc cāryasatyānāṃ saddharmo ’pi na vidyate ||4||

若無八賢聖 則無有僧寶
以無四諦故 亦無有法寶

ruò wú bā xián shèng zé wú yǒu sēng bǎo
yǐ wú sì dì gù yì wú yǒu fǎ bǎo

།གལ་ཏེ་སྐྱེས་བུ་གང་ཟག་བརྒྱད། །དེ་དག་མེད་ན་དགེ་འདུན་མེད།
།འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་རྣམས་མེད་པའི་ཕྱིར། །དམ་པའི་ཆོས་ཀྱང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| gal te skyes bu gaṅ zag brgyad | | de dag med na dge ’dun med |
| ’phags pa’i (6)bden rnams med pa’i phyir | | dam pa’i chos kyaṅ yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):

Verse 4 - If the eight aspirations of men do not exist, there will be no Sangha (i.e., Buddhist order). From the non-existence of the Aryan Truths, the true Dharma also does not exist. - Note: The eight refer to the four matured states and the four arrived states mentioned in the previous

JONES (Skt):

[4] If the eight types of practitioners connected to the four fruits (i.e., those who. aspire for one of the four fruits and those who have attained one) do not exist, so too the community of monks and nuns does not exist. In addition, because the four noble truths do not exist, there is no true doctrine.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):

If the eight types of individuals do not exist, there will be no congregation. From the non-existence of the noble truths, the true doctrine would also not be evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):

If the above eight kinds of persons or human beings do not exist, the Buddhist community does not exist.
From the nonexistence of the Noble Truths, the true Teaching does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):

4. When the Buddhist Sangha does not exist, this world does not exist.
And then, they, the eight kinds of people and personalities, are also too.
And the four kinds of Sacred Truths transcend the existence,
Even the Real Universe itself is never recognized at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):

4 If the eight spiritual categories (fn The four attainments and the four states of being on the way to them.) do not exist, there can be no Buddhist community of monks. Because the four Buddhist truths are nothing there can be no Buddhist Truth.

STRENG (Skt):

4. When the community of Buddhists does not exist, then those eight "kinds of persons" i.e., four abiding in the fruit and four who are obtaining do not exist. Because there is non-existence of the four holy truths, the real dharma does not exist.

BOCKING (Ch):

24v4 If there are not the eight (types of) holy person
Then there will be no Sangha-jewel.
And because there are no four truths
There will be no Dharma-jewel either.

BATCHELOR (Tb):

“If those eight beings did not exist, the Community would not exist. Since there would be no ennobling truths, the sublime Dharma could also not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):

If the eight persons do not exist,
Then there is no Sangha.
Because there are no noble truths,
There is no sacred Dharma. [XXIV.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):

4. If so, the spiritual community will not exist.
Nor will the eight kinds of person.
If the Four Noble Truths do not exist,
There will be no true Dharma.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):

4. If so, without the eight kinds of person,
There would be no sangha.
If the Four Noble Truths do not exist,
There can be no exalted Dharma.

HAGEN (paraphrase):

If the eight types of individuals do not exist, there is no *Sangha*. If the Four Noble Truths do not exist, there is no *True Dharma*.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Inada was probably assuming that cet refers to thought (citta) when he translated part of the first line as "the eight aspirations of men do not exist," whereas it could be more appropriately read as a conditional particle. The association of the true doctrine (sad-dharma) with the four noble troths (arya-satya) to a point where the absence of the latter implies the non-existence of the former should naturally raise questions regarding the more popular assignment of doctrines to the various schools where the four noble truths are assigned to the so-called Hinayana with the superior Mahayana having something more to offer. Such an assignment becomes really questionable when a great Mahayana thinker like Nagarjuna himself admits of such a correlation (XXIV.30). This equation is also significant for another very important reason. Dharma, as "teaching" also means a "statement" of doctrine. Some modern linguistic philosophers would prefer to use the term "truth" primarily in referring to statements rather than to facts. Sad-dharma, identified with truth, seems to accommodate such a perspective.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. These verses highlight these implications regarding the Dharma, but also point out that the rejection of the Four Noble Truths entails the nonexistence of the Sangha. For absent practice and the fruits of the path - that is, realization and accomplishment - there will be no practitioners and realizers.

Kārikā XXIV.5

धर्मे चासति संघे च कथं बुद्धो भविष्यति।
एवं त्रीण्यपि रत्नानि ब्रूवाणः प्रतिबाधसे॥५॥

dharme cāsati saṃghe ca kathaṃ buddho bhaviṣyati |
evaṃ trīṇy api ratnāni bruvāṇaḥ pratibādhase ||5||

以無法僧寶 亦無有佛寶
如是說空者 是則破三寶

yǐ wú fǎ sēng bǎo yì wú yǒu fú;fó bǎo
rú shì shuì kōng zhě shì zé pò sān bǎo

།ཆོས་དང་དགེ་འདུན་ཡོད་མིན་ན།།སངས་རྒྱས་ཇི་ལྟར་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར།
།དེ་སྐད་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་སྨྲ་ན།།དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ་ལ་གནོད་པ་ནི།།

| chos daṅ dge ’dun yod min na | | saṅs rgyas ji ltar yod par ’gyur |
| de skad stoṅ pa ñid smra na | | dkon mchog gsum la gnod pa ni |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - Without Dharma and Sangha, how could there be Buddha? Consequently, what you assert also destroys the Three Treasures. - Note: The implication here is that since all is sunya, there are no grounds for asserting the Three Treasures, i.e., the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

JONES (Skt):
[5] With no true doctrine and no religious community, how can there be the Buddha? Thus, speaking in this way you indeed reject the three Jewels of Buddhism.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
(not translated)

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where the Teaching and the Buddhist community do not exist, how will the Buddha exist?
Thus speaking, the three jewels are denied by you.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. If there were nothing in the Universe, and there were nothing in the Buddhist Organization,
How is it possible for a Person, who has realized the Truth, to exist even in future?
Similarly the three kinds of Buddhist Values, Buddha, Dharma, and Samgha, are just jewels.
But your insistences are attacking and making Buddhism retreat.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 If neither the community of monks exists nor the Buddhist Truth, how can there be an enlightened one? By declaring that all things lack self-existence you reject the three jewels.

STRENG (Skt):
5. And if there are no dharma and community, how will the Buddha exist? By speaking thus, that everything is empty certainly you deny the three jewels i.e., the Buddha, the dharma, and the community.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v5 With no Dharma - or Sangha-jewels
There will also be no Buddha-jewel.
Thus, one who teaches emptiness
Destroys the three jewels.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
“If the Community and the Dharma did not exist, how could Buddha exist? When you talk of emptiness, the three Jewels are maligned.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there is no Dharma and no Sangha,
How could there be any Buddha?
This teaching of emptiness
Invalidates the three jewels. [XXIV.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. If there is no doctrine and spiritual community,
How can there be a Buddha?
If emptiness is conceived in this way,
The three jewels are contradicted.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. If there is no Dharma and sangha,
How can there be a Buddha?
If emptiness is construed in this way,
The existence of the three jewels is undermined.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If the Dharma and the Sangha did not exist, how can there be the Buddha? By saying that everything is empty, you deny the Three Treasures, as well as the fruit of attainment, good and bad, and all conventional truths.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/5 If everything in the world was entirely empty with nothing existing, there would be no arising and no ceasing, and because of no arising and no ceasing there would be no four holy truths. Why is this? The truth of suffering arises from the truth of accumulation (of karma), the truth of accumulation being the cause, and the truth of suffering the effect. The truth of the cessation of suffering and accumulation is called the truth of cessation, and that which enables one to arrive at the truth of cessation is called the truth of the Way, the truth of the Way being the cause, and the truth of cessation the effect.

(32b27) Thus the four truths involve cause and effect. If there were no arising and no ceasing there would be no four truths, and if there were no four truths, there would be no perception of suffering, cutting-off of accumulation, realization of cessation or cultivation of the Way, and without perception of suffering, cutting-off of accumulation, realization of cessation and cultivation of the Way there would not be the four sramana-fruits.

(32c1) Without the four sramana-fruits there could not be the four types of aspirants and the four types of attainers, and if these eight categories of holy people did not exist there would be no jewel of the Sangha. Also, if the four holy truths did not exist there would be no jewel of the Dharma, and if the jewels of the Dharma and the jewel of the Sangha did not exist, how could there possibly be a Buddha? 'Buddha' means to have obtained the Dharma, so if there is no Dharma, how can there be a Buddha? Your (Nagarjuna's) teaching that all dharmas are entirely empty, consequently destroys the three jewels. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

5ab *If neither the community of monks exists nor the Buddhist Truth, how can there be an enlightened one?*

As, in this way, there is no clear knowledge of afflicted existence, no overcoming of it, and so, these being nonexistent, the four categories: stream-winner, once-returner, non-returner and *arhant* are unintelligible. Why? It is the removal of the afflictions which are considered to be the index of these categories.

The four categories with their correlated attainments and fruits are defined precisely in terms of the progressive elimination of afflictive attachments (*klesa*) in all three worlds - the world of desire, the world of form and the world of the formless. There are exactly fifteen moments of realization on the way. But the pre-requisite for this process is the possibility of the four achievements — clear knowledge that existence is afflicted, overcoming the origin of afflicted existence, inner realization of the way to overcome it and the final realization. Without these there can be no wise one secure in any of the four attainments or on the way to them.

If neither the four Buddhist truths hold nor the four achievements - clear knowledge and so on - then, because the attainments in which, by inner acceptance and direct vision, these truths are to be grasped, do not obtain, the persons who would be progressing through these stages and realizing them, do not exist; so the Buddhist community of monks does not exist. The community of monks, which exists by virtue of penetration to the truth, and by virtue of the immediate experience of the ultimate truth due to not being sundered from the illustrious Buddha even by all the demons, and by virtue of its enjoying utterly clarified knowledge, would not exist if the eight spiritual categories of person did not exist.

If the four Buddhist truths are nothing, there can be no Buddhist Truth (*saddharma*) either. What is true for the truly wise Buddhists constitutes the Buddhist Truth.

The truth of the cessation of affliction is the doctrine of the attainments, whereas the truth of the path to end affliction is the doctrine of the conduct leading to the attainments; this is the doctrine of final attainment; the explanation which clarifies it perfectly is the doctrine of the scriptures. If the four Buddhist truths are nothing, all this is nothing. 'If the Buddhist truths are nothing, all this is nothing.' 'If the Buddhist truths are nothing there will be no Buddhist Truth; if the Truth and the community of monks do not exist how can there be an enlightened one?'

If the doctrine as expounded here (fn 5 That is, the orthodox view opposed to Nagarjuna.) is true, then it is reasonable that there could be one who was utterly enlightened concerning every mode of every aspect of things because he had realized both the basic truth and its applications. And if the community of monks is real then by its teachings there will be an accumulated store of knowledge, and by taking refuge in it and by reverence toward it and generosity there will be an

accumulated store of merit and so, step by step, one can become enlightened.

Further, if there were no community of monks there would be no candidate for the attainments of stream-winner, once- returner, and so on. And if no one progresses through the various attainments no one can achieve enlightenment. For a revered one must necessarily have achieved the prior stage. Having attained the prior stage, which is by definition to be within the community, a revered one comes to be. If there is no community it follows that there will be no revered Buddha. Again, even a revered one belongs to the community, because he is no longer a learner. And there are those who explain that a revered one belongs to the community because of the saying ‘the community of monks with a Buddha at its head’. In the opinion of these it is clarity itself to say, if the Buddhist Truth and the community do not exist, how can there be an enlightened one?’

The Madhyadesikas, because of the system of stages (fn 6 The ten stages of the *bodhisattva,* who becomes the ideal realized saint of Mahayana Buddhism; he is analogous to the earlier ideal of the *arhant.*) given in the Mahavastu, maintain that a bodhisattva, as one who is secure in the first stage, having achieved the way of insight, is held to be included in the community of monks. But if the community does not exist there is no bodhisattva either. How then will there be an enlightened one? This is clarity itself. So,

5cd *By declaring that all things lack self-existence you reject the three jewels.*

That is, by arguing for the absence of being in things you are rejecting Buddha, the Buddhist Truth and the community, which are called the three jewels, because they are difficult to attain, arise only seldom, are not fully realized by those of lesser worth and because they are of great value. Further,

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. The whole point of the Dharma and the Sangha is to make it possible to attain buddhahood. The Dharma provides the philosophical insight and knowledge necessary for enlightenment; and the Sangha provides the teachers, the encouragement, the models, the opportunity for practice, and other support necessary for the strenuous and perseverant practice of the path. The attainment of buddhahood requires reliance on these two. So, if they are rejected, so is the possibility of buddhahood. So, the opponent charges, Nāgārjuna’s doctrine of emptiness, in virtue of undermining the Four Noble Truths, denies the existence of the three refuges and makes Buddhism itself impossible.

Kārikā XXIV.6

शून्यतां फलसद्भावमधर्मं धर्ममेव च।
सर्वसंव्यवहारांश्च लौकिकान् प्रतिबाधसे॥६॥

空法壞因果 亦壞於罪福
亦復悉毀壞 一切世俗法

|བྱེད་ཅིང་འབྲས་བུ་ཡོད་པ་དང་||ཆོས་མ་ཡིན་དང་ཆོས་ཡིན་དང་|
|འཇིག་རྟེན་པ་ཡི་ཐ་སྙད་ནི||ཀུན་ལའང་གནོད་པ་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན||

śūnyatāṃ phalasadbhāvam adharmaṃ dharmam eva ca |
sarvasaṃvyavahārāṃś ca laukikān pratibādhase ||6||

kōng fǎ huài yīn guǒ yì huài yū;yú;wū zuì fú
yì fù xī huǐ huài yī qiè shì sú fǎ

| byed ciṅ ’bras bu yod pa daṅ | | chos ma yin pa (7)chos ñid daṅ |
| ’jig rten pa yi tha sñad ni | | kun la’aṅ gnod pa byed pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - Delving in Sunyata, you will destroy the reality of the fruit or attainment, the proper and improper acts, and all the everyday practices relative to the empirical world.

JONES (Skt):
[6] Speaking in this way about “emptiness.” you reject the true existence of the fruits, of true and untrue doctrines, and of all worldly convent ions.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When the doctrine and the congregation are non-existent, how can there be an enlightened one? Speaking in this manner about emptiness, you contradict the three jewels, as well as the reality of the fruits, both good and bad, and all such worldly conventions.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Openness, good or bad results, the Teaching, and
all worldly everyday activities are denied by you.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. The balanced states of the autonomic nervous system are the results in the real world,
And both the Subjective Universe and the real Universe are the results in the real world.
All jobs are secular jobs,
And all occurrences in our daily lives are attacked and evaded by Non-Buddhists.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 Through the lack of self-existence in things you reject the reality of the attainments, the distinction between truth and untruth, and even transactions in the everyday world.

STRENG (Skt):
6. You deny the real existence of a product, of right and wrong, And all the practical behavior of the world as being empty.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v6 The doctrine of emptiness destroys cause and effect,
It also destroys sin and merit.
And further, you utterly destroy
All ordinary worldly dharma (affairs).

BATCHELOR (Tb):
“The existence of actions and fruits, what is not Dharma and what is Dharma, the conventions of the world: all these too are maligned.”

DOCTOR (Tb):
Likewise, the existence of results,
Non-Dharma and Dharma,
And all the conventions of the world
Would likewise be invalidated thereby. [XXIV.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. Hence you assert that there are no real fruits
And no Dharma. The Dharma itself
And the conventional truth
Will be contradicted.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. Hence you also undermine the existence of the fruits;
As well as the profane:
The Dharma itself;
And all mundane conventions.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
(included above)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/6 If you accept the doctrine of emptiness, then you deny sin and merit, and the retributions and rewards of sin and merit. You also negate all conventional worldly dharmas. Since all these kinds of errors ensue, dharmas cannot be empty.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The words 'arguing for' should be understood before 'lack of self-existence'. If all things are devoid of self-existent natures (*sunya*), if, that is, literally everything does not exist (*nasti*) (fn 7 The equation of *sunya* and non-existence is the cardinal error of the opponent.), then right and wrong action, together with the resulting fruits, desired or undesired, will not be possible as they are included in 'all things'. All those everyday action expressions such as 'do it', 'cook', 'eat', 'stay', 'go', 'come', are included in 'all things', and, as all the putative elements of existence are devoid of self-existent natures, they do not make any sense at all. It follows that the argument for the absence of being in things, as given, cannot stand (fn 8 Failing to make sense out of the everyday must be the most serious charge against any philosophy.).

The Madhyamika rejoinder

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

At this point the metaphysician brings up the notion of "emptiness" (sunyata). For him, emptiness is a problem, not became of any other reason, but because it implies "the empty" (sunya), and this latter leaves no room for substantial existence (sad-bhava) of the fruits (artha) of both good and bad as well as all the worldly conventions.

Inada's translation of dharma and adharma as proper and improper acts is a corrective to his earlier rendering of these two terms as factor and non-factor at VIII. 5. However, his translation of samvyavahara as something additional to dharma and adharma can be questioned in the light of the use of vyavahara at XVII.24, where a similar, but not idential, set of categories (punya-papa, "merit and demerit") is referred to as vyavahara. Indeed, this particular use of the term vyavahara (= samvrti) will throw much light on an understanding of the distinction between the two truths discussed at XXIV.8.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. The implicit dilemma with which Nāgārjuna here confronts himself is elegant. For as we have seen, the distinction between the two truths or two vantage points - the ultimate and the conventional is fundamental to his own method. So when the opponent charges that the assertion of the nonexistence of such things as the Four Noble Truths and of the arising, abiding, and ceasing of entities is contradictory both to conventional wisdom and to the ultimate truth (viz., that all phenomena are dependent, impermanent, merely arising, abiding momentarily and ceasing, and only existing conventionally, empty of inherent existence), Nāgārjuna is forced to defend himself on both fronts and to comment on the connection between these standpoints. Nāgārjuna launches the reply by charging the opponent with foisting the opponent's own understanding of emptiness on Nāgārjuna. Though this is not made as explicit in the text as one might like, it is important to note that the understanding Nāgārjuna has in mind is one that, in the terms of Madhyamika, reifies emptiness itself. This will be made more explicit in XXIV: 16:

Kārikā XXIV.7

अत्र ब्रूमः शून्यतायां न त्वं वेत्सि प्रयोजनम्।
शून्यतां शून्यतार्थं च तत एवं विहन्यसे॥७॥

atra brūmaḥ śūnyatāyāṃ na tvaṃ vetsi prayojanam |
śūnyatāṃ śūnyatārthaṃ ca tata evaṃ vihanyase ||7||

汝今實不能 知空空因緣
及知於空義 是故自生惱

rǔ jīn shí bù néng zhī kōng kōng yīn yuán
jí zhī yū;yú;wū kōng yì shì gù zì shēng nǎo

།དེ་ལ་བཤད་པ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ནི།།སྟོང་ཉིད་དགོས་དང་སྟོང་ཉིད་དང་།
།སྟོང་ཉིད་དོན་ནི་མ་རྟོགས་པས།།དེ་ཕྱིར་དེ་ལྟར་གནོད་པ་ཡིན།།

| de la bśad pa khyod kyis ni | | stoṅ ñid dgos daṅ stoṅ ñid daṅ |
| stoṅ ñid don ni ma rtogs pas | | de phyir de ltar gnod pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - (Nagarjuna asserts) Let us interrupt here to point out that you do not know the real purpose of sunyata, its nature and meaning. Therefore, there is only frustration and hindrance (of understanding).

JONES (Skt):
[*Reply:* 7] We say here that you do not comprehend the purpose of emptiness. Therefore, emptiness and the significance of emptiness distress you.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
We say that you do not comprehend the purpose of emptiness. As such, you are tormented by emptiness and the meaning of emptiness.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
We reply that here you have not experienced the purpose in openness,
and thus the use of openness is severed from openness by you.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. In that situation, what are talked are relying upon the balanced autonomic nervous system,
But you do not know clearly the ultimate conclusion.
Even though it is true that the serene state of the balanced autonomic nervous system is just the aim of the balanced autonomic nervous system,
But actually you are totally making your efforts to break down everything without any exception.

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 In our turn we declare that you do not know the purpose of devoidness, nor devoidness itself, nor its meaning. And so you torment yourself in this way.

STRENG (Skt):
7. We reply that you do not comprehend the point of emptiness; You eliminate both "emptiness" itself and its purpose from it.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v7 You really cannot understand
Emptiness, or the reasons for emptiness,
Or understand the meaning of emptiness.
Therefore you create difficulties for yourself.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
An explanation for that: since you do not understand the need for emptiness, emptiness, and the point of emptiness, therefore in that way you malign.

DOCTOR (Tb):
To explain, you have not understood
The purpose of emptiness,
Emptiness itself or its meaning.
Therefore this is damaging to you. [XXIV.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. We say that this understanding of yours
Of emptiness and the purpose of emptiness
And of the significance of emptiness is incorrect.
As a consequence you are harmed by it.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. Here we say that you do not understand
Emptiness, or the purpose of emptiness,
Or the meaning of emptiness.
As a consequence you are harmed by it.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[Nagarjuna responds:] We say that you do not comprehend the purpose of Emptiness, and so you torment yourself in this way.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/7 You do not clearly understand what the characteristics of this 'emptiness' are, or for what reasons it is taught, and you do not understand the meaning of emptiness. Since you lack the capacity to know it for what it really is, you create these doubts and difficulties. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

You, solely by your own speculations, mistakenly foist onto us the view that the meaning of the absence of being (*sunya-tartha*) is unreality (*nastitva*), you calumniate us with such arguments as if all things are devoid of self-existence, there is no coming to be and no ceasing to be' (*kārikā* 1); you fall into great distress and torment yourself excessively. You torment yourself by diverse unfounded speculations, is what is meant.

However, the meaning of the absence of being which we carefully delineate in this treatise is not the meaning you adopt. Not understanding the meaning of absence of being, you do not understand this absence itself; nor do you understand its purpose (*prayojana*). Because you have not comprehended the true nature of things as they are in themselves (*yathavasthitavastusvarupa*) your account makes no sense at all and is unrelated to our own explanation.

Well, what is the purpose of the absence of being or self- existence, in things? It is given in the Chapter on 'Self and the Way Things Really Are'. 'From the wasting away of the afflictions and karmic action there is freedom; the afflictions and karmic action arise from hypostatizing thought and this from the manifold of named things. Named things come to an end in the absence of being.' (MMK XV.5)

This means that the absence of being is taught for the purpose of bringing the manifold of named things (*prapanca*), without exception, to perfect rest (*upasama*). That is, the purpose of the absence of self-existence in things is to bring the entire manifold of named things to perfect rest (fn 9 The philosophy of the *Prasannapada* turns on this thought.). You, however, in erroneously speculating that the meaning of absence is unreality, actually strengthen entanglement in the world of named things; you do not understand the purpose of the absence of being.

And now, what is the absence of being itself? This too was expounded in the Chapter on 'Self and the Way Things Really Are'. 'Not dependent on anything other than itself, at peace, not manifested as named things, beyond thought construction, not of varying form thus is the way things are really spoken of.' (MMK XVIII.9) How can absence of being, whose very nature is the repose of named things, be unreal? You do not understand the absence of being itself either. We expound later in this very Chapter from what base of meaning the expression 'absence of being' derives its validity. 'It is the dependent arising of things which we interpret as the absence of being in them. Absence of being is a non-cognitive, guiding notion presupposing the everyday. It is the middle way itself.'(MMK XXIV.18)

As is said in the verse by the illustrious one, 'Whatever is born of conditions, that is not born; it does not come to be in self-existence. Whatever is dependent on conditions is said to be devoid of a self-existent nature. Whoever understands the absence of self-existence is wise.'

Thus the meaning of the term 'dependent arising' is the same as the meaning of the term 'absence of being'. But the meaning of the term 'non-existence' is not the meaning of the term 'absence of being'. By foisting on us the view that the meaning of the term 'absence of being' is the meaning of the term 'non-existence', you calumniate us. It is clear that you do not understand the meaning of the absence of being either. Not understanding and calumniating us in this way, you necessarily torment yourself.

The two truths

And who is it who calumniates us in this way? Whoever does not understand the incontrovertible distinction between the two truths (*satyadvaya*) as taught in the sayings of the illustrious one, but who is given to reading the traditional texts literally. That is why Nagarjuna, out of compassion for his adversary and with a view to refuting the false exposition of the doctrine, said, in clarification of the incontrovertible two truths as taught in the sayings of the illustrious one,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Looking at the nature of the objections raised by the Buddhist metaphysicians against the notion of "emptiness," Nagarjuna is insisting that they do not understand "the purpose of emptiness," (sunyatayam prayojanam). Does this mean that "emptiness" has a functional or pragmatic value, rather than being an absolute concept? Does it need to be substantiated by "the empty," rather than merely substantiating "the empty." Which is more important, "the empty" or "emptiness," or are they of equal importance? If "the empty" is considered to be important, ''emptiness" would be a mere idea with no grounding in experience. If the "emptiness" is looked upon as being important, the empty would turn out to be a fabrication. If both are considered to be equally important, there could be circularity in reasoning based upon them. However, if the empty is considered to be the basis of experience, and emptiness is derived from that experience, this latter could be provisional and remain to be corrected in terms of future experience. In such a case, the circularity involved in arguing about them could be easily eliminated. In the next three verses, Nagarjuna proceeds to provide very specific answers to most of these questions.

Kārikā XXIV.8

द्वे सत्ये समुपाश्रित्य बुद्धानां धर्मदेशना।
लोकसंवृतिसत्यं च सत्यं च परमार्थतः॥८॥

dve satye samupāśritya buddhānāṃ dharmadeśanā |
lokasaṃvṛtisatyaṃ ca satyaṃ ca paramārthataḥ ||8||

諸佛依二諦 為眾生說法
一以世俗諦 二第一義諦

zhū fú;fó yī èr dì wéi zhòng shēng shuì fǎ
yī yǐ shì sú dì èr dì yī yì dì

།སངས་རྒྱས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཆོས་བསྟན་པ།།བདེན་པ་གཉིས་ལ་ཡང་དག་བརྟེན།
།འཇིག་རྟེན་ཀུན་རྫོབ་བདེན་པ་དང་།།དམ་པའི་དོན་གྱི་བདེན་པའོ།།

| saṅs rgyas rnams kyis chos bstan pa | | (15a1)bden pa gñis la yaṅ dag brten |
| ’jig rten kun rdzob bden pa daṅ | | dam pa’i don gyi bden pa’o |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - The teaching of the Dharma by the various Buddhas is based on the two truths; namely, the relative (worldly) truth and the absolute (supreme) truth.

JONES (Skt):
[8] The buddhas’ teaching of the doctrine rests upon two categories of truths: *truth based on worldly conventions, and truth from the highest point of view.*

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The teaching of the doctrine by the Buddhas is based upon two truths: truth relating to worldly convention and truth in terms of ultimate fruit.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The instruction of the teachings of the *buddhas* are based on two truths:
the truth of common sense conventions about the world and truth in the higher sense of the word.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. In the two kinds of Truths, there is one, which is enjoyed as similar to running.
Which are belonging to Buddha, and the teachings in the Rule of the Universe.
The true guidance in the Universe, that is the Truth,
And it is just the Truth without exception, at the same time it is just the Highest Truth.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 The teaching of the Buddhas is wholly based on there being two truths: that of a personal everyday world and a higher truth which surpasses it.

STRENG (Skt):
8. The teaching by the Buddhas of the dharma has recourse to two truths: The world-ensconced truth and the truth which is the highest sense.

ROBINSON (Skt):
The Buddhas’ Dharma-explanation relies on two truths: the worldly, conventional truth, and the absolute truth.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v8 All Buddhas rely on two types of truth
In order to teach the Dharma of living beings.
One is conventional worldly truth,
The other is the truth of the ultimate meaning.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The Dharma taught by Buddhas perfectly relies on two truths: the ambiguous truths of the world and the truths of the sublime meaning.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The Dharma taught by the Buddhas
Is genuinely based on the two truths:
The relative truth of the world
And the truth of the ultimate meaning. [XXIV.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. The Buddha's teaching of the Dharma
Is based on two truths:
A truth of worldly convention
And an ultimate truth.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. The Buddha’s teaching of the Dharma
Is based on two truths:
A truth of worldly convention,
And an ultimate truth.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[axiomatic] The teaching of the Buddhas is based on two truths: the truth of worldly convention and ultimate Truth.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

That is, the teaching of the illustrious Buddha in this world is effective and valid only as based on the twofoldness of truth. Which twofoldness? The truth of a personal everyday world (*lokasarhvrtisatya*) and a higher truth which surpasses it (*paramarthasatya*).

There is the saying, 'A permanent self among the factors of personal existence is known as a "world" (*loka*) because world is founded on such a belief.' The ordinary person is called a 'world' in so far as he is understood to be based on the five factors of personal existence.

'The everyday' (*samvrti*) means being utterly obscured. Again, ignorance arising from the utter obscuring of the true nature of things is called the everyday. Again, to be reciprocally dependent in existence, that is, for things to be based on each other in utter reciprocity, is to be everyday. Again, the everyday means social convention, that is, the world of ordinary language and of transactions between individuals which is characterized by the distinction between knowing and the thing known, naming and the thing named, and so on.

It is everyday convention and obscurement for a person which is the personal everyday (*lokasamvrti*). What would a non-worldly or non-personal everyday be from which we distinguish the personal or worldly everyday? This question is superfluous at this juncture and a reply would be a repetition of what has already been settled. Those who persistently perceive things mistakenly because of impaired senses, defective vision or jaundice for example, are without a world (*aloka*), or are non-persons. What they take to hold for the world holds for a non-world. The truth of the everyday world is distinguished from this. The Madhyamakavatara deals with this in some detail and it can be studied there. What is true in and for a personal everyday world is personal everyday truth (*loka-samvrtisatya*). The exhaustive totality of words and transactions which are based on the distinction between knowing and the thing known, naming and the thing named and so on, is what is meant by the truth of the everyday personal world. Such a world could not exist in a higher or surpassing sense (*paramarthatah*). Because 'When the object of thought is no more, there is nothing for language to refer to. The true nature of things neither arises nor perishes, as *nirvāṇa* does not.'(MMK XVIII.7) This being so how could verbal utterances (*vac*) or acts of knowledge (*jnana*) be effective and valid (*pravrtti*) in the higher or surpassing sense? Because what is higher or surpassing is not dependent on anything other than itself, it is at peace, it is known in and through itself by the wise; it is beyond the world of named things as such; it cannot be demonstrated nor even cognized. As was said earlier, 'Not dependent on anything other than itself, at peace, not manifested as named things, beyond thought construction, not of varying form thus is the way things really are spoken of.' (MMK XVIII.9)

What both makes sense (*artha*) and is surpassing (*parama*) is the higher or surpassing sense. That alone, taken as the truth, is truth in the higher or surpassing sense (*paramarthasatya*).

The due distinction between these two truths can be understood in detail from the Madhyamakavatara. The teaching of the Truth by the illustrious Buddhas is effective and valid in so far as it is based on this twofoldness of truth. The structure of the teaching being determined in this way, it follows:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This has turned out to be one of two most discussed verses in Nagarjuna's Karika. Modern disquisitions on the conception of two truths could perhaps fill several substantial volumes. Instead of plodding over trodden ground, the present discussion will be confined to a comparison of the conception of two truths in early Buddhism and the metaphysical version presented by the interpreters of the Abhidharma, with a view to clarifying Nagarjuna's position. Nagarjuna's version will be examined in the light of the problems posed at the beginning of the present chapter, as well as his reference to worldly conventions in the previous chapters. In the Sutta-nipata, the Buddha condemned any attempt to uphold a view (ditthi) as the ultimate (paramam)(Sn 796ff.). Refusing to recognize any knowledge of "things as they really are," and making a more sober claim to knowledge of "things as they have come to be" (yathabhuta), the Buddha was reluctant to accept any notion of paramattha as "ultimate reality." Instead, he claimed to know "the dependently arisen" (paticcasamuppanna) and, on that basis, formulated the conception of "dependent arising" (paticcasmppada). In such a context, it was more meaningful for him to speak of attha (Sk. artha) and paramattha (Sk. paramartha) in the sense of fruit, consequence, or result (= phala, as in

samannaphala, "the fruit of recluseship"). Thus, a good action is one that is fruitful (atthasamhita) and a bad, unfruitful (an-atthasamhita).

The Buddha also recognized that views about good and bad, purity and impurity, are in most cases relative conventions (Sn 878-894). According to the same text, good (kusala) and bad (akusala) are conventions that vary depending upon contexts (sammutiyo puthujja, Sn 897). These are the ways of the world (loka), often characterized as sammuti, vohara (D 3.232) or paññatti (S 4.39-40). However, there is no indication that, since these are relative conventions, the Buddha advocated the transcendence of both good and bad. Having defined the good as the fruitful, the Buddha characterized the ultimate good as the ultimately fruitful. The term paramattha was thus used to refer to the "ultimate fruit" rather than "ultimate reality." Sammuti and paramattha are therefore not two contrasting truths. The former is a mixed bag, while the latter represents the ultimate ideal. As a result of attaining nibbana, which is the complete eradication of lust (raga), hatred (dosa), and confusion (moha), the Buddha found himself enjoying an ultimate fruit, without hurting himself or others (na attantapo na parantapo, D 3.232). Paramattha thus becomes the moral ideal as reflected in the Buddha's own attainment of freedom and happiness.

The theory of dependent arising (praticcasamuppada) explaining the phenomena that are dependently arisen (paticcasamuppanna) thus accommodates the four truths as well as the two truths. All truths being pragmatic, there is here no place for an "absolute or ultimate reality." The Buddha's epistemological standpoint does not allow for such speculations.

This, however, was not the case with the metaphysicians. It is significant to note that when the Buddhist metaphysicians were faced with the problem of reconciling the four troths with their conception of substance (svabhava), they were compelled to fall back on the conception of two truths (Akb). However, their interpretation of the two truths is totally different from the Buddha's and, in fact, seems to be contrary to it. Here again, Vasubandhu is our source.

As a Sautrantika metaphysician, Vasubandhu refers to the two truths (satya) and surreptitiously moves on to a discussion of existents (sat): samvrti-sat and paramartha-sat (Akb). He then provides two examples to illustrate the nature of samvrti-sat. The first is a 'pot' (ghata). There cannot be knowledge of a pot when it is broken into pieces. The second is water (ambu). Water is not known independent of the knowledge of "form" (rupa). Contrasted with these two is knowledge of the paramartha-sat. 'Material form' (rupa) is an example of such existence. In this case, when an object is broken down into its ultimately irreducible elements, namely, atoms (paramanu), there is knowledge of the "unique nature" (svabhava = svalaksana?) of such atoms. For the metaphysi- cian, that unique nature, whether it is called svabhava or svalaksana, has always remained an epistemological enigma.

This interpretation of the two truths is totally absent either in the early discourses or in the canonical Abhidharma. In the so-called Theravada tradition, it appears for the first time in the non-canonical texts (Miln 160), contributing, as it did in the case of the Sarvastivada and Sautrantika schools, to insoluble problems such as the duality of mind and matter. Vasubandhu's statement of the two truthssamvrti and paramartha in the above context, where he was recording the interpretation of the Sautrantika view, remains in sharp contrast to the spirit of the Buddha's teaching on "non-substantialism." This should certainly provide an interesting background to the analysis of Nagarjuna's own version of the two truths.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. This is the first explicit announcement of the two truths in the text. It is important to note that they are introduced as two *truths*, and that they are introduced as distinct. This will be important to bear in mind later. For it is tempting, since one of the truths is characterized as an ultimate truth, to think of the conventional as "less true." (fn 108. See, for instance, the comments of Murti (1985) on this verse: The *paramārtha,* however, can be understood and realized only negatively, *only as we remove the saṃvṛti*, the forms which thought has already, unconsciously and beginninglessly, ascribed to the real. The real is to be *uncovered, discovered and realized* as the reality of appearances. In the order of our discovery, the removal of *Saṃvṛti* must precede our knowledge of the *paramārtha.* (p.xxvi [emphasis in the original]). As we shall see, this analysis of the distinction between the two truths as an appearance/reality distinction is explicitly rejected by Nāgārjuna in XXIV: 18, 19. I agree with Kalupahana (1986), who notes that *"artha* as well as *paramartha* are truths *(satya).* The former is not presented as an un-truth *(a-satya)* in relation to the latter, as it would be in an absolutistic tradition. Neither is· the former sublated by the latter." But Kalupahana goes a bit too far when he continues, "There is no indication whatsoever that these are two truths with different standing as higher and lower" (p. 69). For there is clearly an important sense in which, despite their ontic unity, the ultimate truth is epistemologically and soteriologically more significant than the conventional. Kalupahana also errs in my view when he characterizes the two truths as "two fruits" and, hence, as different but complementary moral ideals (p. 332). In his zeal to see Nāgārjuna as a non-Mahayana philosopher and as a Jamesian pragmatist, I fear that he distorts the central epistemological and metaphysical themes of the text.) Moreover, we will see later that while the truths are introduced as quite distinct here, they are in another sense identified later. It will be important to be very clear about the respective senses in

which they are distinct and one. The term translated here as "truth of worldly convention" (Tib: *kun-rdzob bden-pa,* Skt: *samvrti-satya)* denotes a truth dependent upon tacit agreement, an everyday truth, a truth about things as they appear to accurate ordinary investigation, as judged by appropriate human standards. (fn 109. It should be noted that both Sanskrit and Tibetan offer two terms, each of which in turn is often translated "conventional truth." Sanskrit presents *"Samvrtisatya"* and *"vyavahtira-satya.* " The former is delightfully ambiguous. *"Saṃvṛti"* can mean *conventional* in all of its normal senses - everyday, by agreement, ordinary, etc. But it can also mean *concealing,* or *occluding.* This ambiguity is exploited by Madhyamika philosophers, who emphasize that the conventional, in occluding its conventional character, covers up its own emptiness. Candrakīrti's commentary to this verse distinguishes three readings, reflecting three distinct etymologies: *"Saṃvṛti"* can mean concealing; it can mean mutually dependent; it can mean transactional, or dependent on linguistic convention. The latter is captured exactly by the second term *"vyavahtira,"* which simply means transactional - determined by convention. Tibetan presents not only *"kun-rdzob bden-pa,* " which literally means costumed, or disguised, picking up on one of the meanings of *"saṃvṛti,"* but *"tha-snyed bden-pa,"* which means nominal, or by agreement, picking up the other meaning. Because these two Tibetan terms are, according to most Tibetan interpretations of Madhyamika, identical in extension, they are often treated as synonymous. This is a bit unfortunate for when we come to the parallel pair of terms for conventional existents, *"kun-rdzob yod-pa"* and *"thasnyed yod-pa,"* this coextension breaks down in an important case: emptiness is a nominal *(tha snyed)* existent, but not a concealing *(kun-rdzob)* existent. See Nagao (1989), pp. 40-59, and (1991), pp. 13-16, for additional discussion of the Sanskrit etymologies and of the sense in which the conventional truth is a truth. Kalupahana (1986), however, argues (p. 88) that whenever Nāgārjuna uses the terms *"saṃvṛti"* or *"vyavahāra,* " he "was referring to moral conventions of good or bad." He argues that the relation between the two truths is a relation between an ideal life and conventional morality. This claim about usage, however, seems just plain erroneous.)

The term "ultimate truth" (Tib: *dam-pa'i don gyi bden-pa*, Skt *paramārtha-satya)* denotes the way things are independent of convention, or to put it another way, the way things turn out to be when we subject them to analysis with the intention of discovering the nature they have from their own side, as opposed to the characteristics we impute to them.

Kārikā XXIV.9

येऽनयोर्न विजानन्ति विभागं सत्ययोर्द्वयोः।
ते तत्त्वं न विजानन्ति गम्भीरं बुद्धशासने॥९॥

ye ’nayor na vijānanti vibhāgaṃ satyayor dvayoḥ |
te tattvaṃ na vijānanti gambhīraṃ buddhaśāsane ||9||

若人不能知 分別於二諦
則於深佛法 不知真實義

ruò rén bù néng zhī fēn bié yū;yú;wū èr dì
zé yū;yú;wū shēn fó fǎ bù zhī zhēn shí yì

།གང་དག་བདེན་པ་དེ་གཉིས་ཀྱི།།རྣམ་དབྱེ་རྣམ་པར་མི་ཤེས་པ།
།དེ་དག་སངས་རྒྱས་བསྟན་པ་ནི།།ཟབ་མོའི་དེ་ཉིད་རྣམ་མི་ཤེས།།

| gaṅ dag bden pa de gñis kyi | | rnam dbye rnam par mi śes pa |
| de dag saṅs rgyas bstan pa ni | | zab mo’i de ñid rnam mi śes |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - Those who do not know the distinction between the two truths cannot understand the profound nature of the Buddha's teaching.

JONES (Skt):
[9] Those who do not discern the distinction of these two categories of truths do not discern the profound truth in the teachings of the buddhas.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Those who do not understand the distinction between these two truths do not understand the profound truth embodied in the Buddha’s message.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Those who do not understand the distinction between the two truths
do not understand the profound reality in the teaching of the Buddha.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. Those do not belong to the two of the expiration or inhalation,
But the divisions are separated following the Truth and the division,
Those situations of Real Facts are never separated into the two.
However, Gautama Buddha has admonished us to have the hope of an endlessly deep navel, voice, or personality.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 Those who do not clearly know the due distinction between the two truths cannot clearly know the hidden depths of the Buddha’s teaching.

STRENG (Skt):
9. Those who do not know the distribution (vibhagam) of the two kinds of truth Do not know the profound "point" (tattva) in the teaching of the Buddha.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Those who do not know the distinction between these two truths do not know the deep reality in the Buddha’s teaching.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v9 If a person is unable to perceive
The distinction between these two truths
Then he will not know the real meaning
Of the profound Buddha-Dharma.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Those who do not understand the division into two truths, cannot understand the profound reality of the Buddha’s teaching.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Those who do not understand
The distinction between these two truths,
Fail to comprehend the profound reality
Of the Buddha’s teaching. [XXIV.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. Those who do not understand
The distinction drawn between these two truths
Do not understand
The Buddha's profound truth.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. Those who do not understand
The distinction between these two truths
Do not understand
The Buddha’s profound teaching.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[axiomatic] Those who do not understand the distinction between these two truths do not understand the profound Truth in Buddha’s message.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/9 As for 'conventional worldly truth': all dharmas are empty in their nature, but because of our worldly perverted perceptions we produce false and illusory dharmas, and this is worldly reality. Since the saints and sages know the true nature of these perverted perceptions, they know that all dharmas are utterly empty and that there is no arising, and this is the truth of the ultimate meaning which constitutes reality for the saints.

(32c23) All the Buddhas rely on these two truths in order to teach the dharma to living beings. A person who is unable to distinguish properly between these. two truths does not know the real meaning of the extremely profound Buddha-Dharma. To say that 'dharmas are non-arising' is the truth of the ultimate meaning and that the other conventional truth is not necessary, is not correct, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Some may object: Let it be that the surpassing sense is inherently not of the nature of named things. What then is the purpose of the inferior teaching which has to do with the factors of personal existence, the elements, the senses and sense fields, the Buddhist truths, dependent arising and so on, and which has nothing to do with a higher sense? Surely what is untrue should be rejected; and why should that which is to be rejected, be taught?

We reply. That is indeed true. However, unless the everyday world of verbalized transactions (*laukika vyavahara*) — that is, the realm of naming and the thing named, knowing and the thing known, and so on — has been accepted as a base (*abhyu-pagamya*) it is impossible to point out, or to teach (*desayitum*) the surpassing sense. And if it is not pointed out, it cannot be comprehended; if the surpassing sense is not realized *nirvāṇa* cannot be attained. Nagarjuna expounds it this way:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna is, of course, criticizing his opponents for not understanding the Buddha's message. If so, Nagarjuna's own explanation of these two truths should not come anywhere close to the one discussed by Vasubandhu, according to which the samvrti represents a mere designation, not an ultimate reality or paramartha. It is an ontological speculation which is not supported by the Buddha's own conception of dependent arising.

Kārikā XXIV.10

व्यवहारमनाश्रित्य परमार्थो न देश्यते।
परमार्थमनागम्य निर्वाणं नाधिगम्यते॥१०॥

vyavahāram anāśritya paramārtho na deśyate |
paramārtham anāgamya nirvāṇaṃ nādhigamyate ||10||

若不依俗諦 不得第一義
不得第一義 則不得涅槃

ruò bù yī sú dì bù dé dì yī yì
bù dé dì yī yì zé bù dé niè pán

།ཐ་སྙད་ལ་ནི་མ་བརྟེན་པར། །དམ་པའི་དོན་ནི་བསྟན་མི་ནུས།
།དམ་པའི་དོན་ནི་མ་རྟོགས་པར། །མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་ཐོབ་མི་འགྱུར། །

| (2)tha sñad la ni ma brten par | | dam pa'i don ni bstan mi nus |
| dam pa'i don ni ma rtogs par | | mya ṅan 'das pa thob mi 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - Without relying on everyday common practices (i.e., relative truths), the absolute truth cannot be expressed. Without approaching the absolute truth, nirvana cannot be attained.

JONES (Skt):
[10] Without relying upon worldly convention, the truth from the highest point of view cannot be taught. And without reaching the truth from the highest point of view, nirvana cannot be achieved.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Without relying upon convention, the ultimate fruit is not taught. Without understanding the ultimate fruit, freedom is not attained.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Higher truth is not taught independently of common practice.
Liberation is not accomplished by the unattainable higher truth.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. What to do something usually have some kind of unreliable characters.
It is rather difficult for us to indicate the perfect Truth.
It is impossible for us to arrive at the highest Truth to arrive at it.
The perfectly arrive at the state of balanced autonomic nervous system is rather actually impossible for us.

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 Unless the transactional realm is accepted as a base, the surpassing sense cannot be pointed out; if the surpassing sense is not comprehended *nirvāṇa* cannot be attained.

STRENG (Skt):
10. The highest sense of the truth is not taught apart from practical behavior, And without having understood the highest sense one cannot understand nirvana.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Without reliance on the expressional [truth], the absolute Is not taught; without arriving at the absolute, nirvana is not reached.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v10 Unless you rely on the conventional truth
You will not attain the ultimate meaning.
Unless you attain the ultimate meaning
You will not attain nirvana.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Without relying on conventions, the sublime meaning cannot be taught. Without understanding the sublime meaning, one will not attain nirvana.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Without relying on convention,
The ultimate cannot be shown.
Without realizing the ultimate,
Suffering cannot be transcended. [XXIV.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. Without a foundation in the conventional truth,
The significance of the ultimate cannot be taught.
Without understanding the significance of the ultimate,
Liberation is not achieved.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. Without depending on the conventional truth,
The meaning of the ultimate cannot be taught.
Without understanding the meaning of the ultimate,
Nirvana is not achieved.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[axiomatic] Without relying upon convention, the ultimate fruit is not taught. Without understanding the ultimate fruit, freedom is not attained.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/10 The ultimate meaning is entirely dependent on words and expressions, and words and expressions are mundane and conventional. Therefore, without reliance on the conventional and the mundane, the ultimate meaning cannot be expounded. Unless one attains to the ultimate meaning, how can one attain nirvana? Therefore, although dharmas are non-arising, there are these two (levels of) truth.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

This is why the everyday world (*samvrti*), as we have defined it, because it is the means to the attainment of *nirvāṇa*, must, at the outset, necessarily be accepted. It is like a container for someone who wants water. This being so, whoever gives an account of the absence of being in things, ignoring our definition of the twofoldness of truth as that of the personal everyday world and that of the higher sense, such a man,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Unless one is committed to upholding a theory of linguistic or conceptual transcendence of ultimate truth or reality, there seems to be no reason to restrict the use of the terms samvrti , vyavahara, or prajnapti to refer primarily to linguistic convention. These terms could and did stand for any kind of convention, whether it be linguistic, social, political, moral, or religious. As mentioned earlier (see comments on XXIV. 8), all such conventions are pragmatic and contextual. As such, truth relating to them would also be pragmatic and contextual.

The fact that in the two previous instances when Nagarjuna used the term vyavahara (XVII.24; XXIV.6), he used it in the context of a discussion of morality, is of utmost significance. It is in this same context that the Buddha used the term vohara (D 3.232 anariya-vohara = musavada, etc., and ariya-vohara = musavada veramani, etc.) as well as the term sammuti (= samvrti , Sn 897, 911). These, therefore, are the moral conventions of the world (loka, laukika, see XXIV.6) that are pragmatic, yet contextual. However, an ideal moral truth cannot be strictly confined to a particular context. It needs to be more universal and comprehensive. This, indeed, was the Kantian problem. If Nagarjuna was following the Buddha's solution to this problem (see comments on XXIV. 7), he could not have ignored the pragmatic component in the universal moral principle formulated by the Buddha. A moral law that is incapable of accommodating any exceptions can be utterly useless and even harmful. As William James once remarked, "There is always a pinch between the ideal and the actual which can only be got through by leaving part of the ideal behind" ("Moral Philosophies and Moral Philosophers," in Essays in Pragmatism, ed. Albury Castell, New York: Hafner, 1948, p. 78). This is because the ideal is an abstraction out of the concrete and, therefore, needs to be modified in the light of new concrete situations.

Nagarjuna's statement "Without relying upon the conventional, the ultimate fruit is not expressed" (vyavaharam anasritya paramartho na desyate), explains only a one-way relation, not a one-one relationship. He is not saying: "Without relying upon the ultimate fruit, the conventional is not expressed." Thus, he was rejecting a deontological moral principle that provides an absolute source of all moral ideas with no concessions made for individual or concrete situations.

The second line emphasizes the need to have some understanding of that moral principle before one could think of attaining freedom (nirvana). However, it is possible to argue that this moral principle issued out of the Buddha's attainment of nirvana, and that without attaining nirvana one will not be in a position to understand what that principle means. Neither the Buddha nor Nagarjuna would advocate such a position. If one were to fast attain freedom and then look for a moral principle to account for it, one could sometimes end up in wayward fancies, utopias, and hallucinations. For this reason, an understanding of samvrti ("worldly fruit, laukika artha) and, depending upon that, gaining some knowledge of paramartha ("ultimate fruit," lokuttara artha) could serve as a guide for the attainment of freedom (nirvana). In the Therigatha we come across an instance where a disciple claimed that he perceived the faultless dhamma (addasam virajam dhammam) and the path to freedom, while she was still leading a household life (agarasmim vasanti 'ham). Subsequently, she left the household life and attained freedom from all defilements (Thig 97 ff.). It is true that the Buddha attained

enlightenment and freedom by sheer accident. This is why he was reluctant to recognize any teacher (see M 1.171). Yet, before preaching about it to to the world, he spent much time reflecting upon it, as a scientist continues to verify a discovery he has made before making it public. Nagarjuna probably assumed that people could have the benefit of the Buddha's experience and not waste time experimenting with practices that the Buddha himself found to be fruitless (an-artha).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. The goal of Madhyamika philosophy is liberation from suffering. But that liberation, on Nāgārjuna's view, can only be achieved by insight into the ultimate nature of things - their emptiness - and indeed into the ultimate nature of emptiness, which we shall see to be emptiness again. But this insight can only be gained through reasoning and hence through language and thought. And the truth that is to be grasped can only be indicated through language and thought, which are thoroughly conventional and which can only be interpreted literally at the conventional level. It is important to see here that Nāgārjuna is not disparaging the conventional by contrast to the ultimate, but is arguing that understanding the ultimate nature of things is completely dependent upon understanding conventional truth. This is true in several senses: First, as we shall see, understanding the ultimate nature of things just is understanding that their conventional nature *is merely conventional.* But second, and perhaps less obscurely, in order to explain emptiness - the ultimate nature of all phenomena - one must use words and concepts and explain such things as interdependence, impermanence, and so forth. And all of these are conventional phenomena. So both in the end, where the understanding of ultimate truth is in an important sense the understanding of the nature of the conventional, and on the path, where the cultivation of such understanding requires the use of conventions, conventional truth must be affirmed and understood. (fn 110. See Streng (1973), pp. 92-98, and Huntington (1989), pp. 48-50, for a similar analysis. (But Huntington places a bit too much emphasis on specifically social convention in his analysis of the conventional truth, neglecting the role of what the Madhyamikas call "primal ignorance;" or the "innate disposition to reify," embodied in our ordinary cognitive tendencies, which may. in fact, be ontogenetically more fundamental than the specifically social conventions to which they give rise and that then reinforce them. See esp. pp. 52-54.) This analysis contrasts sharply with Murti's (1973) assertion that "the Absolute [ultimate truth] is transcendent to thought ... phenomena in their essential form" (p. 9). This view of the ultimate truth as an absolute standing behind, or in opposition to, a relative truth of the conventional, as a Kantian noumenal world stands to a phenomenal world, is quite contrary to Nāgārjuna's doctrine of the emptiness of emptiness. See also Murti (1955) for an extended defense of this reading and Sprung (1973), esp. pp. 43-46, for another argument for a radical discontinuity between the two truths. Tola and Dragonetti (1981) agree with this view of Madhyamika as nihilistic with regard to the conventional truth: "As a consequence of their argumentation and analysis, the Madhyamikas deny the existence of the empirical reality, of all of its manifestations.... As a result ... there remains (we are obliged to say) 'something' completely different.... That 'something' is the true reality" (p. 276). Crittenden (1981) is in substantial agreement with this view. Curiously, even Nagao seems to succumb to this temptation to absolutize emptiness when he turns to his analysis of the ultimate truth, despite his emphasis on the identity of the two truths when he is elucidating the conventional. See Nagao (1989), pp. 71-72, 75-76.)

Kārikā XXIV.11

विनाशयति दुर्दृष्टा शून्यता मन्दमेधसम्।
सर्पो यथा दुर्गृहीतो विद्या वा दुष्प्रसाधिता॥११॥

vināśayati durdṛṣṭā śūnyatā mandamedhasam |
sarpo yathā durgṛhīto vidyā vā duṣprasādhitā ||11||

不能正觀空 鈍根則自害
如不善咒術 不善捉毒蛇

bù néng zhèng;zhēng guān kōng dùn gēn zé zì hài
rú bù shàn zhòu shù bù shàn zhuō dú shé

།སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ལ་བལྟ་ཉེས་ན། །ཤེས་རབ་ཆུང་རྣམས་ཕུང་བར་འགྱུར།
།ཇི་ལྟར་སྦྲུལ་ལ་བཟུང་ཉེས་དང་། །རིགས་སྔགས་ཉེས་པར་བསྒྲུབ་པ་བཞིན།།

| stoṅ pa ñid la blta ñes na | | śes rab chuṅ rnams phuṅ bar 'gyur |
| ji ltar sprul la gzuṅ ñes daṅ | | rig (3)sṅags ñes par bsgrubs pa bźin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - A wrongly conceived sunyata can ruin a slow-witted person. It is like a badly seized snake or a wrongly executed incantation.

JONES (Skt):
[11] Seeing emptiness incorrectly destroys a person of little intelligence, just as does a snake incorrectly grasped or a spell incorrectly cast.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A wrongly perceived emptiness ruins a person of meager intelligence. It is like a snake that is wrongly grasped or knowledge that is wrongly cultivated.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Openness wrongly conceived destroys the dimly witted.
It is like a snake grasped by the head or a garbled incantation.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. When we have to receive a wrong judicial decision,
The state of being in the balanced autonomic nervous system, might be seen as if we had become perfectly stupid.
There, an animal, which is creeping on the ground like a snake, exists as a bad prize.
And sometimes the wickedness of the snake might be too much bad capture.

SPRUNG (Skt):
11 Being feeble-minded is destroyed by the misunderstood doctrine of the absence of being in things, as by a snake ineptly seized or some secret knowledge wrongly applied.

STRENG (Skt):
11. Emptiness, having been dimly perceived, utterly destroys the slow-witted. It is like a snake wrongly grasped or magical knowledge incorrectly applied.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Emptiness wrongly seen destroys the slow-witted, like a serpent wrongly grasped or magic wrongly performed.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v11 If he is unable to perceive emptiness correctly,
A dull-witted man will injure himself.
It is like a spell unskillfully-invoked
Or a poisonous snake unskillfully-grasped.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If their view of emptiness is wrong, those of little intelligence will be hurt. Like handling a snake in the wrong way, or casting a spell in the wrong way.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When viewing emptiness incorrectly,
Those with little insight will be ruined,
As when a snake is caught in the wrong way,
Or a knowledge mantra is used incorrectly. [XXIV.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. By a misperception of emptiness
A person of little intelligence is destroyed,
Like a snake incorrectly seized
Or like a spell incorrectly cast.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. By a misperception of emptiness
A person of little intelligence is destroyed:
Like a snake incorrectly seized,
Or like a spell incorrectly cast.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[axiomatic] A wrongly conceived emptiness destroys the dimwitted. It is like a snake wrongly grasped, or knowledge wrongly cultivated.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/11 If a man is dull-witted and does not clearly understand the doctrine of emptiness, there will be errors in (his understanding of) emptiness and he will produce wrong views. It is like cleverly catching hold of a poisonous snake: if you are unable to hold it skillfully it will turn on you, and you will be hurt. Or it is like a spell. If you want it to be performed but lack the capacity to accomplish it skillfully you will injure yourself instead. It is the same with a dull-witted man contemplating the doctrine of emptiness.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The wise one on the way (*yogi*), having awakened to the fact that the personal world of the everyday arises solely from ignorance and is devoid of self-existence, and who understands that devoidness of self-existence is the higher truth of the everyday, does not fall into the extremes of dualism. He does not recoil to the belief that things are unreal because he has found no self-existence in them, thinking 'what once was, now is not'. He does not reject (*na badhate*) the personal everyday world, which assumes the form of a reflection, outright, and so he does not reject outright actions and their moral consequences, the distinction between right and wrong, and so on. Nor, on the other hand, does he wrongly impute self-existence to everyday things in the higher sense; because he experiences such things as actions and their moral consequences as not self- existent; and because he does not experience them as self-existent.

However, one who, not seeing the due distinction between the two truths in this way, grasps at the lack of self-existence in all composite things and dwells on it, eager for liberation, either he imagines that all composite things do not truly exist or that the absence of self-existence in them itself exists like a thing (*kamcid bhavatah*), in which case he imagines a self- existent reality of the nature of devoidness. In either case the doctrine of devoidness, wrongly understood, would inevitably destroy such a one. Why? Because if he imagines that just because the entire realm of things is devoid of self-existence it does not exist in any sense, then a serious heresy has taken hold of him.

The dangers of misconceiving the absence of being

To quote: 'This teaching, wrongly grasped, destroys the unwise man; he drowns in the quagmire of the view that all things are unreal.' (*Ratnavali,* II, 19.) On the other hand, if one does not wish to deny the reality of all things one must reject the absence of being in things. How can things be devoid of self-existence when they are perceived by all the world of gods, demons and men? Therefore, having rejected the view that devoidness means only that everyday things are not self-existent, he will inevitably proceed to calamities as a result of inauspicious deeds tending to undermine the true doctrine.

It is said in the *Ratnavali*: 'A foolish and intellectually conceited person, because he misunderstands devoidness, destroys his own person by rejecting it and plunges headfirst into the hell of Avici.' (II.20)

Thus, devoidness destroys the one who takes it to mean the non-existence of things. However, if one wrongly conceives devoidness itself to be an ontic existent (*bhavena*) and imagines that the reality of everyday things is based on it, then the absence of being in things, being ill-suited to the way leading to *nirvāṇa*, becomes fruitless. This is why devoidness destroys the one taking it to be something of the nature of an ontic existent (*bhavarupena*).

You may object that something which is beneficial will be useless if ineptly applied; but how could it destroy? Seed, improperly sown, does not destroy the one seeding. Nagarjuna gives an example to clarify his point: 'like a snake ineptly seized or some secret knowledge wrongly applied'. A snake, aptly seized, brings a great treasure of riches from taking possession of the crest jewel because it conduces to the livelihood of the snake charmers. But the snake destroys one who seizes him not observing the prescribed rules. Secret knowledge, too, treated according to the rules, favours the magician but destroys him if it is put into practice in neglect of the rules. So in this matter. The absence of being as taught here is a great esoteric wisdom, and realized in practice and fully grasped, that is, without recourse to the ideas of existence and nonexistence, but as the middle way (*madhyama pratipad*), can lead to full enlightenment. It does this by extinguishing the sacrificial fire of existence consisting of birth, old age and death and in virtue of the bliss of bathing in the flowing ocean of *nirvāṇa* without conditions or residue. However, devoidness will, for the reason given,

inevitably destroy anyone who conceives of it contrary to the special interpretation given. That is why devoidness destroys anyone who wrongly grasps it and why those of feeble insight are incapable of grasping it at all.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Having explained the two truths, and establishing an important relationship between the conventional and the ideal, the particular and the universal, Nagarjuna returns to the conception of "emptiness" (sunyata) that gave rise to the metaphysicians' problems. The abstract conception of emptiness (sunyata, representing an abstract noun), derived from the experience of "the empty" (sunya), could be as destructive and fatal as a wrongly grasped snake. How the emphasis on the ideal and the universal to the utter neglect of the particular or the situational has wrought havoc can be known through a careful and unbiased study of human history.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. The Madhyamika doctrine of emptiness is subtle and is easily misinterpreted. In particular, it is often misinterpreted as a thoroughgoing nihilism about phenomena. This is so not only among classical Indian critics of Madhyamika, in both Buddhist and nonBuddhist philosophical schools, but also among Western critics, who have sometimes regarded it as completely negative. (fn 111. E.g., Stcherbatsky (1930), Robinson (1967), and Wood (1994).) In this respect, Madhyamika philosophy has suffered from the same fate as much Western skeptical philosophy, including that of the Pyrrhonians and of Hume and Wittgenstein, all of whom were at considerable pains to warn readers against interpreting them as denying the existence of ordinary entities, but all of whom have been repeatedly read as doing so. Nāgārjuna is here charging the opponent represented in the opening verses with interpreting. the assertion that a phenomenon is empty as the assertion that it is nonexistent. Nothing, Nāgārjuna will argue, could be further from the truth. (fn 112. Wood (1994) on p. 202 says that he is unable to find anything in MK 24 to support [the non-nihilistic] interpretation of MK 24.7-11. ... According to [the non-nihilistic interpretation], we would have to read MMK 24 as follows. According to Nāgārjuna, the doctrine that everything is void does not mean that everything is unreal or nonexistent; it only means that everything is empty in the sense that everything arises and perishes through a process of dependent co-origination *(pratītya-samutpāda);* and the critic must be taken as criticizing this position. Wood then argues correctly that no Buddhist opponent would criticize the doctrine of dependent co-origination. This is in fact the cornerstone of Wood's nihilistic reading of the text, as it must be. For this chapter clinches the non-nihilistic interpretation. So, a few things deserve note: While Wood cannot find anything in this chapter to support such a reading, commentators including both Buddhapalita and Bhavaviveka, as well as Candrakīrti and Tsong Khapa, not to mention a host of modern Western and Tibetan scholars, have found quite a bit there. Nāgārjuna's disciple Aryadeva also insists in *Catuhsataka* on a non-nihilistic reading of emptiness. In fact Wood does have the necessary gloss on the verses in question just right. But he misses the position attributed to the opponent entirely. The opponent need not be represented as denying that phenomena are codependently originated. Rather the opponent is failing to see that that dependent co-origination is emptiness. He hence sees the attribution of emptiness as the denial, rather than the assertion, of codependent origination. Hence the entire remainder of the chapter is devoted not to arguing for emptiness, nor to arguing for the reality of codependent origination, but rather to arguing for their identity. To miss this is to miss the entire point of the text.)

Kārikā XXIV.12

अतश्च प्रत्युदावृत्तं चित्तं देशयितुं मुनेः।
धर्मं मत्वास्य धर्मस्य मन्दैर्दुरवगाहताम्॥१२॥

ataś ca pratyudāvṛttaṃ cittaṃ deśayituṃ muneḥ |
dharmaṃ matvāsya dharmasya mandair duravagāhatām ||12||

世尊知是法 甚深微妙相
非鈍根所及 是故不欲說

shì zūn zhī shì fǎ shèn shēn wēi miào xiàng;xiāng
fēi dùn gēn suǒ jí shì gù bù yù shuì

།དེ་ཕྱིར་ཞན་པས་ཆོས་འདི་ཡི།།གཏིང་རྟོགས་དཀའ་བར་མཁྱེན་གྱུར་ནས།
།ཐུབ་པའི་ཐུགས་ནི་ཆོས་བསྟན་ལས།།རབ་ཏུ་ལོག་པར་གྱུར་པ་ཡིན།།

| de phyir źan pas chos 'di yi | | gtiṅ rtogs dka' bar mkhyen gyur nas |
| thub pa'i thugs ni chos bstan las | | rab tu log par gyur pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - Thus the wise one (i.e., the Buddha) once resolved not to teach about the Dharma, thinking that the slow-witted might wrongly conceive it.

JONES (Skt):
[12] Thus, when the Buddha considered how difficult it would be for those of little intelligence to comprehend the doctrine, his mind turned away from teaching.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Thus, the Sage's (the Buddha's) thought recoiled from teaching the doctrine having reflected upon the difficulty of understanding the doctrine by people of meager intelligence.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
And hence the Sage's thought was turned against causing the Truth to be taught.
The purpose of the Teaching is difficult to fathom for the lazy.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. Just because of such a clear reason, there is a case that a snake's knowledge is too much excellent as it is.
Therefore it is clear that the existence of such situations belongs to the Saint.
The Rule of the Universe belongs to ourselves, and to the Rule of the Universe.
And so something, which is a soft motion, and not so clear to be found, is difficult to be found, or recognized clearly.

SPRUNG (Skt):
12 For this reason the mind of the enlightened one was averse to teaching the Truth, realizing how difficult it would be for those of feeble insight to fathom it.

STRENG (Skt):
12. Therefore the mind of the ascetic Gautama was diverted from teaching the dharma, Having thought about the incomprehensibility of the dharma by the stupid.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v12 The World-Honored One knew that this Dharma,
Extremely profound and subtle in character.
Could not be approached by the dull-witted.
This is why he was unwilling to teach.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Therefore, knowing how difficult it is for the weak to understand the depths of this Dharma, the heart of the Muni strongly turned away from teaching the Dharma.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Hence, knowing that the depth of this Dharma
Would be hard for the feebleminded to understand,
The realized mind of the Able One
Turned entirely away from teaching the Dharma. [XXIV.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. For that reason - that the Dharma is
Deep and difficult to understand and to learn -
The Buddha's mind despaired of
Being able to teach it.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. Knowing that the Dharma is
Deep and difficult for simpletons to understand,
The Buddha's mind despaired of
Being able to teach it.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Thus the Buddha recoiled from teaching the Dharma when he considered the difficulty many people would have in attempting to understand it.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/12 Because the dharma was extremely profound and subtle and would not be clearly understood by the dull-witted, the Buddha was reluctant to teach.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

For this reason the Truth, understood as the absence of being in things, destroys the person of feeble insight and small mind because he grasps it falsely. So it is that, having realized how difficult it would be for those of feeble insight to fathom the Truth, the mind of the enlightened one, of the illustrious Buddha, after awakening to supreme and perfect enlightenment and after beholding the realm of all beings and the surpassing depth of the Truth, was averse to teaching the Truth, though gifted with special knowledge of the great means to do so.

As is said in the sutra, 'It occurred to the illustrious one in the very moment of his perfect enlightenment: I have attained the deep, hidden Truth, radiant even in its depth, unreasoned, beyond the reach of reason, subtle, to be known only by one wise and learned. If I were to reveal its radiance to others and they were not to understand it, that would be fruitless and the end of me; my thought would be still-born. As I achieved the joy of seeing the sweet Truth alone in a remote forest I should remain to savour it.' And so on.

The interpretation of the four truths

So, in this manner lacking insight into the incontrovertible nature of the two truths,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is a reference to the incident related in the "Discourse on the Noble Quest" (Ariyapariyesana-sutta, M 1.167-168) where the Buddha explains the nature of his enlightenment as well as the events immediately preceding and succeeding his attainment of enlightenment. Nagarjuna could not have been unaware of the nature of the Buddha's enlightenment as described in this discourse and also the reasons for the Buddha's reluctance to preach the doctrine. The Buddha's statement reads thus:

It occurred to me monks: "This dhamma won by me is deep, difficult to see, difficult to understand, tranquil, excellent, beyond a priori reasoning, subtle, intelligible to the learned. But these human beings are delighting in obsessions (alaya), delighted by obsessions, rejoicing in obsessions. So that for the human beings who are rejoicing in obsessions, delighted by obsessions and rejoicing in obsessions, this were a matter difficult to see, that is to say, dependent arising. This too were a matter difficult to see, that is to say, the appeasement of all dispositions, the renunciation of all attachment, the waning of craving, the absence of lust, cessation, freedom. But if I were to teach the dhamma and others were not to understand me, that would be a weariness to me, that would be a vexation to me.' (M 1.167)

This passage should dispel any doubts regarding the nature of the Buddha's reasons for his initial reluctance to preach. It was not because of any intellectual incapacity on the part of the human beings, but mostly because of the emotional difficulties they would have in breaking away from the accepted theories in which they have found safety and comfort, a sort of 'mooring' (alaya), especially in accepting a less absolutistic and fundamentally non-substantialist (anatta) philosophy and a way of life. As indicated above, the phrase used by the Buddha to refer to the attitude of the human beings is alaya-rata ("delighting in alaya," where alaya is derived from a + li implying some sort of mooring or obsession). Alaya represents an obsession for not only the pleasures of sense, but also ideas, dogmas, theories, etc.

Kārikā XXIV.13

शून्यतायामधिलयं यं पुनः कुरुते भवान्।
दोषप्रसङ्गो नास्माकं स शून्ये नोपपद्यते॥१३॥

śūnyatāyām adhilayaṃ yaṃ punaḥ kurute bhavān |
doṣaprasaṅgo nāsmākaṃ sa śūnye nopapadyate ||13||

汝謂我著空 而為我生過
汝今所說過 於空則無有

rǔ wèi wǒ zhù;zhuó;zhāo kōng ér wéi wǒ shēng guò
rǔ jīn suǒ shuì guò yū;yú;wū kōng zé wú yǒu

|སྐྱོན་དུ་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར་བ་ནི||སྟོང་ལ་འཐད་པ་མ་ཡིན་པས|
|ཁྱོད་ནི་སྟོང་ཉིད་སྤོང་བྱེད་པ||གང་དེ་ང་ལ་མི་འཐད་དོ||

| skyon du thal bar 'gyur ba ni | | stoṅ la 'thad pa ma yin pas |
| (4)khyod ni stoṅ ñid spoṅ byed pa | | gaṅ de ṅa la mi 'thad do |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - You have repeatedly refuted Sunyata but we do not fall into any error. The refutation does not apply to sunya.

JONES (Skt):
[13] In addition, the error accompanying the objections to emptiness that you make is not ours - it is not applicable to what is empty.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Furthermore, if you were to generate any obsession with regard to emptiness, the accompanying error is not ours. That [obsession] is not appropriate in the context of the empty.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
But what objection to openness is made by the twelvefold causal chain of becoming?
The condemnation is not ours. It does not apply in what is open.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. Relying upon the balanced autonomic nervous system, to make the mind more inactive,
The balanced states are much more accomplished into miscellaneous existences.
Worrying about such criticism does never belong to our problems,
And so such problems do never appear into the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
13 You again perpetrate falsities concerning devoidness. The dire consequences you allege do not apply to us, nor do they make sense of devoidness.

STRENG (Skt):
13. Time and again you have made a condemnation of emptiness, But that refutation does not apply to our emptiness.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v13 You say that we are attached to emptiness
And you produce and attribute errors to us.
But the errors which you are expounding
Do not exist in emptiness.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Since [those] erroneous consequences do not apply to emptiness, whatever rejections you make of emptiness do not apply to me.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The flaws that ensue in consequence
Are not reasonable with respect to emptiness.
Hence, your discarding emptiness
Is not reasonable to me. [XXIV.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. You have presented fallacious refutations
That are not relevant to emptiness.
Your confusion about emptiness
Does not belong to me.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. Since the absurd consequences you adduce
Are not relevant to emptiness,
Your rejection of emptiness
Is not relevant to me.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Your repeated refutations of Emptiness are fallacious. The dire consequences you speak of do not apply to Emptiness as it is spoken of here.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/13 Because you say that we are attached to emptiness, you produce errors and attribute them to us. But the emptiness of natures of which we speak There – this emptiness is itself empty. are no such errors. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The dire consequence you cast at us was: 'If the entire everyday is devoid of self-existence, nothing can come to be nor cease to be. It follows inexorably that, for you, the four Buddhist truths do not hold.'(MMK XXIV.1) Such an allegation, hurled because of a lack of due insight into the nature of the two truths, and because of ignorance of the nature of devoidness, and of its meaning and purpose, it does not make sense applied to our understanding of devoidness.

It does not, therefore, make sense at all. In the way you allege this dire consequence of devoidness, you make a charge against and calumniate, you attack and repudiate devoidness, but your accusation is not logically relevant to our position. Your allegation derives from wrongly foisting the meaning of non-existence onto the idea of the absence of being. But we do not declare the meaning of non-existence and of absence of being to be the same; rather absence of being has the same meaning as dependent arising (*pratityasamutpada*) (fn 10 This permits the translation of *pratityasamutpada* as 'the truth of things'.); so this fault in the idea of devoidness does not make sense.

It is not merely that these dire consequences, as stated, are not relevant to our view, but more than that, the entire structure (*vyavasthana*) of Buddhist doctrines becomes more intelligible. Expounding this Nagarjuna said,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Adhilaya has been rendered as "repeatedly refuted" (Inada,). However, the term is more closely related to alaya (see commentary on XXlV.12) utilized by the Buddha to refer to emotional attachment or obsession for views. Nagarjuna seems to be saying that the metaphysicians are generally fascinated by clear-cut and wellformed theories, abstract concepts, which they revere as divine, while the concrete percepts are looked upon as belonging to the brute (see William James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 34). This paves the way for an extremely important statement by Nagarjuna regarding sunyata and sunya.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

13. Nāgārjuna here simply denies that his view sustains the nihilistic reading, while granting that if one treats emptiness as nonexistence, all of the absurd conclusions that the opponent enumerates' indeed follow. But, Nāgārjuna continues in XXIV: 14, the interpretation of the entire Madhyamika system depends directly on how one understands the concept of emptiness. If that is understood correctly, everything else falls into place. If it is misunderstood, nothing in the system makes any sense:

Kārikā XXIV.14

सर्वं च युज्यते तस्य शून्यता यस्य युज्यते।
सर्वं न युज्यते तस्य शून्यं यस्य न युज्यते॥१४॥

sarvaṃ ca yujyate tasya śūnyatā yasya yujyate |
sarvaṃ na yujyate tasya śūnyaṃ yasya na yujyate ||14||

以有空義故 一切法得成
若無空義者 一切則不成

yǐ yǒu kòng yì gù yī qiè fǎ dé;děi;de chéng
ruò wú kōng yì zhě yī qiè zé bù chéng

།གང་ལ་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་རུང་བ།།དེ་ལ་ཐམས་ཅད་རུང་བར་འགྱུར།
།གང་ལ་སྟོང་ཉིད་མི་རུང་བ།།དེ་ལ་ཐམས་ཅད་མི་རུང་འགྱུར།།

| gaṅ la stoṅ pa ñid ruṅ ba | | de la thams cad ruṅ bar 'gyur |
| gaṅ la stoṅ ñid mi ruṅ ba | | de la thams cad ruṅ mi 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 14 - Whatever is in correspondence with Sunyata, all is in correspondence (i.e., possible). Again, whatever is not in correspondence with sunyata, all is not in correspondence. - Note: The meaning conveyed here is that sunyata is the basis of all existence. Thus, without it, nothing is possible.

JONES (Skt):
[14] For whom emptiness is admissible, everything is admissible. For whom emptiness is inadmissible, everything is inadmissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Everything is pertinent for whom emptiness is proper. Everything is not pertinent for whom the empty is not proper.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Because openness works, therefore everything works.
If openness does not work, then everything does not work.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
14. If everything is bound by the concrete facts totally,
Even the state of the balanced autonomic nervous system must be also bound by the real facts.
And if everything is not bound by the concrete facts,
Even the state of the balanced autonomic nervous system must not be also bound at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
14 All things make sense for him for whom the absence of being makes sense. Nothing makes sense for him for whom the absence of being does not make sense.

STRENG (Skt):
14. When emptiness "works", then everything in existence "works". (A) If emptiness "does not work", then all existence "does not work". (B)

ROBINSON (Skt):
Everything is valid for that of which emptiness is valid; nothing is valid for that of which emptiness is not valid.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v14 By virtue of the principle of emptiness
All dharmas are established.
If there were no principle of emptiness
Nothing would be established.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Those for whom emptiness is possible, for them everything is possible. Those for whom emptiness is not possible, for them everything is not possible.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Everything is possible
For those for whom emptiness is possible.
Nothing is possible
For those for whom emptiness is impossible. [XXIV.14]

GARFIELD (Tb):
14. For him to whom emptiness is clear,
Everything becomes clear.
For him to whom emptiness is not clear
Nothing becomes clear.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
14. For him to whom emptiness makes sense,
Everything makes sense.
For him to whom emptiness does not make sense,
Nothing makes sense.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Everything is clear to those for whom Emptiness is clear. Nothing is clear to those for whom Emptiness is not clear.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
If emptiness is possible,
Then everything is possible,
But if emptiness is impossible,
Then nothing else is possible either. (14)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/14 By virtue of the principle of emptiness, all dharmas within the world and outside the world are established. If there were no principle of emptiness, then nothing at all would be established.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

For the one for whom the devoidness of self-existence in all things makes sense, for him everything (*sarvam etad*), in the sense in which we have explained it, makes sense. Why? Because we elucidate dependent arising as devoidness of self- existence.

As the *Anavataptahradapasarhkramana Sutra* has it: 'Whatever is born of conditions is not truly born; and it does not arise as self-existent. Whatever depends on conditions is said to be devoid of self-existence. Whoever comprehends the absence of self-existence is free of delusion.' As the *Prajnaparamita-sutra* puts it: 'All putative elements of existence are devoid, because they lack self-existence.'

It follows that our devoidness makes sense, is luminous and relevant for him for whom dependent arising makes sense. And the four Buddhist truths make sense for him for whom dependent arising makes sense. Why is this? Because it is precisely what arises in dependence that constitutes unregenerate existence (*duhkha*), not what does not arise in dependence. What arises in dependence, because not self-existent, is devoid of being. Given afflicted or unregenerate existence, it makes sense that it comes to be and ceases to be and that there is a way leading to its cessation. And so the clear grasp of unregenerate existence, the elimination of its arising, the intuitive experience of its cessation and the inner realization of the way, all make sense.

If the truths about unregenerate existence and the clear grasp, and so on, of them obtain, then the spiritual attainments (*phala*)(MMK XXIV.3) make sense. Given spiritual attainments it makes sense that there are those who are on the way. Given those who are on the way abiding in the spiritual attainments, the Buddhist community makes sense. If the Buddhist truths truly obtain then the Buddhist Truth (*dharma*) makes sense. Given the Buddhist Truth and the Buddhist community, the idea of an enlightened one makes sense too. Therefore the three jewels (fn 11 i.e. the Buddhist Truth, the community of monks, and the Buddha.) make sense. All things whatsoever (*padarthah sarve*), whether of this world or of the realm beyond which are realized in the Buddhist discipline, will make sense. Moral and immoral conduct and their consequences, spiritual well-being and downfall and all everyday practical transactions will make sense.

So it is that 'Everything makes sense for him for whom the absence of being makes sense.' For him for whom the devoidness of self-existence in all things makes sense, for him everything in the world, as we have explained it, makes sense (*yujyate*), that is, coheres in living sense (*sampadyate*). However, for one for whom devoidness, as we expound it, does not make sense, because he does not understand the dependent arising of all things, the entire world makes no sense. In what way it does not make sense Nagarjuna will demonstrate in detail.

In sum, our case is flawless and is established without contradicting any principles. Your view is very unsubtle and shortsighted, contradicts principles and is full of difficulties. You are too obtuse to discern clear faults and merits.

The unintelligibility of the opponent's concept

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This terse statement of Nagarjuna, representing an extremely valuable assessment of the two concepts of "emptiness" (sunyata) and "the empty" (sunyam), can be comprehended only in the background of his previous statement (XX-IV. 13). It is a criticism of the absolutistic and substantialist enterprise wherein abstract concepts like "emptiness" receive a divine status thereby becoming compatible with anything and everything in human experience, like the Platonic "forms", whereas any emphasis on the concrete leaves everything hanging in the air. Plato's "forms", Spinoza's "substance", Vedanta "Brahman" and Lao-tzu's "Tao"all these are fascinating abstract concepts that fit in with everything. Even if one does not have to move on to the other extreme, as did

Hume with his "impressions", and the Sautrantikas with their "atoms" (paramanu), any recognition given to the concrete, to plurality, to the flux tends to disrupt the sense of security one enjoys in a world of abstractions. The Sarvastivadins raised objections against "the empty" (sunya)(XXIV. 1-6) not because there is an actual conflict between the notion of "the empty" and the theory of four truths, but because the conception of "the empty" conflicted with their notion of substance (svabhava) which they were holding on to with great enthusiasm. The fault, as Nagarjuna points out in the following verse, is theirs.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

14. ("Nothing becomes clear" fn 113. The Tibetan term translated as "clear" here is *"rung-ba"* which literally means *suitable*, or *appropriate.* But while that makes sense in Tibetan, it clearly doesn't in English, and the context indicates "clear" as the word that best captures the meaning.)

Kārikā XXIV.15

स त्वं दोषानात्मनीनानस्मासु परिपातयन्।
अश्वमेवाभिरूढः सन्नश्वमेवासि विस्मृतः॥१५॥

sa tvaṃ doṣān ātmanīyān asmāsu paripātayan |
aśvam evābhirūḍhaḥ sann aśvam evāsi vismṛtaḥ ||15||

汝今自有過 而以迴向我
如人乘馬者 自忘於所乘

rǔ jīn zì yǒu guò ér yǐ huí xiàng wǒ
rú rén chéng;shèng mǎ zhě zì wàng yū;yú;wū suǒ chéng;shèng

|ཁྱོད་ནི་རང་གི་སྐྱོན་རྣམས་ནི། །ང་ལ་ཡོངས་སུ་སྒྱུར་བྱེད་པ།
|རྟ་ལ་མངོན་པར་ཞོན་བཞིན་དུ། །རྟ་ཉིད་བརྗེད་པར་གྱུར་པ་བཞིན།།

| khyod ni raṅ gi skyon rnams ni | | ṅa la yoṅs su sgyur byed pa |
| rta la (5)mṅon par źon bźin du | | rta ñid brjed par gyur pa bźin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 15 - You level your own errors at us. It is as if you are mounted on your horse but forget about it.

JONES (Skt):
[15] In attributing your errors to us, you have forgotten the horse you yourself are mounted upon.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
You, attributing your own errors to us, are like one who has mounted his horse and [who is] confused about it.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
You have projected your errors on us.
You are like one who mounts a horse forgetting the saddle.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
15. Actually you are a man, who is prone to commit many errors, subjectively or objectively, at this place.
Therefore you must have a tendency to guard yourself in every case.
But even though you were actually riding a horse,
You are just riding as if you were sitting on a dog.

SPRUNG (Skt):
15 You, who bring down your own errors on us, though mounted on a horse, forget that you are.

STRENG (Skt):
15. You, while projecting your own faults on us, (i.e. objectifying emptiness) Are like a person who, having mounted his horse, forgot the horse! (i.e. a tool)

BOCKING (Ch):
24v15 You yourselves are in error
Yet you turn these errors against us.
Like a man riding a horse
Who forgets what he himself is mounted on.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
You are transferring your own mistakes onto me. This is like mounting a horse but forgetting about the horse itself.

DOCTOR (Tb):
All your own faults
You project onto me,
As if, while riding your horse,
You had forgotten all about it. [XXIV.15]

GARFIELD (Tb):
15. When you foist on us
All of your errors
You are like a man who has mounted his horse
And has forgotten that very horse.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
15. When you foist on us
All of your errors,
You are like a man who has mounted his horse
And has forgotten that very horse.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
In attributing your own errors to us you are like the one who mounts his own horse but forgets that he has done so.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/15 You are wrong about the existence of dharmas but are not conscious of it yourselves, yet you can see faults in emptiness. It is like a man riding a horse who forgets that which he is riding on. Why is this:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

It is as if someone mounted on a horse, but forgetting that he is, falsely accuses others of the crime of stealing it. Similarly, you, though mounted on the horse of the theory of devoidness understood as the dependent arising of all things — do not perceive this because of your overhasty repudiation, and revile us.

Nagarjuna explains what these faults of the opponent are, which he does not recognize in himself but accuses the proponent of devoidness of:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As mentioned previously (see comments on XXIV. 14), the problem faced by the Buddhist metaphysicians was in regard to reconciling "the empty" (sunya) with the four noble truths. This was because they were explaining the four truths in relation to the notion of substance (svabhava) and the notion of substance clearly conflicted with the concept of "the empty." If Nagarjuna had merely relied upon the abstract concept of "emptiness" (sunyata), ignoring "the empty" (sunya), the Buddhist metaphysicians would not have run into difficulties, for "emptiness," being the abstract concept could easily be reconciled with the notion of substance. As such, the problem was created by the metaphysicians when they emphasized the non-empirical "substance" to the neglect of the empirical phenomena, as is clearly evident from Nagarjuna's statement that follows. Nagarjuna was, therefore, reminding them that they were riding their own hone without realizing it.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

15. Here is the idea behind this image, a standard trope in classical Indian rhetoric: A man with a herd of horses thinks that he is missing one and accuses you of having stolen it. As he rides around and counts his horses, he always comes up one short. But you point out to him that the one he is accusing you of stealing is in fact the very one he is riding but has forgotten to count. Likewise, Nāgārjuna is saying, the opponent who confuses the Madhyamika analysis in terms of emptiness with nihilism is charging Nāgārjuna with a nihilism that is in fact his own. Nāgārjuna will argue, that is, that while the opponent claims to preserve the reality of the three jewels, the Four Noble Truths, and dependently arisen phenomena against Nāgārjuna's nihilism, Nāgārjuna himself can explain the reality of these things, though it will turn out that on the opponent's view they must be nonexistent! (fn 114. But see Wood (1994), pp. 115-16, for a dramatically different reading (of the parallel verse in *Vigrahavyavartani* - but the points all go over) of this verse. Wood interprets emptiness as complete nonexistence and reads Nāgārjuna as a thoroughgoing nihilist. So he interprets Nāgārjuna as asserting that if one sees conventional phenomena as real in any way, one is in trouble and that philosophical problems vanish only if one sees all apparent phenomena as illusions. In offering this interpretation, Wood notes that Nāgārjuna often characterizes phenomena as like dreams or mirages. That is indeed so, but his interpretation of that simile is itself problematic. For a thing to be like a mirage or a dream is for it to exist in one way (as, e.g., a mirage), but to not exist in the way that it appears (as water). To put the point another way: Mirages *really are* mirages, but are *not* really water, though they might *appear* to be. So conventional phenomena, according to the simile, *really are* empty, dependently-arisen, nominally real phenomena, but are *not* substantial, inherently existent phenomena, though they might *appear* to be. So, pace Wood, it is not Nāgārjuna, but his opponent who is the nihilist here. See also Padhye (1988), esp. pp. 61-66, for a good critical discussion of the nihilistic reading.) At this point the positive philosophical program of this chapter begins.

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Kārikā XXIV.16

स्वभावाद्यदि भावानां सद्भावमनुपश्यसि।
अहेतुप्रत्ययान् भावांस्त्वमेवं सति पश्यसि॥१६॥

svabhāvād yadi bhāvānāṃ sadbhāvam anupaśyasi |
ahetupratyayān bhāvāṃs tvam evaṃ sati paśyasi ||16||

若汝見諸法 決定有性者
即為見諸法 無因亦無緣

ruò rǔ jiàn zhū fǎ jué dìng yǒu xìng zhě
jí wéi jiàn zhū fǎ wú yīn yì wú yuán

།གལ་ཏེ་དངོས་རྣམས་རང་བཞིན་ལས།།ཡོད་པར་རྗེས་སུ་ལྟ་བྱེད་ན།
།དེ་ལྟ་ཡིན་ན་དངོས་པོ་རྣམས།།རྒྱུ་རྐྱེན་མེད་པར་ཁྱོད་ལྟའོ།།

| gal te dṅos rnams raṅ bźin las | | yod par rjes su lta byed na |
| de lta yin na dṅos po rnams | | rgyu rkyen med par khyod lta'o |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 16 - If you perceive the various existences as true beings from the standpoint of self-nature, then you will perceive them as non-causal conditions.

JONES (Skt):
[16] If you perceive entities as having true being because of their self-existence, then you will perceive entities as being without causes and conditions.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If you perceive the existence of the existents in terms of self-nature, then you will also perceive these existents as non-causal conditions.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If you consider that the existence of beings is from self-nature,
you see beings existing without cause or conditions.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
16. When you have left from the subjective ideas, you are belonging to existences,
Then you will notice Real Existences.
Unreasonable Real Truths are existences,
And you will look at the Real Existence in future.

SPRUNG (Skt):
16 If you discern the true being of things as their self-existence, then you must regard things as having no causes or conditions.

STRENG (Skt):
16. If you recognize real existence on account of the self-existence of things, You perceive that there are uncaused and unconditioned things.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v16 If you perceive all dharmas
As having fixed, existent natures,
Then you will see all dharmas
As without causes and without conditions.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If you view all things as existing from their own nature, then you would view all things as not having causes and conditions.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If you view things
As existent by nature,
Then for you there are
No causes and conditions. [XXIV.16]

GARFIELD (Tb):
16. If you perceive the existence of all things
In terms of their essence,
Then this perception of all things
Will be without the perception of causes and conditions.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
16. If you regard all things
As existing in virtue of their essence,
Then you will regard all things
As being without causes and conditions.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If you recognize the existence of things in terms of self-nature, then you must regard things as having no causes or conditions.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/16 You teach that all dharmas have fixed natures. This being the case, you will see all dharmas as being without causes and without conditions, and why? If dharmas have fixed, existent natures, then they must be non-arising and non-ceasing, and what use would such dharmas have for causes and conditions? If you say that dharmas arise from causes and conditions, then they will have no nature. Therefore, dharmas with fixed, existent natures have no causes and conditions. If you say that dharmas abide, fixed and settled in their own-nature, this is not correct, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

(*"True being of things"* – fn 12 *Sadbhava*. Candrakīrti glosses this as factual or ontic *(vidyamana).*)

If you consider that things are, ontically (*vidyamana*), self- existent, you ignore their causal conditions. You regard things, however differentiated into inner and outer, as having no causal conditions, as having ontically no causal conditions, as being beyond cause (*nirhetuka*). But if you suppose anything can be beyond causality,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

For Nagarjuna , any existent is a causally conditioned existent. Such an existent is clearly imcompatible with a self-nature or substance, the latter being permanent and eternal by definition. This would mean that Nagarjuna's conception of "emptiness" (sunyata) does not partake of any such characteristics. Even though "emptiness" and "serf-nature" are both abstractions from concrete experiences, Nagarjuna would continue to maintain the primacy of such concrete experiences, which are "the empty," and insist that "emptiness" is dependent upon "the empty," while the metaphysicians would consider self-nature to be independent, thereby divorcing it from the concrete.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

16. There are two related assertions contained in this critical verse: First, at the conventional level, the opponent, in virtue of thinking that to exist is to exist inherently, will be unable to account for dependent arising and hence for anything that must be dependently arisen. As Nāgārjuna will make explicit later on, this will include such things as suffering, its causes, nirvāṇa, the path thereto, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the Buddha, as well as more mundane phenomena.

But secondly and more subtly, since the opponent is seeing actual existence as existence as a discrete entity with an essence, it would follow that for the opponent the reality of emptiness would entail that emptiness itself is an entity, an inherently existing entity at that. To see emptiness in this way is to see it as radically different from conventional, phenomenal reality. It is to see the conventional as illusory and emptiness as the reality standing behind it. If Nāgārjuna were to adopt this view of emptiness, he would indeed have to deny the reality of the entire phenomenal, conventional world. This would also be to ascribe a special, nonconventional, nondependent hyperreality to emptiness itself. Ordinary things would be viewed as nonexistent, emptiness as substantially existent. (It is important and central to the Madhyamika dialectic to see that these go together - that nihilism about one kind of entity is typically paired with reification of another.) This view is not uncommon in Buddhist philosophy, and Nāgārjuna is clearly aware that it might be suggested by his own position. SQ Nāgārjuna's reply must begin by distancing himself from this reified view of emptiness itself and hence from the dualism it entails. Only then can he show that to reify emptiness in this way would indeed entail the difficulties his imaginary opponent adumbrates, difficulties not attaching to Nāgārjuna's own view. (fn 115. So, for instance, when Wood (1994) writes on p. 161 that "[he does] not think that there is a non-nihilistic sense of the phrase 'does not exist,' " he is succumbing to the very view that Nāgārjuna criticizes here - the view that to exist is to exist inherently and that to not exist inherently is not to exist at all. The nonnihilistic sense of "does not exist" is in play when Nāgārjuna, in providing a reductio on the opponent's view, is taking inherent existence as the meaning of "existence." Given that understanding, Nāgārjuna can quite easily say that, e.g., the self does not exist while retaining his commitment to its conventional existence. He can also say that no inherently existent phenomena exist at all without denying the conventional existence of conventional phenomena.) This brings us to the central verses of this chapter:

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Kārikā XXIV.17

कार्यं च कारणं चैव कर्तारं करणं क्रियाम्।
उत्पादं च निरोधं च फलं च प्रतिबाधसे॥१७॥

kāryaṃ ca kāraṇaṃ caiva kartāraṃ karaṇaṃ kriyām |
utpādaṃ ca nirodhaṃ ca phalaṃ ca pratibādhase ||17||

即為破因果 作作者作法
亦復壞一切 萬物之生滅

jí wéi pò yīn guǒ zuò zuò zhě zuò fǎ
yì fù huài yī qiè wàn wù zhī shēng miè

།འབྲས་བུ་དང་ནི་རྒྱུ་ཉིད་དང་།བྱེད་པ་པོ་དང་བྱེད་དང་བྱ།
།སྐྱེ་བ་དང་ནི་འགག་པ་དང་།།འབྲས་བུ་ལ་ཡང་གནོད་པ་བྱེད།།

| ’bras bu daṅ ni rgyu ñid daṅ | | byed pa po daṅ byed daṅ (6)bya | |
skye ba daṅ ni ’gag pa daṅ | | ’bras bu la yaṅ gnod pa byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 17 - You will then destroy (all notions of) cause, effect, doer, means of doing, doing, origination, extinction, and fruit (of action).

JONES (Skt):
[17] You will also reject effect, cause, actor, the means of acting, action, arising, ceasing, and fruit.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
You will also contradict [the notions of] effect, cause, agent, performance of action, activity, arising, ceasing, as well as fruit.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
You deny effect, cause, agent, action, and activity
as well as arising, cessation, and the fruit [of action].

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
17. What is really accomplished, and what is the cause of the accomplishment, are originally the same.
What to produce something, is just the Real Efforts of production, a production is just production, the Real Action itself.
Production is also a kind of suppressive control too,
And the Result is just your torture called production.

SPRUNG (Skt):
17 You must reject the notions of cause and effect, of agent, means and act, of coming to be and ceasing to be and of spiritual attainment.

STRENG (Skt):
17. You deny "what is to be produced," cause, the producer, the instrument of production, and the producing action, And the origination, destruction, and "fruit."

BOCKING (Ch):
24v17 This constitutes a negation of cause and effect,
Of doing, doer and thing done.
And moreover it denies
The arising, and ceasing of all the myriad things.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Cause and effect itself, agents, tools and acts, production and cessation, the effects too would be undermined.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Effect and cause;
Agent, means, and action;
Arising, cessation, and result—
These are invalidated as well. [XXIV.17]

GARFIELD (Tb):
17. Effects and causes
And agent and action
And conditions and arising and ceasing
And effects will be rendered impossible.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
17. Effects and causes;
And agent, instrument and action;
And arising and ceasing;
And the effects will be undermined.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
You must also reject notions of cause and effect, agent and action, arising and ceasing, as well as attainment.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/17 If dharmas have fixed natures then there will be no such things as cause and effect etc. As the verse says:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Why is that? If you suppose a water jug to be self-existent, what would be the function of the clay and the other causal conditions of such an ontic self-existent, as they would not be causal conditions. It is unintelligible for an effect like a water jug to have no cause (*hetu*). If there were no cause, then, as the potter's wheel and the other tools, the making of the water jug, the potter himself and the actual creation of a vessel in the shape of a water jug would be non-existent, coming to be and ceasing to be would be non-existent. But if nothing comes to be nor ceases to be how can there be spiritual attainment? If you suppose that things are self-existent you discard the entire set of notions having to do with cause and effect; thus, supposing things are self-existent, this entire set of notions can make no sense for you. For us, however, who hold the view that things are devoid of self-existence, this entire set of notions is logically intelligible. Why is that? Because

Absence of being as the middle way

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

How the recognition of self-nature (svabhava) contradicts all forms of empirical knowledge, knowledge recognized by the Buddha relating to dependent arising, moral behavior (karma), and responsibility (karmaphala), has already been explained in detail in the numerous chapters that precede. Here Nagarjuna is simply summarizing all his conclusions.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

17. Again, this verse is to be read at two levels: At the conventional level, the opponent, through reifying phenomena in order to preserve their conventional reality, will deny the possibility of any kind of dependence, impermanence, or action. But more importantly, if Nāgārjuna's analysis of these things as empty meant that they were nonexistent and that only emptiness exists, then Nāgārjuna himself would be denying the empirical reality of these phenomena. That is, not only would an inherently existent phenomenal world be devoid of change, dependency, and so forth, but inherently existent emptiness would render the phenomenal world completely nonexistent.

This defines the straits between which the middle path must be found, as well as the presupposition that generates both extremes: The extreme of reification of the phenomenal world depends upon viewing emptiness nihilistically; the extreme of reification of emptiness requires us to be nihilistic about the phenomenal world. A middle path must reify neither and hence must regard emptiness, as well as all empty phenomena, as empty. Both extremes presuppose that to exist is to exist inherently. They only disagree about whether this inherent existence is properly ascribed to conventional phenomena or to their ultimate nature. Nāgārjuna will deny exactly that presupposition, arguing that to exist is to exist conventionally and that both conventional phenomena and their ultimate natures exist in exactly that way. The next verse is the climax of the entire text and can truly be said to contain the entire Madhyamika system in embryo. It is perhaps the most often quoted and extensively commented on verse in all of Mahayana philosophy:

Kārikā XXIV.18

यः प्रतीत्यसमुत्पादः शून्यतां तां प्रचक्ष्महे।
सा प्रज्ञप्तिरुपादाय प्रतिपत्सैव मध्यमा॥१८॥

yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatāṃ tāṃ pracakṣmahe |
sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā ||18||

眾因緣生法 我說即是無
亦為是假名 亦是中道義

zhòng yīn yuán shēng fǎ wǒ shuì jí shì wú
yì wéi shì jiǎ míng yì shì zhōng dào yì

།རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བར་འབྱུང་བ་གང་། །དེ་ནི་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་དུ་བཤད།
།དེ་ནི་བརྟེན་ནས་གདགས་པ་སྟེ། །དེ་ཉིད་དབུ་མའི་ལམ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| rten ciṅ ’brel bar ’byuṅ ba gaṅ | | de ni stoṅ pa ñid du bśad |
| de ni brten nas gdags pa ste | | de ñid dbu ma’i lam yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 18 - We declare that whatever is relational origination is sunyata. It is a provisional name (i.e., thought construction) for the mutuality (of being) and, indeed, it is the middle path.

JONES (Skt):
[18] Whatever is dependently arisen, we call that “emptiness.” This indicator, once comprehended, is in fact itself the “middle way.”

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
We state that whatever is dependent arising, that is emptiness. That is dependent upon convention. That itself is the middle path.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What is interdependent origination, that is called openness by us.
It [openness] makes use of convention and is the practice of the middle way.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
18. That is just the very clear Total Occurrence.
The totally balanced autonomic nervous systems, are indicating the situations of the Present Moment itself.
Those Realities just might be what have been grasped as information.
And so our rather anti-historical tendency might be called the Middle Way.

SPRUNG (Skt):
18 We interpret the dependent arising of all things as the absence of being in them. Absence of being is a guiding, not a cognitive, notion, presupposing the everyday. It is itself the middle way.

STRENG (Skt):
18. The "originating dependently" we call "emptiness"; This apprehension, i.e., taking into account all other things, is the understanding of the middle way.

ROBINSON (Skt):
It is dependent co-arising that we term emptiness; this is a designation overlaid [on emptiness]; it alone is the Middle Path.

NG (Skt):
We declare that whatever is of dependent arising is emptiness. Because this Emptiness is a Provisional Name, therefore it [Emptiness] is indeed the Middle Way.

NG (Ch):
I declare that whatever is of Dependent Origination is Emptiness (nothingness); it is also a Provisional Name; it is also the meaning of the Middle Way.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v18 Dharmas produced by causes and conditions
We say are nonexistent.
And constitute conventional names
And this is the meaning of the middle path.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Whatever is contingently related, that is explained as emptiness. That is contingently configured; it is the central path.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Float which originates in dependence
Is taught to be emptiness.
This itself is dependent imputation
And so the path of the Middle Way. [XXIV.18]

GARFIELD (Tb):
18. Whatever is dependently co-arisen
That is explained to be emptiness.
That, being a dependent designation,
Is itself the middle way.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
18. That which is dependent origination
Is explained to be emptiness.
That, being a dependent designation,
Is itself the middle way.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
We declare that whatever is dependent arising is Emptiness—a provisional name presupposing the everyday, and is in itself the middle way.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Whatever is dependently arisen
Is explained to be emptiness.
Its existence is imputed in dependence upon something else,
And this is the path of the Middle Way. (18)

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

This dependent arising, which is the manifestation of seeds, consciousness and all such things in dependence on causal conditions, is the non-arising of things in the self-existent sense. And the non-arising of things in the self-existent sense is the absence of being in things. As the illustrious one said: 'Whatever is born of conditions is not truly born; it does not arise as self-existent. Whatever depends on conditions is said to be devoid of self-existence. Whoever comprehends the absence of self existence is free of delusion.' And in the Lankavatara Sutra, 'It being accepted, o Mahamati, that nothing comes to be of itself, it is my teaching that all the putative elements of existence are devoid of self-existence', and so on. In the Dvyardhasatika, 'All putative elements of existence are devoid because, ontically, they are without self-existence.'

This very absence of self-existence is a guiding, not a cognitive, notion presupposing the everyday (*prajnapti-upadaya*) (fn 13 'Everyday' is not in the text, but by analogy with the chariot, it is the everyday (*samvrti*) world which the term *sunyata* must presuppose if it is to function effectively, as 'chariot' presupposes wheels, axle, and so on.). Absence of self-existence itself, as it presupposes the everyday, is a guiding, not a cognitive notion. It is the components wheels and so on which, being presupposed, are, for practical purposes, referred to as 'a chariot' (*rathah prajnapyate*). That to which the guiding expression refers, as it presupposes its own component parts, does not come to be self-existently. It is this not coming to be (*anutpatti*) self-existently (*svabhavena*) which is absence of being. This absence, characterized as not coming to be self-existently, is known as the middle way. What does not come to be self-existently does not exist. But because what does not come to be self-existently cannot cease to be, it is not non-existent. Therefore, because it avoids the dual dogmas of existence and non-existence, the absence of being in things, understood to mean that all things without exception do not arise self-existently, is said to be the middle way or the middle path. It follows that the absence of being as a guiding, not a cognitive, notion which presupposes the everyday and which is the middle way, is the preferred interpretation of the dependent arising of all things (fn 14 That is, of the way things truly are.).

All elements of existence are devoid

Considering this in all its aspects:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

There seems to be no other statement of Nagarjuna more controversial than this one. An entire school of Chinese Buddhism emerged as a result of the interpretation (or misinterpretation) of this verse, [see Hajime Nakamura, "The Middle Way and the Emptiness View," Journal of Buddhist Philosophy, ed. Richard S. Y. Chi, (Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana,) 1 (1984):81-111].

In the first line, Nagarjuna is presenting an equation: Dependent arising (pratityasamutpada) is "emptiness" (sunyata). Inada's rendering of this line is an improvement on Nakamura's, since the latter assumes that here there is a reference to the events (op. cit.,), rather than the principle in terms of which the events are explained. As emphasized earlier, "dependent arising" and "emptiness" are abstract concepts derived from concrete empirical events, "the dependently arisen" (pratityasamutpanna) and "the empty" (sunya) respectively. Unless this relationship between the abstract and the concrete is clearly observed, the interpretation of the second line of the verse will remain for ever obscure, as seems to have happened since Nagarjuna composed this treatise.

The second line refers to the middle path (madhyama pratipat). The question is: In what way can dependent arising and emptiness, which are synonymous, represent a middle path? The answer to this question is in the statement, sa prajnaptir upadaya. If this phrase were to be translated as, "It is a provisional name" (Inada,) or as "That is a temporary designation" (Nakamura,), which are standard translations offered by most scholars, then in the explanation of dependent arising and emptiness one will be committed either to an extreme form of nominalism or a similiarly extremist absolutism. In such a case, dependent

arising or emptiness would either be a mere description with no basis in cognitive experience or it would be an experience that is ineffable. The former alternative would conflict with everything Nagarjuna was trying to establish, namely, the reality of arising and ceasing, of human behavior, etc. (XXIV16-17). The latter alternative would render any philosophical enterprise meaningless and would undermine Nagarjuna's assertion at XXIV. 10.

Taking samvrti , vyavahara, and prajñapti as synonyms, as was intended by the Buddha himself (D 3.202), and considering the contexts in which Nagarjuna was using the terms samvrti and vyavahara (XVII.24; XVIV.6,8)namely, in relation to discussions of worldly conventions, the most important among them being good and bad, dharma/adharma (and this sense is captured by Inada's own translation of samvrti and vyavahara, see)it would be more appropriate to characterize both "dependent arising" and "emptiness" as being the universal truths rather than absolute truths. This would mean that both samvrti (and, therefore, vyavahara and prajnapti) and paramartha are "thought constructions" founded on experience. As such, they are not absolutely real or absolutely unreal. This, then, would be the middle position (madhyama pratipat). This middle path could be adopted in understanding all forms of experience, whether they be linguistic, social, political, moral, or religious. While all conventions, whether they be situational (samvrti) or ideal (paramartha), are explained in terms of dependent arising, the conception of "the empty" (sunya) eliminates the absolutistic sting at the level of the situational, and "emptiness" does so at the level of the universal. (See comments on XXIV. 19 that follows.)

Kārikā XXIV.19

अप्रतीत्य समुत्पन्नो धर्मः कश्चिन्न विद्यते।
यस्मात्तस्माद‍शून्यो हि धर्मः कश्चिन्न विद्यते॥१९॥

apratītya samutpanno dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate |
yasmāt tasmād aśūnyo hi dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate ||19||

未曾有一法 不從因緣生
是故一切法 無不是空者

wèi céng yǒu yī fǎ bù cóng yīn yuán shēng
shì gù yī qiè fǎ wú bú shì kōng zhě

།གང་ཕྱིར་རྟེན་འབྱུང་མ་ཡིན་པའི། །ཆོས་འགའང་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་པ།
།དེ་ཕྱིར་སྟོང་པ་མ་ཡིན་པའི། །ཆོས་འགའང་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ། །

| gaṅ phyir rten ’byuṅ ma yin pa’i | | chos ’ga’ (7)yod pa ma yin pa |
| de phyir stoṅ pa ma yin pa’i | | chos ’ga’ yod pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 19 - Any factor of experience which does not participate in relational origination cannot exist. Therefore, any factor of experience not in the nature of sunya cannot exist.

JONES (Skt):
[19] Any basic phenomenon (i.e., any ultimate "factor of the experienced world") that is not dependently arisen is not seen. Thus, a thing that is not empty is not seen.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A thing that is not dependently arisen is not evident. For that reason, a thing that is non-empty is indeed not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Not any event not interdependently originated occurs.
Indeed, not any event that is not open occurs.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
19. When some kinds of accidental facts are not so understandable,
The Rule of the Universe can never be recognized at all.
Because according to that facts, or according to this facts, everything is lacking the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system,
The system of the Universe hasn't been recognized at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
19 There is no element of existence whatsoever which does not arise dependently; and so there is no element of existence whatsoever which is not devoid of self-existence.

STRENG (Skt):
19. Since there is no dharma whatever originating independently, No dharma whatever exists which is not empty.

ROBINSON (Skt):
No dharma occurs that is not dependently co-arisen; hence no non-empty dharma occurs.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v19 There has never existed a single dharma
Which did not arise from causes and conditions.
Therefore no dharma exists
Which is not empty.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Because there are no things at all, which are not contingently emergent, therefore, there are no things at all, which are not empty.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Apart from what originates dependently,
There are no phenomena at all.
Therefore, apart from emptiness,
There are no phenomena at all. [XXIV.19]

GARFIELD (Tb):
19. Something that is not dependently arisen,
Such a thing does not exist.
Therefore a nonempty thing
Does not exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
19. There does not exist anything
That is not dependently arisen.
Therefore there does not exist anything
That is not empty.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Things not dependently arisen are not evident. For this reason, things that are non-Empty are not evident.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
There is not a single phenomenon
That is not dependently arisen.
Therefore, there is not a single phenomenon
That is not empty. (19)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/19 Causes and conditions produce dharmas, and we say that they are empty. Why is this? It is entirely through the combination of causes that things are produced. Since these things depend upon causes and conditions they have no own-nature and since they have no own-nature, they are empty.

(33b17) Emptiness moreover is itself empty. But in order to guide all beings, it is taught by means of conventional designations. Because it is separate from the extremes of both existence and nonexistence, it is called the middle path. Since dharmas have no own-nature we cannot say that they exist, and since they are not vacuous, we cannot say that they are nonexistent. If dharmas possessed the characteristics of natures then they would exist independently of causes and conditions, but then if they did not depend on causes and conditions they would not be dharmas. Therefore, there are no non-empty dharmas. As. for the errors which you discoursed on above in regard to the doctrine of emptiness, these errors now rebound on you, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

There is absolutely no putative element of existence whatsoever which arises free of conditions. As is said in the *Catuhsataka*: 'There is never non-dependent existence of anything whatsoever under any circumstances; again, there is never eternal existence of anything whatsoever under any circumstances. Infinite space and other non-composite elements are thought to be imperishable by ordinary people. Thoughtful people do not discern objects for such expressions as they are used ordinarily.' And the illustrious one said, 'The wise man comprehends the elements of existence as dependent; he does not take refuge in ultimate dogmas. He knows the elements of existence have causes and conditions; it is not the nature of the elements to be uncaused and without conditions.' That is to say, 'There is no element of existence whatsoever which does not arise dependently.'

As what arises in dependence is devoid of self-existence, there is no element of existence which is not devoid. Therefore our thought, that all elements of existence are devoid, is not open to the fault charged by our opponent. But he is the proponent of the view that things have self-existence.

Devoidness essential to the intelligibility of the four truths

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

After clarifying the nature of the universal conventions, Nagarjuna returns to the situational, for it was this latter that caused problems for the metaphysicians. The metaphysicians realized that "the dependently arisen" (pratityasamutpanna), so long as it is considered to be "the empty" (sunya), conflicted with their notion of substance (svabhava). Therefore, they were looking for "the dependently arisen" that is not empty of substance.

However, for Nagarjuna, substance (svabhava) is not dependently arisen (XV.2). A thing that is not dependently arisen is not evident. Therefore, a substance is also not evident. A substance being non-empty, the absence of a substance would mean the absence of the non-empty (a-sunya). This is a clear and unequivocal denial of substance (svabhava), of the non-empty (a-sunya) and of the independent (a-pratityasamtpanna), and the assertion of the non-substantial (nih-svabhava), the empty (sunya) and the dependently arisen (pratitysamutpanna). In the hope of being an absolute non-absolutist, if someone were to propose that both alternativessvabhava and nihsvabhava, asunya and sunya, apratityasamutpanna and pratityasamutpannaare true (or false), the empiricist Nagarjuna, following the Buddha (Sn 884) would insist that only one of these alternatives is true (ekam hi saccam), and not the second (na dutiyam). This means that neither the Buddha nor Nagarjuna could be characterized as absolutists. However, if the two alternatives were to be two metaphysical alternatives, then both the Buddha and Nagarjuna would be compelled to negate them. Taken out of context, svabhava and nihsvabhava could appear as metaphysical alternatives. So could asunya and sunya. Yet, apratityasamutpanna and pratityasamutpanna, as understood by the Buddha and Nagarjuna, could not be easily converted to metaphysical alternatives. The reason for this is that the term pratityasamutpanna, being a past participle, does not refer strictly to any one temporal experience, whether it belongs to the past, present or future, nor does it transcend temporality altogether. While it has a present connotation, it is not divorced from the past. It is, therefore, a term most appropriately used to describe the events perceived by the Buddha through his

"knowledge of things as they have come to be" (yathabhuta-nana). It refers to the events experienced in the so-called "specious present" (see comments on XIX.4).

It is this empiricist prajnapti that serves as a corrective to any proposal which would turn either pratityasamutpada or sunyata into an absolute truth, ineffable and a-temporal. It is, indeed, the philosophical middle path referred to at XXIV. 18 and the Buddha's discourse to Katyayana.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

19. These two verses demand careful scrutiny and are best discussed together. In XXIV: 18, Nāgārjuna establishes a critical three-way relation between emptiness, dependent origination and verbal convention, and asserts that this relation itself is the Middle Way toward which his entire philosophical system is aimed. As we shall see, this is the basis for understanding the emptiness of emptiness itself. Nāgārjuna is asserting that the dependently arisen is emptiness. Emptiness and the phenomenal world are not two distinct things. They are, rather, two characterizations of the same thing. To say of something that it is dependently co-arisen is to say that it is empty. To say of something that it is empty is another way of saying that it arises dependently. (fn 116. Padhye (1988), pp. 66-67, also emphasizes this corelativity of emptiness and dependent arising.)

Moreover, whatever is dependently co-arisen is verbally established. That is, the identity of any dependently arisen thing depends upon verbal conventions. To say of a thing that it is dependently arisen is to say that its identity as a single entity is nothing more than its being the referent of a word. The thing itself, apart from conventions of individuation, has no identity. To say of a thing that its identity is a merely verbal fact about it is to say that it is empty. To view emptiness in this way is to see it neither as an entity nor as unreal - it is to see it as conventionally real. (fn 117. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in oral remarks (Columbia University 1994), says: Since dependent co-origination is used as a premise to argue for the lack of inherent existence of things, it can't be independent of it. Lack of inherent existence must always be understood as negative and as a feature of conventional reality. . .. In *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā* these two truths - dependent co-origination and. emptiness - are taught as two perspectives on the same reality.)

Moreover, "emptiness" itself is asserted to be a dependent designation (Tib: *brten nos gdags-pa*, Skt: *prajnaptir-uptidtiya*). (fn 118. See Nagao (1991), pp. 190-94, for a useful discussion of alternative renderings of this compound and of the interpretive issues raised in translating it. Nagao himself opts for "8 designation based upon (some material)." I find this both awkward and misleading; it commits Nāgārjuna univocally to "some material" as the designative basis for emptiness, submerging the metalinguistic reading. Both seem to me to be clearly intended by the text.) Its referent, emptiness itself, is thereby asserted to be merely dependent and nominal - conventionally existent but ultimately empty. This is hence a middle path with regard to emptiness. (fn 119. Compare to Murti (1973):

Relativity or mutual dependence is a mark of the unreal. . , . For the Madhyamika, reciprocity, dependence, is the lack of inner essence'. *Tattva,* or the Real, is something in itself, self-evident, and self-existent. Reason, which understands things through distinction and relation is a principle of falsity, as it distorts and thereby hides the Real. Only the Absolute as the unconditioned is real. ... (p. 16)

This represents as clear a statement as one would like of the position that the conventional/ultimate distinction is a version of an appearance/reality or phenomenon/ noumenon distinction, a position I read Nāgārjuna as at pains to refute. As Murti says later in this essay (p. 22), "I have interpreted *sunyata* and the doctrine of the Two Truths as a kind of Absolutism, not Nihilism. Nāgārjuna's 'no views about reality' should not be taken as advocating a 'no-reality view.'"

Nagao (1991) concurs with Mufti on this point: "The twofold Truth is composed of paramārtha (superworldly or absolute) and saq1vrti (worldly or conventional). These two lie sharply contrasted, the former as the real truth, and the latter as the truth concealed by the veil of falsehood and ignorance" (p. 46). Now while Nagao, to be sure, is less disparaging of the conventional truth than is Murti, noting the alternative etymologies of *"saṃvṛti-satya"* and allowing that "... the twofold Truth opens a channel by which language recovers itself in spite of its falsehood and ignorance," he emphasizes that "the 'silence' of *paramārtha* is true 'Wisdom' " (p. 46) Hence in the end, he agrees with Murti on the critical interpretive claim that the two truths are radically distinct from one another and that the conventional truth is not in fact a truth in any straightforward sense. See also Napper [1993] and Hopkins [1983] for a similar interpretation.

There are two things to say about this interpretation: First, as Nāgārjuna would be quick to point out, absolutism is not the only alternative to nihilism. Madhyamika is an attempt to forge a middle path between precisely those two extremes. And second, to say that a rejection of absolutism is a rejection of the reality of the world tout court is to presuppose exactly the equation of existence with inherent existence that is the target of Nāgārjuna's critique. To the extent that "reality" is interpreted to be absolute reality, Nāgārjuna indeed advocates a "no-reality view." But to the extent that we accept the Madhyamika reinterpretation of "reality" as conventional reality, no such consequence follows. Streng (1973) agrees:

Because Nāgārjuna's ultimate affirmation is *pratītya-samutpāda,* any conventional affirmation that might suggest an absolute, in the form of a dogma or doctrine, is avoided. Even *sunya, asvabhāva, Tathāgata* or *pratyaya* cannot be transformed into absolutes....

. . . The highest awareness, which is needed for release from *svabhāva,* is not the result of moving from the finite to the infinite, but the release from ignorance about the dependent co-origination of anything at all. *Paramartha-satya,* then, is living in full awareness of dependent co-origination.... (p. 36))

To view the dependently originated world in this way is to see it neither as nonempty nor as completely nonexistent. It is, viewed in this way, conventionally existent, but empty. So we have a middle path with regard to dependent origination. (fn 120. Nagao (1989) puts this point nicely: When the birth-death cycle itself is empty, when there is nothing that exists permanently as its own essence; when, without self-identity all the functions of beings depend upon others, then dependent co-arising is emptiness and emptiness is dependent co-arising.... . . . The real is

suchness where there is an identification of emptiness and dependent co-arising whereby empty non-being "hollows out" every trace of inner selfhood. (p. 15) See also Ng (1993), esp. pp. 16-18.) To view convention in this way is to view it neither as ontologically insignificant - it determines the character of the phenomenal world - nor as ontologically efficacious - it is empty. And so we also have a middle way with regard to convention. Finally, given the nice ambiguity in the reference of "that," *(de ni),* not only are "dependent arising" and "emptiness" asserted to be dependent designations, and their referents hence merely nominal, but the very relation between them is asserted to be so dependent and hence to be empty.

This last fact, the emptiness of the relation between the conventional world of dependently arisen phenomena and emptiness itself, is of extreme importance at another stage of the Madhyamika dialectic and comes to salience in Nāgārjuna's *Vigrahavytivartani* and in Candrakīrti's *Prasannapada.* For this amounts to the emptiness of the central ontological tenet of Nāgārjuna's system and is what allows him to claim, despite all appearances, that he is positionless. That is, Nāgārjuna thereby has a ready reply to the following apparent reductio argument (reminiscent of classical Greek and subsequent Western challenges to Pyrrhonian skepticism): You say that all things are, from the ultimate standpoint, nonexistent. That must then apply to your own thesis. It therefore is really nonexistent, and your words, only nominally true. Your own thesis, therefore, denies its own ground and is self-defeating. This objection would be a sound one against a view that in fact asserted its own inherent existence, or grounded its truth on an inherently existing ontological basis. But, Nāgārjuna suggests here, that is not the case for his account. Rather everything, including this very thesis, has only' nominal truth, and nothing is either inherently existent or true in virtue of designating an inherently existent fact. This is hence one more point at which ladders must be kicked away. (fn 121. See Garfield (unpublished) and Streng (1973), chap., 4 for a similar interpretation of these verses and the correlative arguments.)

These morals are driven home in XXIV: 19, where Nāgārjuna emphasizes that everything - and this must include emptiness - is dependently arisen. So everything - including emptiness - lacks inherent existence. So nothing lacks the three coextensive properties of emptiness, dependent-origination, and conventional identity. With this in hand, Nāgārjuna can reply to the critic: He points out (XXIV: 20-35) that, in virtue of the identity of dependent origination and emptiness on the one hand and of ontological independence and intrinsic reality on the other, such phenomena as arising, ceasing, suffering, change, enlightenment, and so on - the very phenomena the opponent charges Nāgārjuna with denying are possible only if they are empty. The tables are thus turned: It appeared that Nāgārjuna, in virtue of arguing for the emptiness of these phenomena, was arguing that in reality they do not exist precisely because for the reifier of emptiness, existence and emptiness are opposites. But, in fact, because of the identity of emptiness and conventional existence, it is the reifier who, in virtue of denying the emptiness of these phenomena, denies their existence. And it is hence the reifier of emptiness who is impaled on *both* horns of the dilemma he presented to Nāgārjuna: Contradicting the ultimate truth, the opponent denies that these phenomena are empty; contradicting the conventional, he is forced to deny that they even exist! And so Nāgārjuna can conclude:

Kārikā XXIV.20

यद्यशून्यमिदं सर्वमुदयो नास्ति न व्ययः।
चतुर्णामार्यसत्यानामभावस्ते प्रसज्यते॥२०॥

yady aśūnyam idaṃ sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ |
caturṇām āryasatyānām abhāvas te prasajyate ||20||

若一切不空 則無有生滅
如是則無有 四聖諦之法

ruò yī qiè bù kōng zé wú yǒu shēng miè
rú shì zé wú yǒu sì shèng dì zhī fǎ

།གལ་ཏེ་འདི་ཀུན་མི་སྟོང་ན།།འབྱུང་བ་མེད་ཅིང་འཇིག་པ་མེད།
།འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་པ་བཞི་པོ་རྣམས།།ཁྱོད་ལ་མེད་པར་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te ’di kun mi stoṅ na | | ’byuṅ ba med ciṅ ’jig pa med |
| ’phags pa’i bden pa bźi po rnams | | khyod la med par thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 20 - If everything were of the nature of non-sunya, then there would be neither production nor destruction. Then also the non-existence of the Aryan Fourfold Truths would accordingly follow.

JONES (Skt):
[20] If, as you say, everything were not empty, then there would be neither arising nor ceasing, and the nonexistence of the four noble truths follows.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If all this is non-empty, there exists no uprising and ceasing. These imply the non-existence of the four noble truths.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If all this is not open, arising and dissolution do not exist.
For you, the nonexistence of the four noble truths follows.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
20. When the unbalanced situations of the autonomic nervous system hasn't become pervaded through the world,
The appearance of an accident does not exist, and the ending of changes does not exist.
The Four Sacred Truths,
The non-existence of Them are attached by the too much strong prejudice.

SPRUNG (Skt):
20 If all things are not devoid, nothing can come to be nor cease to be; It follows that, for you, the four Buddhist truths do not obtain.

STRENG (Skt):
20. If all existence is not empty, there is neither origination nor destruction. You must wrongly conclude then that the four holy truths do not exist.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v20 If everything were not empty
There would be no arising or ceasing
And thus there would not be
The dharma of the four holy truths.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If all were not empty, nothing could come about or perish. It would follow for you that the four ennobling truths could not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If all of this were not empty,
Nothing would arise or be destroyed.
For you it follows that
There are no four noble truths. [XXIV.20]

GARFIELD (Tb):
20. If all this were nonempty, as in your view,
There would be no arising and ceasing.
Then the Four Noble Truths
Would become nonexistent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
20. If all this were nonempty, as in your view,
Then there would be no arising and ceasing.
It would follow that the Four Noble Truths
Would not exist.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If all this were non-Empty, as you say, there would be neither arising nor ceasing. Such would imply the nonexistence of the Four Noble Truths.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/20 If every dharma each had its own individual existent nature and was not empty, then there would be no arising or ceasing, and because of no arising or ceasing there would be no dharma of the four holy truths. Why is this?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

20ab *If all things are not devoid, nothing can come to be nor cease to be;*

And, then, if there is neither coming to be nor ceasing to be, necessarily

20cd *It follows that, for you, the four Buddhist truths do not obtain.* (fn 15 Cf. MMK XXIV.1. Nagarjuna turns the opponent's own objection into an argument against him.)

Why? Because,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

By rescuing the philosophical middle path from any absolutistic or substantialist interpretation, Nagarjuna has set the foundation for the explanation of the Buddha's doctrine of the four noble truths. The facts of arising and ceasing are central to the four noble truths. If there ever has been a permanent entity, an entity that is not empty of a substance, then dependence as well as the four noble truths would have been falsified. No such entity has been discovered so far. Hence the four truths have remained valid.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

20. The argument for this surprising turnabout reductio is straightforwardly presented in the subsequent verses:

Kārikā XXIV.21

अप्रतीत्य समुत्पन्नं कुतो दुःखं भविष्यति।
अनित्यमुक्तं दुःखं हि तत्स्वाभाव्ये न विद्यते॥२१॥

apratītya samutpannaṃ kuto duḥkhaṃ bhaviṣyati |
anityam uktaṃ duḥkhaṃ hi tat svābhāvye na vidyate ||21||

苦不從緣生 云何當有苦
無常是苦義 定性無無常

kǔ bù cóng yuán shēng yún hé dāng yǒu kǔ
wú cháng shì kǔ yì dìng xìng wú wú cháng

།རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་འབྱུང་བ་མ་ཡིན་ན།།སྡུག་བསྔལ་ཡོད་པར་ག་ལ་འགྱུར།
།མི་རྟག་སྡུག་བསྔལ་གསུངས་པ་དེ།།རང་བཞིན་ཉིད་ལ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| rten ciṅ ’brel ’byuṅ ma yin na | | (15b1)sdug bsṅal yod par ga la ’gyur |
| mi rtag sdug bsṅal gsuṅs pa de | | raṅ bźin ñid la yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 21 - Where could suffering in the nature of non-relational origination arise? For, indeed, what is impermanent is said to be in the nature of suffering and the impermanent cannot exist in something with self-nature.

JONES (Skt):
[21] How could suffering come to be if it is not dependently arisen? It is said that suffering is impermanent - indeed, it is not seen in what is self-existent.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can there be suffering that is not dependently arisen? Suffering has, indeed, been described as impermanent. As such, it is not evident in terms of self-nature.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How will there be suffering that is not interdependently originated?
Suffering is said to be impermanent. Indeed, it does not occur in what is imagined to have self-nature.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
21. When the synthetic universal phenomena are not clear,
It is not clear where a serious pain will exist in future?
And unreliable talks really produce very severe pain,
Because even a concrete fact, which does not exist in the subjective image, is not recognized.

SPRUNG (Skt):
21 How will unregenerate existence come to be if it is not dependent on conditions? Unregenerate existence is said to be perishable and what is perishable cannot have its being in itself.

STRENG (Skt):
21. Having originated without being conditioned, how will sorrow (dukkha) come into existence? It is said that sorrow (dukkha) is not eternal; therefore, certainly it does not exist by its own nature (svabbava).

ROBINSON (Skt):
How would there be suffering that is not arisen in dependence? Since suffering is termed impermanent, it does not occur in own-beingness.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v21 If suffering did not arise from conditions
Then now could there possibly be suffering?
The meaning of suffering is impermanence
fixed nature is not impermanent.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If things were not contingently emergent, how could anguish exist? Impermanent things are taught to be anguish; in their very own nature they do not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
As it would not originate dependently,
How could there be suffering?
The teaching that the impermanent is suffering
Cannot be relevant where nature exists. [XXIV.21]

GARFIELD (Tb):
21. If it is not dependently arisen,
How could suffering come to be?
Suffering has been taught to be impermanent,
And so cannot come from its own essence.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
21. If it is not dependently arisen,
How could suffering come to be?
Suffering has been taught to be impermanent,
And so cannot exist through its essence.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How can there be dukkha that is not dependently arisen? Indeed, it has been taught that dukkha is impermanence, and as such it is not evident in terms of self-nature.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/21 Suffering which does not arise from conditions is not suffering. Why is this? The sutras say that the meaning of suffering is impermanence . If suffering had a fixed nature, how could it be impermanent, since it would not forsake its own-nature? Moreover,

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If something is self-existent it cannot arise dependently; what does not arise dependently cannot be perishable. After all, a sky-flower, which does not exist ontically, is not perishable. The illustrious one said that unregenerate existence (*duhkha*) was perishable. 'Whatever is perishable, is unregenerate existence.' And from the *Catuhsataka*: 'Suffering, certain suffering is born of the perishable and there is no happiness in it. Therefore the perishable as such is known as unregenerate existence.'

If it is supposed that things are self-existent, there can be nothing perishable. Which is to say, on the supposition that there is self-existence in things, unregenerate existence makes no sense. Nor is it merely unregenerate existence that makes no sense; on the supposition that things are self-existent, its arising (*samudaya*) as well makes no sense. Nagarjuna expounds this:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna is here returning to the interpretation of suffering by the substantialist metaphysicans (see comments on XXIV. 1), who held that suffering exists in terms of self-nature. He is reminding the metaphysicians that the Buddha's conception of suffering is founded not only on the idea of dependent arising but also the notion of impermanence. In fact, the perversion regarding the notion of impermanence is also the cause of the perversion regarding the conception of suffering (see comments on XXIII. 1).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

21. The first noble truth is the truth of the existence of suffering. The opponent charges Nāgārjuna with denying the existence of suffering through asserting its emptiness. But, Nāgārjuna points out, since emptiness is dependent origination, when the opponent denies its emptiness, he denies that suffering is dependently originated. But he agrees that all phenomena are dependently originated. He thus is forced to deny the existence of suffering. But for Nāgārjuna, since existence amounts to emptiness, the assertion of the emptiness of suffering affirms, rather than denies, its existence.

Kārikā XXIV.22

स्वभावतो विद्यमानं किं पुनः समुदेष्यते।
तस्मात्समुदयो नास्ति शून्यतां प्रतिबाधतः॥२२॥

svabhāvato vidyamānaṃ kiṃ punaḥ samudeṣyate |
tasmāt samudayo nāsti śūnyatāṃ pratibādhataḥ ||22||

若苦有定性 何故從集生
是故無有集 以破空義故

ruò kǔ yǒu dìng xìng hé gù cóng jí shēng
shì gù wú yǒu jí yǐ pò kōng yì gù

|རང་བཞིན་ལས་ནི་ཡོད་ཡིན་ན།།ཅི་ཞིག་ཀུན་ཏུ་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར།
|དེ་ཕྱིར་སྟོང་ཉིད་གནོད་བྱེད་ལ།།ཀུན་འབྱུང་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| raṅ bźin las ni yod yin na | | ci źig kun tu ’byuṅ bar ’gyur |
| de phyir stoṅ ñid gnod byed la | | kun ’byuṅ yod pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 22 - How could that which has self -nature arise again? Therefore, there is no arising in that which disaffirms (i.e., destroys)

JONES (Skt):
[22] In addition, if something exists by self-existence, how could it come to be? For one who rejects emptiness, there can be no “coming to be.”

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can that which is evident in terms of self-nature rise again? Therefore, for one who contradicts emptiness, there exists no [conception of] arising.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, why will what is presently existing as a consequence of selfnature rise again?
Therefore, from the denial of openness, there is the nonexistence of arising.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
22. The subjective ideas, which we are considering in our brain now,
How they are possible to be considered in our brain again?
Therefore it is impossible for the past and the present will be combined together.
And then the two states of the balanced autonomic nervous system might fight with each other.

SPRUNG (Skt):
22 Why should something which exists in itself already be brought into existence once again? If devoidness of self-existence is repudiated unregenerate existence cannot come to be.

STRENG (Skt):
22. How can that which is existing by its own nature originate again? For him who denies emptiness there is no production.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Why would something occurring by its own-being arise again? Therefore when you deny emptiness, there is no arising [of suffering].

BOCKING (Ch):
24v22 If suffering had a fixed nature
How could it arise from accumulation?
Therefore there is no accumulation
Through denial of the principle of emptiness.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If it did exist from its own nature, why would it have an origin? Therefore, for those who undermine emptiness, it can have no origin.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Given natural existence,
What could originate?
Hence, for those who deny emptiness,
There cannot be any origin. [XXIV.22]

GARFIELD (Tb):
22. If something comes from its own essence,
How could it ever be arisen?
It follows that if one denies emptiness
There can be no arising (of suffering).

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
22. If something exists through its essence,
How could it ever be arisen?
It follows that for one who denies emptiness
There could be no sources of suffering.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How could that which exists in terms of self-nature come into existence again? For those who deny Emptiness, there can be no arising of dukkha.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/22 If suffering had a fixed nature, then it would not arise, being already existent. If this were so, there would be no truth of accumulation, because of the denial of the principle of emptiness.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The thought is that unregenerate existence does arise, and therefore there is unregenerate existence, and, as is said, there is a cause of its arising. Therefore, if one repudiates the devoidness of unregenerate existence and supposes that it is self- existent, the idea of a cause of unregenerate existence is meaningless because there would be no purpose in its coming to be a second time. And so for one repudiating devoidness, arising does not make sense either.

Further, an end (*nirodha*) to unregenerate existence is not comprehensible either for one who supposes that unregenerate existence is self-existent.

Nagarjuna expounds:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Throughout the treatise, Nagarjuna was refusing to recognize that the conception of self-nature or substance leaves any room for the recognition of arising and ceasing. This was contrary to the attempt on the part of the metaphysicians. Nagarjuna is here insisting that the conception of arising (samudaya) makes no sense at all when applied to self-nature.

Self-nature is not something that comes and goes. It is not an occurrence. It is there for ever. As such, it contradicts the theory of emptiness which is intended to explain the occurrence of events. Emptiness, as mentioned earlier (XXIV. 18), is synonymous with "dependent arising."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

22. The second noble truth is that suffering has a cause. But, again, if the opponent asserts the nonemptiness of suffering, he asserts that it does not arise from causes and conditions. Yet Nāgārjuna’s analysis shows that it must, in virtue of its emptiness, be so arisen and thus accords with the second truth.

Kārikā XXIV.23

न निरोधः स्वभावेन सतो दुःखस्य विद्यते।
स्वभावपर्यवस्थानान्निरोधं प्रतिबाधसे॥२३॥

na nirodhaḥ svabhāvena sato duḥkhasya vidyate |
svabhāvaparyavasthānān nirodhaṃ pratibādhase ||23||

苦若有定性 則不應有滅
汝著定性故 即破於滅諦

kǔ ruò yǒu dìng xìng zé bù yīng yǒu miè
rǔ zhù;zhuó;zhāo dìng xìng gù jí pò yū;yú;wū miè dì

།སྡུག་བསྔལ་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་ཡོད་ལ།།འགོག་པ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།
།རང་བཞིན་ཉིད་ནི་ཡོངས་གནས་ཕྱིར།།འགག་ལ་འདང་གནོད་པ་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན།།

| sdug bsṅal (2)raṅ bźin gyis yod na | | ’gog pa yod pa ma yin no |
| raṅ bźin gyis ni yoṅs gnas phyir | | ’gog la gnod pa byed pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 23 - The extinction of suffering in terms of self-nature does not happen. For, you deny extinction itself by adhering to the notion of self-nature.

JONES (Skt):
[23] Thus, there can be no cessation of suffering that exists though self-existence. You deny cessation by being obsessed with self-existence.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The cessation of suffering that exists in terms of self-nature is not evident. You contradict cessation by adhering to a notion of self-nature.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The cessation of suffering existing by means of self-nature does not occur.
Cessation by contradictions in self-nature is denied by you.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
23. The States of Self-Regulation are not related with the subjective existence.
Therefore, the Real State of the Painful Situations can be recognized only by the pain itself .
Subjective situations are prone to be contradictory.
However the Self-Regulation is always painful against you.

SPRUNG (Skt):
23 There is no end to unregenerate existence which is self- existent. Because of your obsession with self-existence you preclude the possibility of cessation.

STRENG (Skt):
23. There is no destruction of sorrow (dukkha) if it exists by its own nature. By trying to establish "self-existence" you deny destruction.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Cessation of suffering that exists by own-being is non-occurrent; because you persistently maintain own-being, you deny cessation.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v23 If suffering had a fixed nature
There would be no cessation
Through your attachment to fixed natures
You deny the truth of cessation.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If anguish existed by its own nature, there could be no cessation. Because its own nature would be totally present, cessation too would be undermined.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If suffering exists by nature,
There can be no cessation.
As it would remain completely,
Cessation would be invalidated. [XXIV.23]

GARFIELD (Tb):
23. If suffering had an essence,
Its cessation would not exist.
So if an essence is posited,
One denies cessation.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
23. If suffering existed essentially,
Its cessation would not exist.
So if one takes it to exist essentially,
One denies cessation.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The cessation of dukkha in terms of self-nature is not evident. To assert self-nature is to deny cessation.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/23 If suffering had a fixed nature, it would not cease. Why? Because natures do not cease.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If unregenerate existence were self-existent, how could there be an end to it as self-existence does not terminate? Thus, because of your obsession with self-existence, having seized on the idea and persisting in it stubbornly, you preclude the possibility of an end to unregenerate existence.

Now Nagarjuna expounds how the Buddhist path (*marga*) as well is unintelligible for the exponent of the self-existence view.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Just as the notion of selfnature contradicts the idea of arising, it also renders the conception of cessation meaningless. Note the emphasis on the present participle, santa (left untranslated by Inada,), used in relation to duhkha, implying "suffering that exists" in terms of selfnature. The notion of existence defined in this manner has already been criticized by Nagarjuna (I.6). In effect Nagarjuna is saying that the notion of existence (sat) may be compatible with the conception of self-nature, but it is not appropriate in the context of "that which has come to be" (bhuta).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

23. Similarly, the third noble truth is the truth of cessation. But inherently existent things cannot cease. Empty ones can. Nāgārjuna’s analysis thus explains the third truth; the reifier contradicts it.

Kārikā XXIV.24

स्वाभाव्ये सति मार्गस्य भावना नोपपद्यते।
अथासौ भाव्यते मार्गः स्वाभाव्यं ते न विद्यते॥२४॥

svābhāvye sati mārgasya bhāvanā nopapadyate |
athāsau bhāvyate mārgaḥ svābhāvyaṃ te na vidyate ||24||

苦若有定性 則無有修道
若道可修習 即無有定性

kǔ ruò yǒu dìng xìng zé wú yǒu xiū dào
ruò dào kě xiū xí jí wú yǒu dìng xìng

|ལམ་ལ་རང་བཞིན་ཡོད་ན་ནི||བསྒོམ་པ་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ|
|ཅི་སྟེ་ལམ་དེ་བསྒོམ་བྱས་ན||ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན||

| lam la raṅ bźin yod na ni | | sgom pa ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |
| ci ste lam de bsgom bya na | | khyod kyi raṅ bźin yod ma (3)yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 24 - If the way to enlightenment possesses self -nature, then its practice will not be possible. But if the way is practiced, your assertion of a way involving self-nature is inadmissible (i.e., cannot exist).

JONES (Skt):
[24] If the path were self-existent, the cultivation of the path could not occur. But since the path is in fact cultivated, self-existence is not seen in it.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When self-nature exists, the cultivation of the path is not appropriate. And if the path were to be cultivated, then no self-nature associated with it [i.e., the path] would be evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
In what is conceived to be existing by self-nature, practice of the path does not take place.
But were this path caused to exist by you, what is imagined to be selfnature does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
24. Relying upon our own will actually belong to the True Way.
And what kind of reason does such a result occur, is not clear.
Fortunately the symbol of the True Way exists actually,
And so no existence of selfishness can be recognized from the facts.

SPRUNG (Skt):
24 The realizing of a path which exists in itself, is not intelligible. Again, a path which is to be realized cannot exist in itself as you think.

STRENG (Skt):
24. If the path of release is self-existent, then there is no way of bringing it into existence (bhávaná); If that path is brought into existence, then "self-existence," which you claim does not exist.

ROBINSON (Skt):
If own-being existed, cultivation of the path would not be a fact; if the path is cultivated, then your “own-being” does not occur.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v24 If suffering had a fixed nature
There would be no cultivation of the Way.
If the Way can be cultivated
Then it does not have a fixed nature.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the path existed by its own nature, cultivation would not be appropriate. If the path is to be cultivated, your own nature cannot exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there were a nature of the path,
It could not reasonably be cultivated.
If the path is to be cultivated,
Then this nature of yours does not exist. [XXIV.24]

GARFIELD (Tb):
24. If the path had an essence,
Cultivation would not be appropriate.
If this path is indeed cultivated,
It cannot have an essence.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
24. If the path had an essence,
Practice would not be tenable.
If this path is to be practiced,
It cannot have an essence you attribute.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If the Path existed in terms of self-nature, then its cultivation would not be possible. But if the Path were to be cultivated, it cannot have self-nature.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/24 If dharmas had a fixed existence, then there would be no cultivation of the Way, and why? If dharmas had reality, then they would be permanent, and what is permanent cannot be augmented. If the Way can be cultivated, then the Way does not have a fixed nature.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If all things were self-existent then the path too would be self-existent in the same sense; but a path is by definition unrealized. Why would one realize it a second time? As Nagarjuna puts it, 'The realizing (*bhavana*) of a path which exists in itself is not intelligible.'

If you concede that a path is to be realized then indeed the Buddhist path could not be self-existent. The meaning is, because of the nature of effect and cause. Again the realization of the way is commended for the purpose of ending unregenerate existence and eradicating its origin. According to the argument developed, the proponent of the self-existence view must realize:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The principle of self-nature (svabhavya, note the use of the abstract noun instead of svabhava) explains the way in which self-nature functions. Thus, if somethings are assumed to have self-nature, what is assumed is that things happen on their own (svo bhavo) without the support of anything else. In this sense, they are independent. If the path (marga) leading to the cessation of suffering (duhkha) were to be explained in terms of self-nature, it means that the way will work out on its own, without any effort on the part of one who is expected to cultivate it. If one is expected to cultivate the path, it means that one has to make an effort. It does not happen automatically.

Kārikā XXIV.25

यदा दुःखं समुदयो निरोधश्च न विद्यते।
मार्गो दुःखनिरोधत्वात् कतमः प्रापयिष्यति॥२५॥

yadā duḥkhaṃ samudayo nirodhaś ca na vidyate |
mārgo duḥkhanirodhatvāt katamaḥ prāpayiṣyati ||25||

若無有苦諦 及無集滅諦
所可滅苦道 竟為何所至

ruò wú yǒu kǔ dì jí wú jí miè dì
suǒ kě miè kǔ dào jìng wéi hé suǒ zhì

|གང་ཚེ་སྡུག་བསྔལ་ཀུན་འབྱུང་དང་||འགོག་པ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན|
|ལམ་གྱིས་སྡུག་བསྔལ་འགོག་པ་ནི||གང་ཞིག་འཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར་བར་འདོད||

| gaṅ tshe sdug bsṅal kun ’byuṅ daṅ | | ’gog pa yod pa ma yin na | |
lam gyi sdug bsṅal ’gog pa ni | | gaṅ źig thob par ’gyur par ’dod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 25 - When suffering, arising, and extinction cannot be admitted to exist, what path is achieved in virtue of the extinction of suffering?

JONES (Skt):
[25] If no suffering, arising, and ceasing are seen, what path for the cessation of suffering could there be?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When suffering as well as its arising and ceasing are not evident, through the cessation of suffering where will the path lead to?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If suffering, arising, and cessation does not OCcur
which path will result in the cessation of sUfferin~?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
25. At every time, when Pains are accumulated,
Self-regulation is never recognized at all.
The True Way seems to be the negation of Pain.
And how is it possible for something to be found in future?

SPRUNG (Skt):
25 If there is no unregenerate existence and no origin or nor end to it, what way can there be leading to its cessation?

STRENG (Skt):
25. When sorrow (dukkha), origination, and destruction do not exist, What kind of path will obtain the destruction of sorrow (dukkha)?

ROBINSON (Skt):
When suffering, arising and cessation do not occur, what path is supposed to be attained through the cessation of suffering?

BOCKING (Ch):
24v25 If there were no truth of suffering
And no truths of accumulation and cessation,
What could be achieved
By a Way to extinguish suffering?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When anguish, origins and cessation cannot exist, what ceasing of anguish could one seek to attain by the path?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If there is neither suffering
Nor its origin and cessation,
What cessation of suffering
Do you assert is achieved by the path? [XXIV.25]

GARFIELD (Tb):
25. If suffering, arising, and
Ceasing are nonexistent,
By what path could one seek
To obtain the cessation of suffering?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
25. If suffering, its origin, and
Its cessation are nonexistent,
By what path could one seek
To obtain the cessation of suffering?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When dukkha as well as its arising and ceasing are not evident, what way can there be leading to its cessation?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/25 If all dharmas had a pre-existent fixed nature, there would be no truths of suffering, accumulation or cessation. Then what state of extinction of suffering could the Way to the extinction of suffering achieve?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

There can be no cessation of unregenerate existence because of whose cessation the way, as what is attained, is realized. It follows that the Buddhist path is not intelligible. In sum, the four Buddhist truths cease to exist for those who hold that things are self-existent.

Now Nagarjuna expounds how, for such, there can be no clear knowledge, no overcoming, no inner acceptance, and no final realization of the Buddhist truths.

Devoidness essential to intelligibility of enlightenment

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Insisting upon the recognition of self-nature, the metaphysicians were compelled to deny the fact of suffering as well as its arming and ceasing. It would, therefore, be meaningless to speak of a path leading to the cessation of suffering. Substantialist speculation leaves only two alternatives: either there is cessation of suffering or there is no cessation of suffering. If the fact is that there is cessation of suffering (duhkha-nirodhatva), there is no room for a path. It happens in any case. If the fact is that there is no cessation of suffering, then it is meaningless to think of a path. Fatalism being the consequence of both standpoints, the notion of a path leading to any goal is rendered utterly meaningless.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

25. The fourth truth is the truth of the path. Again, the path only makes sense, and cultivation of the path is only possible, if suffering is impermanent and alleviable and if the nature of mind is empty and hence malleable. The path, after all, is a path from suffering and to awakening. If the former cannot cease and the latter does not depend on cultivation, the path is nonexistent. But it is the analysis in terms of emptiness that makes this coherent. An analysis on which either the phenomena were inherently existent or on which emptiness was and the phenomena were therefore nonexistent would, make nonsense of the Four Noble Truths. Nāgārjuna now turns to the implications for this line of argument for the three jewels, the Sangha, the Buddha, and the Dharma:

Kārikā XXIV.26

स्वभावेनापरिज्ञानं यदि तस्य पुनः कथम्।
परिज्ञानं ननु किल स्वभावः समवस्थितः॥२६॥

svabhāvenāparijñānaṃ yadi tasya punaḥ katham |
parijñānaṃ nanu kila svabhāvaḥ samavasthitaḥ ||26||

若苦定有性 先來所不見
於今云何見 其性不異故

ruò kǔ dìng yǒu xìng xiān lái suǒ bù jiàn
yū;yú;wū jīn yún hé jiàn qí xìng bù yì gù

།གལ་ཏེ་རང་བཞིན་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ནི།།ཡོངས་སུ་ཤེས་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན།
།དེ་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་ཡོངས་ཤེས་འགྱུར།།རང་བཞིན་གནས་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནམ།།

| gal te raṅ bźin ñid kyis ni | | yoṅs su śes pa ma yin na |
| de ni ji ltar yoṅs śes 'gyur | | (4)raṅ bźin gnas pa ma yin nam |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 26 - If (suffering) cannot be known in virtue of self-nature, how does it become an object of knowledge again? Self-nature, indeed, never remains fixed.

JONES (Skt):
[26] If non-understanding exists by self-existence, how will understanding ever arise? Is not self-existence fixed?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If non-understanding is due to self-nature, how can one come to possess understanding subsequently? Is it not the case that self-nature is fixed?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
There is no thesis by means of self-nature. How is there a thesis
or proposition about it if self-nature is never assuredly established?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
26. Relying upon subjective existence is never relying upon perfect knowledge.
At that time, what is included into the concrete facts is what again?
How is it possible for the problem to be included into Reality actually?
Therefore, the subjective existences are perfectly maintained stable.

SPRUNG (Skt):
26 If the lack of clear knowledge is self-existent how can there ever be knowledge? Surely what is self-existent is unchanging.

STRENG (Skt):
26. If there is no complete knowledge as to self-existence, how can there be any knowledge of it? Indeed, is it not true that self-existence is that which endures?

BOCKING (Ch):
24v26 If suffering had a fixed nature
Which was not previously perceived
How could it be perceived now
Since its nature would not have changed?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If non-understanding existed by its very own nature, how could one ever understand? Doesn't it abides by nature?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If complete understanding
Were absent by nature,
How could complete understanding occur?
Does nature not remain? [XXIV.26]

GARFIELD (Tb):
26. If nonunderstanding comes to be
Through its essence,
How will understanding arise?
Isn't essence stable?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
26. If it is not understood
Through its essence,
How could it come to be understood?
Does essence not endure?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If non-understanding is self-existent, how can there be understanding? Whatever is self-existent does not change.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/26 If previously, when you were unenlightened, you were unable to perceive the nature of suffering then you ought not to be able to perceive it now either, and why? Because its nature would be fixed as 'not perceived'.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If it is supposed that at one time there is self-existent ignorance of unregenerate existence but that later there is perfect comprehension (*parijnayate*) of it, that does not make sense. Why not? Because surely the self-existent is unchanging. Surely it is common experience that the self-existent is immutable and is not subject to change, like the heat of fire. As there can be no change in what is self-existent it is not logically possible that there can be knowledge of unregenerate existence of which there was, earlier, self-existent ignorance. Thus, perfect comprehension of unregenerate existence is not possible either.

And as the perfect comprehension of unregenerate existence is not possible, so:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Inada's rendering of nanu kila svabhavah samavastbitah as "self-nature, indeed, never remains fixed," seems to be based upon a misunderstanding of the import of the particle nanu which simply means: "is it not the case that," rather than a simple negation. If self-nature is something that "never re-maim fixed," what we are presented here is the so-called Spinozan solution to the problem of substance. Nagarjuna was not willing to accept such an interpretation of self-nature, for if self-nature were understood as changing, the whole purpose of formulating the notion of self-nature by the substan- tialists would be defeated. Therefore, he was simply asking the question: "Is it not the case that self-nature is fixed?" He is, in fact, insisting that if it is not fixed, it is not a self-nature. A change of substance was, in the eyes of Nagarjuna , a self-contradiction.

Hence he argues: If there is any inability to understand suffering because such inability is inherent, is through self-nature, then there can never be its understanding. Something that is inherently unknowable can never be subsequently known. This is the most telling criticism of self-nature (svabhava) as it is employed in the explanation of the path to freedom (nirvana).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

26. If ignorance is real and thus for the opponent inherently existent, there is no possibility of replacing it with insight. Therefore the cultivation of Buddhist practice is impossible, or at least pointless.

Kārikā XXIV.27

प्रहाणसाक्षात्करणे भावना चैवमेव ते।
परिज्ञावन्न युज्यन्ते चत्वार्यपि फलानि च॥२७॥

prahāṇasākṣātkaraṇe bhāvanā caivam eva te |
parijñāvan na yujyante catvāry api phalāni ca ||27||

如見苦不然 斷集及證滅
修道及四果 是亦皆不然

rú jiàn kǔ bù rán duàn jí jí zhèng miè
xiū dào jí sì guǒ shì yì jiē bù rán

།དེ་བཞིན་དུ་ནི་ཁྱོད་ཉིད་ཀྱི།།སྤང་དང་མངོན་དུ་བྱ་བ་དང་།
།བསྒོམ་དང་འབྲས་བུ་བཞི་དག་ཀྱང་།།ཡོངས་ཤེས་བཞིན་དུ་མི་རུང་ངོ་།།

| de bźin du ni khyod ñid kyi | | spaṅ daṅ mṅon du bya ba daṅ |
| bsgom daṅ 'bras bu bźi dag kyaṅ | | yoṅs śes bźin du mi ruṅ ṅo |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 27 - Just as in the case of knowledge (of suffering), therefore, your knowledge of abandoning, perceptual confirmation, practice, and the four fruits (i.e., religious attainments) cannot be possible.

JONES (Skt):
[27] Like understanding, elimination, realization, and meditative development are not possible if you accept self-existence, nor are their four noble fruits.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
As in the case of understanding, this [i.e., the explanation in terms of self-nature] is not proper in relation to the activities of relinquishing, realizing as well as cultivating. And so would the four fruits be [improper.]

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Practice in the intuitive perception of letting go and thus possession of a thesis and also the four noble fruits do not occur for you.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
27. Considerations are just Intuitions.
What are manifested themselves in front of us are just the same as what we are looking at them.
What are similar to knowledge are never fixed like a harness.
The Four Sacred Truths are like that, and the Four Kinds of Results are also similar to.

SPRUNG (Skt):
27 Overcoming, final realization and inner realization of the path make as little sense for you as did perfect comprehension and the four spiritual attainments.

STRENG (Skt):
27. As in the case of complete knowledge, neither destruction, realization, "bringing into existence," Nor are the four holy fruits possible for you.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v27 Just as perception of suffering would not occur,
So cutting-off accumulation, realizing cessation,
Cultivation of the Way, and the four fruits
Would also not occur

BATCHELOR (Tb):
In the same way, your letting go, realizing, cultivating and the four fruits too are as impossible as understanding.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The same with your elimination,
Actualization, familiarization,
Cultivation, and [our fruitions—
They are as impossible as complete understanding. [XXIV.27]

GARFIELD (Tb):
27. In the same way, the activities of
Relinquishing, realizing, and meditating
And the four fruits
Would not be possible.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
27. Just like complete understanding,
The activities of relinquishing, realizing,
Meditating, and the four fruits
Would not make sense.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
As with understanding, neither relinquishing, realizing, cultivation, nor the four fruits are possible for you.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/27 Just as, if the nature of the truth of suffering was not perceived previously it would not be perceived subsequently, so in the same way there would be no cutting-off of accumulation, realization of cessation or cultivation of the Way, and why? If accumulation's nature was not cut-off before, it could not be cut off now either, because a nature cannot be cut off. If cessation was not realized previously, it could not be realized now either, because it was not realized before. If the Way was not previously cultivated, it could not be cultivated now, because it was not cultivated before. Therefore none of the four holy truths or the four activities of perceiving, cutting-off, realizing and cultivating would exist, and if these four activities did not exist, the four fruits of the Way would not exist either. Why is this?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Overcoming (*prahana*) of the origin of unregenerate existence and final realization (*saksatkarana*) of its cessation are meant by the dual expression 'overcoming and realization'. 'Inner realization' (*bhavana*) is of the Buddhist path. It makes no sense because perfect comprehension of unregenerate existence is not possible for you. The eradication of an origin, which, because the self-existent is indestructible, is indestructibly self-existent, is not intelligible. Realization and attainment are to be understood in the same way.

It is not only perfect comprehension and so on which is not possible according to the theory of self-existence. For, 'the four spiritual attainments make as little sense as did perfect comprehension'.

As a self-existent perfect comprehension of an uncomprehended unregenerative existence does not make sense, so the attainment of having entered the stream, which earlier did not exist, cannot possibly exist later. As for the attainment of entering the stream, so, it should be recognized, there can be no attainments of once-returning, not-returning and enlightenment.

It is not merely that, like perfect comprehension, these spiritual attainments make no sense, but the realization (*adhigama*) of them makes no sense either.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

An understanding (parijna) of the nature of suffering (duhkha) is a necessary prerequisite for its relinquishing, the realization of freedom, and the cultivation of the path leading to freedom. In the previous verse, Nagarjuna explained how a belief in self-nature would create difficulties in explaining understanding (parijna) or its absence (aparijna). The same difficulties are associated with the explanation of the relinquishing (prahana) of suffering, the realization (saksatkarana) of freedom and the cultivation (bhavana) of the path. To highlight these difficulties, Nagarjuna concentrates on the fruits or consequences (phala).

Kārikā XXIV.28

स्वभावेनानधिगतं यत्फलं तत्पुनः कथम्।
शक्यं समधिगन्तुं स्यात्स्वभावं परिगृह्णतः॥२८॥

svabhāvenānadhigataṃ yat phalaṃ tat punaḥ katham |
śakyaṃ samadhigantuṃ syāt svabhāvaṃ parigṛhṇataḥ ||28||

是四道果性 先來不可得
諸法性若定 今云何可得

shì sì dào guǒ xìng xiān lái bù kě dé;děi;de
zhū fǎ xìng ruò dìng jīn yún hé kě děi

|རང་བཞིན་ཡོངས་སུ་འཛིན་པ་ཡི།།འབྲས་བུ་རང་བཞིན་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ནི།
|འཐོབ་པ་མིན་པ་གང་ཡིན་དེ།།ཇི་ལྟར་འཐོབ་པ་ཉིད་དུ་འགྱུར།།

| raṅ bźin yoṅs su 'dzin pa yis | | 'bras bu raṅ bźin ñid kyis ni |
| thob pa min (5)pa gaṅ yin de | | ji ltar 'thob par nus par 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 28 - To one who adheres to the notion of self-existence, how could the (four) fruits which are unattainable in virtue of self-existence be ever attainable?

JONES (Skt):
[28] For one who accepts self-existence, how is it possible to obtain a fruit that is not already obtained through its self-existence?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How could it be possible for a person, who upholds a theory of self-nature, to realize a fruit that has already been realized through self-nature?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, how is which fruit attained by means of self-nature?
Self-nature would be able to encompass and completely grasp it.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
28. What are not grasped relying upon our subjectivity,
That is just the Result, but what is just it is?
What will be well realized, might be what has been realized already.
But in such situations, there might be perhaps subjective existence, has been realized abundantly already.

SPRUNG (Skt):
28 How could it be possible, for one who holds to the self-existence of things, to realize a certain attainment which exists in itself as unrealized?

STRENG (Skt):
28. If you accept "self-existence," and a "fruit" is not known by its self-existence, How can it be known at all?

BOCKING (Ch):
24v28 The natures of these four fruits of the Way
Being formerly unattainable,
If all dharmas had fixed natures,
How could they possibly be attained?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How can any fruits, which totally hold their own nature and by their own nature are unattained, be attained?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Since they retain their own nature,
How could fruitions that are
By nature unachieved
Ever be achieved? [XXIV.28]

GARFIELD (Tb):
28. For an essentialist,
Since the fruits through their essence
Are already unrealized,
In what way could one attain them?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
28. For an essentialist,
How could it be possible
To attain those fruits
That are already essentially unattained?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How could one who holds the notion of self-nature realize the four fruits which are yet unrealized?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/28 If all dharmas had fixed natures, and the four sramana-fruits had not yet been attained, how could they be attained now? If they can be attained, their natures are not fixed.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Because it is the nature of the self-existent not to be born nor to perish, it is not logically possible, if one assumes self- existence, that there should be subsequent realization of things whose inherent nature it was earlier to be unrealized.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

A person believing in self-nature also admits that a fruit is obtained by that means. If a fruit has not been achieved through self-nature it can never be achieved in any other way. It is an either/or situation. Accept it as occurring on its own or it will never occur. This is a substantialist view of freedom (nirvana , which will be taken up for detailed treatment by Nagarjuna later on). This, indeed, is a fatalistic or a deterministic explanation of causality. Either the effect exists in the cause or it does not (see discussion of artha [= phala] at I.6).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

28. So the essentialist has a dilemma if he wants to maintain the possibility of a community of practitioners (the Sangha) and of a path for them to practice: Either the ignorance in which they find themselves and that serves as the impetus to practice is inherently existent, in which case practice is bound to be inefficacious, or the understanding they hope to achieve is inherently existent, in which case there is no need to practice since it is already present and no use in practicing since its existence is independent of practice.

Kārikā XXIV.29

फलाभावे फलस्था नो न सन्ति प्रतिपन्नकाः।
संघो नास्ति न चेत्सन्ति तेऽष्टौ पुरुषपुद्गलाः॥२९॥

phalābhāve phalasthā no na santi pratipannakāḥ |
saṃgho nāsti na cet santi te ’ṣṭau puruṣapudgalāḥ ||29||

若無有四果 則無得向者
以無八聖故 則無有僧寶

ruò wú yǒu sì guǒ zé wú dé;děi;de xiàng zhě
yǐ wú bā shèng gù zé wú yǒu sēng bǎo

།འབྲས་བུ་མེད་ན་འབྲས་གནས་མེད། །ཞུགས་པ་དག་ཀྱང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།གལ་ཏེ་སྐྱེས་བུ་གང་ཟག་བརྒྱད། །དེ་དག་མེད་ན་དགེ་འདུན་མེད།།

| ’bras bu med na ’bras gnas med | | źugs pa dag kyaṅ yod ma yin |
| gal te skyes bu gaṅ zag brgyad | | de dag med na dge ’dun med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 29 - Without the (four) fruits, there can be no matured states and arrived (i.e., completed) states. If these eight states of men do not exist, there will also be no realization of the Sangha. - Note: Refer to verses 3 and 4 for the fruits and states of men.

JONES (Skt):
[29] In the absence of the fruits, there are none who have attained the fruits, nor any who have entered the way to attaining them. If these eight types of people do not exist, there is no community of monks and nuns.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
In the absence of the fruits, there are neither those who have attained the fruits nor those who have reached the way [to such attainment]. If the eight types of individuals do not exist, there will be no congregation.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where the fruits do not exist, the stage in which the fruits are enjoyed and those who have arrived at a goal do not exist.
If the eight kinds of persons or human beings do nol exist, the Buddhist community does not exist.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
29. Without the existence of Result, there is no establishment of the Result.
And there might be no arrival of the Realizing the Truth.
The Buddhist Organizations do not exist, and their real entities do not exist really.
There it is impossible for the eight kinds of officers, and other personal members of the Buddhist Organizations do not exists actually.

SPRUNG (Skt):
29 If the attainments do not exist, those who strive for and exist in them do not exist. If the eight spiritual categories do not exist, the Buddhist community does not exist.

STRENG (Skt):
29. In the non-existence of "fruit," there is no "residing in fruit" nor obtaining the "fruit"; When the community of Buddhists does not exist, then those eight "kinds of persons" do not exist.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v29 If there were no four fruits
There would be none who attained or aspired
And without the eight kinds of holy person
There would be no jewel of the Sangha.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the fruits did not exist, there could be no abiding in the fruits. Experiencing them would also not exist. If those eight beings did not exist, the Community would not exist.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Without fruition, there is no one abiding in it,
Nor anyone who has gained entry.
If the eight persons do not exist,
Then there is no Sangha. [XXIV.29]

GARFIELD (Tb):
29. Without the fruits, there are no attainers of the fruits,
Or enterers. From this it follows that
The eight kinds of persons do not exist.
If these don't exist, there is no spiritual community.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
29. Without the fruits, there would be no
Enjoyers of the fruits or practitioners.
If the eight kinds of beings and persons did not exist,
There would be no sangha.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
In the absence of the fruits, there are neither those who have arrived nor those who have attained the path. If the eight types of individuals do not exist, there is no Sangha.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/29 If the four sramana-fruits did not exist, there would be none who attained the fruits and none who aspired to them. Without the eight types of saints and holy people there would be no jewel of the Sangha. But the sutras say that these eight types of saints and holy people constitute the Sangha-jewel.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

("Eight spiritual categories": fn 16 Cf MMK XXIV.4.)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

29. The consequence of this is that there is no Sangha. The existence of the Sangha is entirely dependent upon the existence of the path and of the possibility of the fruits of the path - increasing degrees of realization since the Sangha is, by definition, the community of practitioners of the path.

Kārikā XXIV.30

अभावाच्चार्यसत्यानां सद्धर्मोऽपि न विद्यते।
धर्मे चासति संघे च कथं बुद्धो भविष्यति॥३०॥

abhāvāc cāryasatyānāṃ saddharmo ’pi na vidyate |
dharme cāsati saṃghe ca kathaṃ buddho bhaviṣyati ||30||

無四聖諦故 亦無有法寶
無法寶僧寶 云何有佛寶

wú sì shèng dì gù yì wú yǒu fǎ bǎo
wú fǎ bǎo sēng bǎo yún hé yǒu fú;fó bǎo

།འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་རྣམས་མེད་པའི་ཕྱིར།།དམ་པའི་ཆོས་ཀྱང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།ཆོས་དང་དགེ་འདུན་ཡོད་མིན་ན།།སངས་རྒྱས་ཇི་ལྟར་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར།།

| ’phags pa’i bden rnams med pa’i phyir | | dam pa’i (6)chos kyaṅ yod ma yin |
| chos daṅ dge ’dun yod min na | | saṅs rgyas ji ltar yod par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 30 - Without the Aryan Truths the true Dharma does not exist. Without the Dharma and Sangha, how could there be the Buddha?

JONES (Skt):
[30] Because of the nonexistence of the four noble truths, the true doctrine also is not seen. And if there is no doctrine or religious community, how could a buddha arise?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
From the non-existence of the noble truths, the true doctrine would also not be evident. In the absence of the doctrine and the congregation, how can there be an enlightened one?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
From the nonexistence of the noble truths, the true Teaching does not occur.
Where the Teaching and the Buddhist community do not exist, how will the Buddha exist?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
30. Without leaving the non-existence of the Sacred Truths,
Even the Real Universe can never be recognized.
If He were not existing both in the Universe, or in the Buddhist Organization,
Where shall it be possible for Buddha to exist even in future?

SPRUNG (Skt):
30 If the four Buddhist truths do not hold there is no Buddhist Truth. If the Buddhist Truth and community do not exist, how can there be an enlightened one?

STRENG (Skt):
30. Because there is non-existence of the four holy truths, the real dharma does not exist. And if there is no dharma and community, how will the Buddha exist?

BOCKING (Ch):
24v30 Because there are no four holy truths
There is no jewel of the Dharma either
And without the Dharma-jewel and Sangha-jewel
How can there be the Buddha-jewel?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Since there would be no ennobling truths, the sublime Dharma could also not exist. If the Community and the Dharma did not exist, how could Buddha exist?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Because there are no noble truths,
There is no Dharma either:
If there are no Dharma and Sangha,
How could there be any Buddha? [XXIV.30]

GARFIELD (Tb):
30. From the nonexistence of the Noble Truths
Would follow the nonexistence of the true doctrine.
If there is no doctrine and no spiritual community,
How could a Buddha arise?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
30. If the Noble Truths did not exist
The noble Dharma would not exist.
If there were neither Dharma nor sangha,
How could a Buddha come to exist?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
From the non-existence of the Four Noble Truths, the Dharma would not be evident. Without the Dharma and the Sangha, how can there be the Buddha?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/30 Putting into practice the four holy truths one attains the dharma of nirvana. If there were no four truths there would be no jewel of the Dharma. If these two jewels did not exist, how could the jewel of the Buddha possibly exist? By such reasonings as these, asserting that dharmas have fixed natures, you destroy the three jewels.

Question: Although you have refuted all dharmas, surely the ultimate state (Tao) of anuttara-samyak-sambodhi exists, since it is by virtue of this state that we call someone 'Buddha'.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The meaning of these two verses is as explained previously.

Further, on the assumption of self-existence in things,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Having shown that the explanation of the attainment of the fruits (phala) of life is rendered impossible or meaningless by the adherence to the notion of self-nature, Nagarjuna turns the table on the metaphysicians, showing them how the denial of emptiness (sunyata), rather than its assertion, leads to a denial of all that they were trying to explain.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

30. But it would also follow that there is no Dharma - no true Buddhist doctrine since that is grounded on the existence of the Four Noble Truths. And finally, as Nāgārjuna emphasizes in XXIV: 31, 32, since the attainment of buddhahood depends upon the study and practice of the Dharma within the context of the spiritual community, the opponent's view, unlike Nāgārjuna's, has the consequence that no buddha can arise. Moreover, if the Buddha and enlightenment were each inherently existent, they would be independent and could hence arise independently, which is absurd. To be a buddha is to be enlightened, and vice versa:

Kārikā XXIV.31

अप्रतीत्यापि बोधिं च तव बुद्धः प्रसज्यते।
अप्रतीत्यापि बुद्धं च तव बोधिः प्रसज्यते॥३१॥

apratītyāpi bodhiṃ ca tava buddhaḥ prasajyate |
apratītyāpi buddhaṃ ca tava bodhiḥ prasajyate ||31||

汝說則不因 菩提而有佛
亦復不因佛 而有於菩提

rǔ shuì zé bù yīn pú tí ér yǒu fú;fó
yì fù bù yīn fú;fó ér yǒu yū;yú;wū pú tí

།ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་སངས་རྒྱས་བྱང་ཆུབ་ལ།།མ་བརྟེན་པར་ཡང་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།
།ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་བྱང་ཆུབ་སངས་རྒྱས་ལ།།མ་བརྟེན་པར་ཡང་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| khyod kyis saṅs rgyas byaṅ chub la | | ma brten par yaṅ thal bar ’gyur |
| khyod kyis byaṅ chub saṅs rgyas la | | ma brten par yaṅ thal bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 31 - According to your assertion there is a fallacy of becoming the Buddha without relationship to enlightenment. Also, conversely, there is enlightenment without relationship to the Buddha.

JONES (Skt):
[31] It also follows for you that an enlightened one is not dependent upon enlightenment. It also follows for you that enlightenment is not dependent upon the enlightened.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Your [conception of the] enlightened one implies an independent enlightenment. Also, your [conception of] enlightenment implies an independent enlightened one.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
It follows for you that the Buddha is independent of enlightenment.
And it follows for you that enlightenment is independent of the Buddha.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
31. Even though the Truth is not confirmed so well yet,
Your Gautama Buddha is compassionate toward you.
Even though you have not arrived at Gautama Buddha's personality well,
You have attached to your own Buddhist Truth preferably.

SPRUNG (Skt):
31 It follows for you that the enlightened person is not dependent on enlightenment. It follows for you that enlightenment is not dependent on an enlightened person.

STRENG (Skt):
31. For you, either the one who is enlightened (Buddha) comes into being independent of enlightenment, Or enlightenment comes into being independent of the one who is enlightened.

ROBINSON (Skt):
According to you, the Buddha would not be dependent on bodhi, which is absurd, and bodhi would not be dependent on the Buddha, which is absurd.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v31 You are saying that the Buddha exists
But independently of bodhi
And again, that independently of a Buddha
Bodhi nevertheless exists.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It would also follow that your Buddha does not depend on awakening. It would also follow that your awakening does not depend on Buddha.

DOCTOR (Tb):
For you it follows that the Buddha
Does not depend on enlightenment.
For you it follows that enlightenment
Does not depend on the Buddha. [XXIV.31]

GARFIELD (Tb):
31. For you, it would follow that a Buddha
Arises independent of enlightenment.
And for you, enlightenment would arise
Independent of a Buddha.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
31. For you, it would follow absurdly that a Buddha
Would be independent of enlightenment.
And for you, it would follow absurdly that
Enlightenment would be independent of a Buddha.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
For you, it would follow that a Buddha arises independent of enlightenment, and enlightenment arises independent of a Buddha.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/31 If, as you say, all dharmas have a fixed nature, then there should be Buddhahood independently of bodhi, and bodhi independently of Buddhahood, since the nature of these two will be permanent and fixed.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If there were an ontic existent (*bhava*) called a self-existent enlightened person, a buddha, he would not be dependent on enlightenment (*bodhi*), on awareness that is omniscient; he would not even be related to it. As was said, 'The self-existent is not created nor is it dependent on anything other than itself.' That is, there would be enlightenment without anyone being enlightened; enlightenment would have no basis and be unrelated to anyone becoming enlightened.

Further,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Explained in terms of self-nature, the enlightened one would be so irrespective of conditions (apratyaya). Similarly, enlightenment would be achieved irrespective of whether it is a person who makes an effort or not. This substantialist explanation of enlightenment and the enlightened one, in terms that are strictly naturalistic or deterministic, would render the activities of the one seeking enlightenment and freedom utterly meaningless.

Kārikā XXIV.32

यश्चाबुद्धः स्वभावेन स बोधाय घटन्नपि।
न बोधिसत्त्वचर्यायां बोधिं तेऽधिगमिष्यति॥३२॥

yaś cābuddhaḥ svabhāvena sa bodhāya ghaṭann api |
na bodhisattvacaryāyāṃ bodhiṃ te ’dhigamiṣyati ||32||

雖復勤精進 修行菩提道
若先非佛性 不應得成佛

suī fù qín jīng jìn xiū xíng pú tí dào
ruò xiān fēi fú;fó xìng bù yīng dé;děi;de chéng fú;fó

།ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ནི།།སངས་རྒྱས་མིན་པ་གང་ཡིན་དེས།
།བྱང་ཆུབ་སྤྱོད་ལ་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཕྱིར།།བརྩལ་ཡང་བྱང་ཆུབ་འཐོབ་མི་འགྱུར།།

| khyod (7)kyi raṅ bźin ñid kyis ni | | saṅs rgyas min pa gaṅ yin des |
| byaṅ chub spyod la byaṅ chub phyir | | brtsal kyaṅ byaṅ chub thob mi ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 32 - According to your assertion, anyone who is not a Buddha in virtue of self-existence cannot hope to attain enlightenment even by serious endeavor or by practice of the Bodhisattva way.

JONES (Skt):
[32] One who by his self-existent nature is unenlightened would not attain enlightenment even while striving toward enlightenment by leading the way of life of a bodhisattva.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whosoever is by self-nature unenlightened, even though he were to contend with enlightenment, would not attain enlightenment through a career of a *bodhisattava*.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Whoever is not a *buddha* by means of self-nature, he is striving after enlightenment.
For you, he will not attain enlightenment in the practices of *bodhisattvas.*

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
32. Even a person, who hasn't become to the same state as Gautama Buddha relying upon his own personality yet,
Such kinds of Enlightenment can be got relying upon what is occupied.
Relying upon keeping the same state of balanced autonomic nervous system as Gautama Buddha actually,
Such kinds of people will arrive at the Real Truth actually in future..

SPRUNG (Skt):
32 One whose inherent nature is to be unenlightened, can never, according to you, even though he strives to be awakened, achieve enlightenment in the career of the bodhisattva.

STRENG (Skt):
32. For you, some one who is a non-Buddha by his own nature (svabhava) but strives for enlightenment (i.e. a Bodhisattva) Will not attain the enlightenment though the "way of life of becoming fully enlightened."

ROBINSON (Skt):
For you, he who is non-Buddha by his own-being, even though he strives for bodhi, will not realize bodhi in the bodhisattva course.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v32 Although one diligently and single-mindedly sets forth
Cultivating and practicing the bodhi-path
If he previously has the nature of a non-Buddha,
He cannot accomplish Buddhahood. ...

BATCHELOR (Tb):
For you, someone who by his very nature is not Buddha could not attain awakening however much he strove in the practice of awakening for the sake of awakening.

DOCTOR (Tb):
For you, the one who by nature is no Buddha.
May pursue the conduct of enlightenment
In order to attain enlightenment,
Yet all such efforts will be in vain. [XXIV.32]

GARFIELD (Tb):
32. For you, one who through his essence
Was unenlightened,
Even by practicing the path to enlightenment
Could not achieve enlightenment.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
32. For you, one who is
Essentially unenlightened,
Even by practicing the path to enlightenment,
Could not achieve enlightenment.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
For you, one who is by self-nature, unenlightened, would not attain enlightenment even though he practiced the Bodhisattva Way.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/32 .. e because he does not already have that nature. It is like iron which does not have the nature of gold. Even though you repeatedly refine it in various ways, it will never become gold.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

(fn 17 Cf MMK XXIV.5 commentary)

This means that because being enlightened is self-existent, there could be no enlightenment for one whose nature is to be unenlightened, even though he strives for enlightenment in the true career of the bodhisattva, because it is impossible for one whose nature is unenlightened to alter fundamentally.

Devoidness essential to the intelligibility of moral action

Further,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This is the one and only time Nagarjuna, the so-called patron of Mahayana, refers to the way (carya) of a bodhisattva. Yet, the kind of criticism he is presenting here offers no consolation to those who accept certain doctrines of popular Mahayana. Any substantialist theory, according to Nagarjuna's view, militates against the career of a bodhisattva.

To uphold the view that a person is by nature unenlightened is tantamount to saying that he can never attain the fruit of enlightenment and freedom by exerting himself. Similarly, to assert the view that a person is by nature enlightened, b a potential buddha, or possesses a bodhi-citta, makes the attainment of enlightenment meaningless (XXIV.28) or impossible.

This, indeed, is reminiscient of the long drawn controversy between the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas regarding the nature as well as the functioning of good (kusala = dharma) or bad (akusala = adharma) thoughts (citta). The metaphysical problems generated by an extremist analysis in relation to phenomena in general have been explained in Chapters I and II. The selfsame metaphysical problems appeared in the explanation of moral phenomena. The Sarvastivada-Sautrantika controversy relating to the "seeds that are of good nature" (kusala-dharma-bija) reflects their involvement in such metaphysical issues. The atomistic (and, therefore, non-empirical) analysis of thought (citta) led the metaphysicians to assume a sharp distinction not only between good thoughts (kusala-citta) and bad thoughts (akusala-citta), but also between individual moments of thought in each series, whether they be of good thoughts or bad thoughts. As such, several questions came to be raised: How does one good thought moment give rise to another similar thought moment? How can two different thought moments, one which is good and the other which is bad, coexist in one moment, especially when they are distinct as light and darkness (aloka-tamas ,see Adv)? If they cannot co-exist, how can a bad thought moment give rise to or be followed by a good thought? While the Sarvastivadins utilized the conceptions of prapti and aprapti to explain the manner of their occurrence, the Sautrantikas employed the notion of seed (bija) to elucidate these problems.

The substantialist Sarvastivadins, who adhered to a notion of self-nature (svabhava) were compelled to maintain that each variety of thought has its own-nature. Yet, when they were called upon to explain the occurrence or non-occurrence of good or bad thoughts in an individual person's stream of thought (samtana), they assumed that the non-attainment (aprapti) of one kind of thought could make room for the attainment (prapti) of another kind. The Sautrantikas, rejecting the notion of self-nature, emphasized the idea of potentiality (sakti) existing in the form of seed (bija). Thus, when a good thought moment occurs, the bad thought moment can remain latent without manifesting itself. Thus, we are left with two potentialities, one manifesting itself when the other is not. The terms sakti, bija, andvasana were all employed to refer to such potentiality.

A distinction came to be admitted not only between good (kusala) and bad (akusala), but also among the good seeds themselves. Thus, there are defiled good seeds (sasrava-kusala-bija) and non-defiled good seeds (anasrave-kusala-bija), the former accounting for worldly goodness and the latter leading to freedom (nirvana). These seeds were considered to be extremely subtle (susuksma) and remain uncorrupted or undestroyed (na samudghata). They were compared to gold (kancana). A popular statement runs thus: I perceive his extremely subtle seed of release

like a seam of gold concealed in a cleft of elemental rocks. (Moksa-bijam aham hy asya susuksmam upalaksaye, dhatu-pasana-vivare niliam iva kancanam, Sakv , see also Jaini, Adv Introduction, .)

Even though this substantialist view is attributed to the Buddha himself (see Jaini, loc cit.) on the basis of the Buddha's statement regarding the "luminous thought" (pabhassaram cittam), we have already provided evidence to the contrary (see Introduction), where thought is compared with "gold-ore" (jata-rupa) rather than with gold (suvanna). As such, neither the theory of the "seeds of release" (moksa-bija) nor of the "originally pure mind" (prakrti-prabhasvaracitta), which is a predecessor, the Mahayana notion of a bodhi-citta, can be reconciled with the Buddha's conception of non-substantiality (anatta) or Nagarjuna's view of "emptiness (sunyata). The present statement of Nagarjuna is a clear rejection of the substantialist standpoint of the later interpreters, which represents a recurrent desire to go back to a primordial source.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

32. Nāgārjuna has hence demonstrated that any reification, whether of the conventional or of the ultimate, ends up, paradoxically, denying the existence of the very things it reifies. And any reification renders the most fundamental Buddhist philosophical insights and practices incoherent. A thoroughgoing analysis in terms of emptiness, on the other hand - one that includes the understanding of the emptiness of emptiness - renders the entire phenomenal world as well as emptiness itself comprehensible as nominally existent, empirically actual, and dependently arisen - real but essenceless. At this stage, Nāgārjuna shifts to the charge leveled by the opponent in XXIV: 2 that no practice is intelligible in the context of emptiness and argues that, on the contrary, practice is intelligible only in that context. The argument is a reprise of earlier moves, and so is rather straightforward:

Kārikā XXIV.33

न च धर्ममधर्मं वा कश्चिज्जातु करिष्यति।
किमशून्यस्य कर्तव्यं स्वभावः क्रियते न हि॥३३॥

na ca dharmam adharmaṃ vā kaścij jātu kariṣyati |
kim aśūnyasya kartavyaṃ svabhāvaḥ kriyate na hi ||33||

若諸法不空 無作罪福者
不空何所作 以其性定故

ruò zhū fǎ bù kōng wú zuò zuì fú zhě
bù kōng hé suǒ zuò yǐ qí xìng dìng gù

།འགའ་ཡང་ཆོས་དང་ཆོས་མིན་པ། །ནམ་ཡང་བྱེད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ།
།མི་སྟོང་བ་ལ་ཅི་ཞིག་བྱ། །རང་བཞིན་ལ་ནི་བྱ་བ་མེད།།

| ’ga’ yaṅ chos daṅ chos min pa | | nam yaṅ byed par mi ’gyur te |
| mi stoṅ pa la ci źig bya | | raṅ bźin la ni bya ba (16a1)med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 33 - No one would ever be able to create factors or non-factors of experience. For, what is there to create in non-sunyata? Self-existence, after all, cannot be created. - Note: The word, create, may well be substituted by manipulate.

JONES (Skt):
[33] And no one will ever perform correct or incorrect actions - what can be done to what is not empty since what is self-existent cannot be affected by action?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
No one will, indeed, do good or bad. What could the non-empty do? For, self-nature does not perform.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Not anyone at all will do good or bad deeds.
Indeed, self-nature is not made by what is to be made of what is not open.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
33. Even the Rule of the Universe, or even Not the Rule of the Universe,
Both those are never produced by Human Beings even in future.
How is it possible for what does not belong to the balanced autonomic nervous system to be what should be done?
Because it is completely impossible for any subjective idea to be able to produce any kinds of Something Real at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
33 No one will ever achieve good or ill: what can be attained if things are not devoid of self-existence? The self-existent is not produced by action.

STRENG (Skt):
33. Neither the dharma nor non-dharma will be done anywhere. What is produced which is non-empty? Certainly self-existence is not produced.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v33 If all dharmas were not empty
There would be no-one who did good or bad (deeds)
If not empty, what could be done
Since their natures would be fixed?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
No one would ever do what is Dharma and what is not Dharma. What can that which is not empty do? Inherent nature is inactive.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Nobody would ever perform
Dharma or non-Dharma.
What can be done to the not empty?
There can be no action in relation to nature. [XXIV.33]

GARFIELD (Tb):
33. Moreover, one could never perform
Right or wrong actions.
If this were all nonempty what could one do?
That with an essence cannot be produced.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
33. Nobody could ever perform
Virtuous or nonvirtuous actions.
If all this were nonempty, what could one do?
What can one with an essence do?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Furthermore, no one could ever act for good or ill. If all were non-Empty, what could be done? Self-nature is not made.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/33 If dharmas were not empty, there would never be people doing good and bad (deeds), and why? Because the natures of good and bad (deeds) would be already fixed, and also because there would be no doing or doer.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

On the assumption of the self-existence of things, bringing about good or ill is not intelligible. What can be attained in the non-devoid? It is not logically possible to bring about anything which, by nature, is not devoid of self-existence, because the non-devoid is factually in existence.

Further,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Inada, once again, renders the terms dharma and adharma as factors and non-factors of experience, thereby reading more ontology than axiology into the statement of Nagarjuna. A substantialist interpretation of good and bad allows no room for their cultivation or performance. If someone is good in terms of self-nature, he does not have to perform the good; it is simply there. Similarly with bad. Self-nature (svabhava) implies absolute existence (sad-bhava), not occurrence (sambhava, XXIV.22).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

33. Nāgārjuna now turns to the moral dimensions of the extreme positions and their consequences for the Buddhist doctrine of karma, specifically with regard to the consequences for one's own life of one's actions. Nonempty phenomena, such as the opponent wishes to posit, are seen, on analysis, to be static. But practice and action require dependence, change, and a regular relation between one's actions and one's future state. So in the preceding verse, Nāgārjuna notes that in a static, nonempty world, we can't even make sense of the possibility of action. He then points out (XXIV: 34) that even were action possible, in virtue of the impossibility of change and dependence in an essentialist universe, there would be no consequences of those actions. For to be a consequence is to be dependent, hence to be empty, hence from the standpoint of the essentialist - whether reificationist or nihilist-nonexistent.

Kārikā XXIV.34

विना धर्ममधर्मं च फलं हि तव विद्यते।
धर्माधर्मनिमित्तं च फलं तव न विद्यते॥३४॥

vinā dharmam adharmaṃ ca phalaṃ hi tava vidyate |
dharmādharmanimittaṃ ca phalaṃ tava na vidyate ||34||

汝於罪福中 不生果報者
是則離罪福 而有諸果報

rǔ yū;yú;wū zuì fú zhōng bù shēng guǒ bào zhě
shì zé lí zuì fú ér yǒu zhū guǒ bào

།ཆོས་དང་ཆོས་མིན་མེད་པར་ཡང་།།འབྲས་བུ་ཁྱོད་ལ་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར།
།ཆོས་དང་ཆོས་མིན་རྒྱུས་བྱུང་བའི།།འབྲས་བུ་ཁྱོད་ལ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| chos daṅ chos min med par yaṅ | | ’bras bu khyod la yod par ’gyur |
| chos daṅ chos min rgyus byuṅ ba’i | | ’bras bu khyod la yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 34 - According to your assertion, the fruit could exist separated from factors and non-factors of experience. Again, according to your assertion, the fruit could not have arisen by the factors and non-factors of experience.

JONES (Skt):
[34] Indeed, for you karmic fruit is found without any correct or incorrect action. Conversely, the fruit of correct and incorrect actions is not found.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
As for you, the fruit would be evident even without good or bad. This means that for you a fruit occasioned by good and bad would not be evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Indeed, for you the fruit occurs without good and bad deeds.
But for you the fruit does not occur without being caused by good or bad deeds.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
34. Both the Universe and the neglecting the Universe, do not exist.
Because the affirmation of Result is impossible for you to confirm the existence of Result.
Both the affirmation and the negation of the Universe are just a kind of marks,
Therefore it might be impossible for you to recognize the Result.

SPRUNG (Skt):
34 Though, for you, there are moral consequences apart from a good or ill act; yet for you there are no moral consequences deriving from a good or ill act.

STRENG (Skt):
34. Certainly, for you, there is a product without the distinction of dharma or non-dharma. Since, for you, the product caused by dharma or non-dharma does not exist.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v34 According to you, in sin and merit
There is no production of retribution and rewards
Such retribution and rewards exist,
But they are separate from sin and merit.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Even without Dharma and not-Dharma, you would have the fruits. You would not have the fruits which have arisen from the causes of Dharma and not-Dharma.

DOCTOR (Tb):
In the absence of Dharma and non-Dharma,
For you, there are still effects.
Effects caused by Dharma and non-Dharma
For you, do not exist. [XXIV.34]

GARFIELD (Tb):
34. For you, from neither right nor wrong actions
Would the fruit arise.
If the fruit arose from right or wrong actions,
According to you, it wouldn't exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
34. For you, even without virtuous or nonvirtuous causes,
There would be an effect.
According to you there is no effect
Arisen from virtuous or nonvirtuous causes.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
For you, fruit would arise from neither good or bad actions. Thus, according to you, no fruit would arise from either good or bad actions.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/34 If, as you claim, there are no rewards and retributions inherent in the good and bad deeds which are their causes and conditions, then the rewards and retributions must exist separately from the good and bad actions which are their causes and conditions. Why is this? Because the rewards and retributions do not rely on causes to emerge.

Question: Good and evil rewards and retributions cannot exist apart from sin and merit. Good and evil rewards and retributions simply arise out of sin and merit.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If a moral consequence (*phala*), whether desirable or undesirable, not deriving from a good or ill act, is self-existent, then it would exist regardless of good or ill. In so far as for you there are moral consequences without good or ill, then, for you moral consequences born of good or ill are not possible; the accumulation of good or ill merit would be meaningless. 'For you there are no moral consequences deriving from a good or ill act.'

However, if you imagine that moral consequences exist deriving from good or ill acts, Nagarjuna explains that these cannot be non-devoid of self-existence (*asunya*) (fn 18 i.e. having their being in themselves, or, existing apart from cause in time.).

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The consequence of upholding a notion of self-nature in moral philosophy are explicated here. If good and bad were to be explained in terms of self-nature or substance, then there would be goodness and badness "in themselves." These would always be existent. A fruit, if it were to arise at all, from a good action will always be good and, as such, there would be identity of cause and effect (see Chapter I). If a good action were to lead to a bad consequence, it would not matter at all, as it is assumed to be the case with, for example, "good-will." This notion of intrinsic good or bad would render the concept of a cause (nimitta) almost meaningless.

Kārikā XXIV.35

धर्माधर्मनिमित्तं वा यदि ते विद्यते फलम्।
धर्माधर्मसमुत्पन्नमशून्यं ते कथं फलम्॥३५॥

dharmādharmanimittaṃ vā yadi te vidyate phalam |
dharmādharmasamutpannam aśūnyaṃ te kathaṃ phalam ||35||

若謂從罪福 而生果報者
果從罪福生 云何言不空

ruò wèi cóng zuì fú ér shēng guǒ bào zhě
guǒ cóng zuì fú shēng yún hé yán bù kōng

།ཆོས་དང་ཆོས་མིན་རྒྱུས་བྱུང་བའི།།འབྲས་བུ་གལ་ཏེ་ཁྱོད་ལ་ཡོད།
།ཆོས་དང་ཆོས་མིན་ལས་འབྱུང་བའི།།འབྲས་བུ་ཅི་ཕྱིར་སྟོང་མ་ཡིན།།

| chos daṅ chos min rgyus byuṅ ba'i | | 'bras bu gal te khyod la (2)yod |
| chos daṅ chos min las byuṅ ba'i | | 'bras bu ci phyir stoṅ ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 35 - If you are to admit the fruit based on the factors and non-factors of experience, how could the fruit arising from them be of the nature of non-sunya?

JONES (Skt):
[35] Or, if for you there is the fruit of correct and incorrect actions, how can this fruit be non-empty since it has arisen from correct and incorrect actions?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If, on the contrary, a fruit occasioned by good or bad is evident to you, how can you maintain the fruit that has arisen from good or bad to be [at the same time] non-empty?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the fruit occurs for you without being caused by good or bad deeds
how is the fruit produced by good or bad deeds not open? '

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
35. Both the affirmation and the negation of the Universe are just a kind of marks,
Then they also recognize the Result too.
Just the Universe and the not the Universe are both the miscellaneous phenomena,
And how is it possible for those, which are not the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system, to be Result.

SPRUNG (Skt):
35 If, for you, moral consequences derive from good or ill acts, how can they, being produced from good or ill, be non-devoid?

STRENG (Skt):
35. If, for you, the product is caused by dharma or non-dharma, be non-empty? How can that product, being originated by dharma or non-dharma empty?

BOCKING (Ch):
24v35 If you say that reward and retribution
Arise out of sin and merit;
If rewards arise from sin and merit
How can you say they are not empty?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If you have the fruits which have arisen from the causes of Dharma and not-Dharma, why are the fruits which have arisen from the Dharma and not-Dharma not empty?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If for you, there are effects
That arise from Dharma and non-Dharma,
Why, then, would these effects
Of Dharma and non-Dharma not be empty? [XXIV.35]

GARFIELD (Tb):
35. If, for you, a fruit arose
From right or Wrong actions,
Then, having arisen from right or wrong actions,
How could that fruit be nonempty?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
35. If for you, an effect arose
From virtuous or nonvirtuous causes,
Then, having arisen from virtuous or nonvirtuous causes,
How could that effect be nonempty?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If, for you, fruit arose from good or bad actions, how can you, at the same time, claim that it is non-Empty?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/35 If there are no good and evil rewards apart from sin and merit, how can you say that rewards are not empty? If they are so then there will be no sin and merit apart from the doer. Your previous assertion that dharmas are not empty is not correct.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The meaning is that they will be devoid of self-existence because produced in dependence, 'like a reflection'.

What is more, all personal everyday transactions (*samvyava-hara*) without exception, like going, doing, cooking, reading, standing, originate in dependence. If you consider them to exist in themselves then you repudiate the dependent arising of things; if you repudiate that then you preclude the possibility of all personal everyday transactions. Nagarjuna expounds:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Thus, Nagarjuna insists that moral discourse and a substantialist world-view are incompatible. If something is good by nature, good in terms of self-nature, good in itself, then it must be always good. It cannot be otherwise. Such an absolutistic theory will fail to accommodate some individual or particular situations that are in conflict with the theory, but which would certainly be valid in certain contexts. This was a serious defect in the absolutistic theory, as explained by Nagarjuna in the following verse.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

35. The reificationist develops a strict dichotomy between things that exist inherently and things that are completely nonexistent. That dichotomy exhausts the ontological domain. But neither possibility for understanding the nature of practice, the practitioner, or the fruits of practice makes sense of action. If the relevant phenomena are granted inherent existence, their essence precludes development and change. If, on the other hand, they lack essence and hence, for the reifier, are completely nonexistent, there literally is no practice, in any sense: But if they are conceived of as empty and hence empirically and conventionally real, yet essenceless and dependent, the possibility and purpose of practice fall out straightforwardly. So it is the reifier, not Nāgārjuna, who makes action and soteriology impossible, and Nāgārjuna and not the reifier who rescue them from ontological oblivion.

———

Kārikā XXIV.36

सर्वसंव्यवहारांश्च लौकिकान् प्रतिबाधसे।
यत्प्रतीत्यसमुत्पादशून्यतां प्रतिबाधसे॥३६॥

sarvasaṃvyvahārāṃś ca laukikān pratibādhase |
yat pratītyasamutpādaśūnyatāṃ pratibādhase ||36||

汝破一切法 諸因緣空義
則破於世俗 諸餘所有法

rŭ pò yī qiè fă zhū yīn yuán kōng yì
zé pò yū;yú;wū shì sú zhū yú suŏ yŏu fă

|རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་པར་འབྱུང་བ་ཡི།|སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ལ་གནོད་བྱེད་གང་།
|འཇིག་རྟེན་པ་ཡི་ཐ་སྙད་ནི།|ཀུན་ལ་འང་གནོད་པ་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན།|

| rten ciṅ 'brel bar 'byuṅ ba yi | | stoṅ pa ñid la gnod byed gaṅ |
| 'jig rten pa yi tha sñad ni | | kun la gnod pa byed pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 36 - You will thus destroy all the everyday practices relative to the empirical world because you will have destroyed the sunyata of relational origination.

JONES (Skt):
[36] You reject all worldly conventions since you reject the emptiness of "dependent-arising."

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
You will contradict all the worldly conventions when you contradict the emptiness associated with dependent arising.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
All worldly everyday activites are denied by you.
That openness is what is interdependently originated is denied by you.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
36. Everything is done as the works actually, which are done in cooperation.
However you are making your efforts to stop all kinds of such secular jobs.
Such kind of very conspicuous synthetic phenomena,
The state of the balanced autonomic nervous system, you are going to stop it.

SPRUNG (Skt):
36 By precluding all personal everyday transactions, you preclude the absence of being in the dependent arising of things.

STRENG (Skt):
36. You deny all mundane and customary activities When you deny emptiness in the sense of dependent co-origination (patytya-samutpada).

BOCKING (Ch):
24v36 Your denial of the idea of emptiness,
Of the causality of all dharmas
Is a denial of all worldly conventions
And all other dharmas that exist.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Whoever undermines emptiness which is contingent emergence also undermines all the conventions of the world.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The one who denies
The emptiness of dependent origination
Will, likewise, be denying
All conventions of the world. [XXIV.36]

GARFIELD (Tb):
36. If dependent arising is denied,
Emptiness itself is rejected.
This would contradict
All of the worldly conventions.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
36. Those who deny emptiness,
Which is dependent origination,
Undermine all of
The mundane conventions.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
You contradict all worldly conventions by denying the Emptiness of dependent arising.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/36 If you deny the doctrine of causality, (and) the highest meaning of emptiness, then you deny all worldly dharmas, and why?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The word 'by' is adverbial, related to the verb 'preclude'.

Further,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This, once again, highlights the significant relationship between worldly conventions, that are situational or contextual and the principle of dependent arising which, as explained earlier, is a universal. The only way the universal can accommodate the situational is when the universal is not looked upon as corresponding to an "ultimate reality." The substantialists who assumed that there is an ultimate reality, therefore, were faced with all the insoluable metaphysics. Thus the actual function of emptiness is the elimination of this substantialist sting (see comments on XXIV. 18).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

36. Recall the other horn of the dilemma in XXIV: 6. The opponent charged Nāgārjuna not only with contradicting fundamental Buddhist tenets, but with contradicting the conventional truth as well. Nāgārjuna has responded up to this point to the first charge, turning it back on the opponent. He now does the same with the second. Nāgārjuna suggests that to assert the nonemptiness of phenomena and of their interrelations when emptiness is properly understood is not only philosophically deeply confused, but is contradictory to common sense. We can make sense of this argument in the following way: Common sense neither posits nor requires intrinsic reality in phenomena or a real causal nexus. Common sense holds the world to be a network of dependently arisen phenomena. So common sense only makes sense if the world is asserted to be empty. Hence it is the opponent, not Nāgārjuna, who disagrees with the conventional truth.

The standpoint of emptiness is hence not at odds with the conventional standpoint, only with a particular philosophical understanding of it - that which takes the conventional to be more than merely conventional. What is curious - and, from the Buddhist standpoint, sad - about the human condition, on this view, is the naturalness and seductiveness of that philosophical perspective. (fn 122. This point requires emphasis. For Nāgārjuna is not merely speaking to and correcting philosophers. He is no Berkeley, suggesting that his own position is that of common sense and that only a philosopher would reify. In fact, it is fundamental to any Buddhist outlook, and certainly to Nāgārjuna's view, that one of the root delusions that afflicts all non-buddhas is the innate tendency to reify. But that tendency is raised to high art by metaphysics. Nāgārjuna intends his attack to strike both at the prereflective delusion and at its more sophisticated philosophical counterpart. But in doing so, he is not denying, and is in fact explaining, the nonmetaphysical part of our commonsense framework - that part that enables us to act and to communicate and, especially for Nāgārjuna, to practice the Buddhist path.) This, of course, is the key to the soteriological character of the text: Reification is the root of grasping and craving and hence of all suffering. And it is perfectly natural, despite its incoherence. By understanding emptiness, Nāgārjuna intends one to break this habit and extirpate the root of suffering. But if in doing so one falls into the abyss of nihilism, nothing is achieved. For then action itself is impossible and senseless, and one's realization amounts to nothing. Or again, if one relinquishes the reification of phenomena but reifies emptiness, that issues in a new grasping and craving the grasping of emptiness and the craving for Nirvāṇa - and a new round of suffering. Only with the simultaneous realization of the emptiness, but conventional reality, of phenomena and of the emptiness of emptiness, argues Nāgārjuna, can suffering be wholly uprooted.

Let us consider now more carefully what it is to say that emptiness itself is empty. The claim, even in the context of Buddhist philosophy, does have a somewhat paradoxical air. For emptiness is, in Mahayana philosophical thought, the ultimate nature of all phenomena. And the distinction between the merely conventional nature of things and their ultimate nature would seem to mark the distinction between the apparent and the real. While it is plausible to say that what is merely apparent is empty of reality, it seems nihilistic to say that what is ultimately real is empty of reality, and as we have seen, the Madhyamika are quite consciously antinihilistic. But again, when we say that a phenomenon is empty, we say, inter alia, that it is impermanent, (fn 123. To be sure, both in the *Abhidharma* literature

and in most Mahayana metaphysical literature, space is regarded as permanent, despite being a conventional phenomenon. There are two things to say about this apparent counterexample: First, on general metaphysical grounds the claim is suspect. Whether one argues along Kantian lines, or from general relativity theory, space apparently shares, from the transcendental point of view, the impermanence of all other phenomena. But second, and for the purposes of understanding this text, more importantly, Nāgārjuna never asserts the permanence of space and repeatedly associates emptiness with impermanence. I would thus argue that other Mahayana literature to the contrary notwithstanding, nothing in Nāgārjuna's presentation of Madhyamika entails the permanence of space or indeed of any other entity.) that it depends upon conditions and that its identity is dependent upon convention. Do we really want to say of each phenomenon that its emptiness - the fact that it is empty - is itself impermanent; itself dependent on something else; itself dependent upon conventions? It might at least appear that even if all other properties of conventional entities were so, their emptiness would be an eternal, independent, essential fact.

It may be useful to approach the emptiness of emptiness by first asking what it would be to treat emptiness as nonempty. When we say that a phenomenon is empty, we mean that when we try to specify its essence, we come up with nothing. When we look for the substance that underlies the properties, or the bearer of the parts, we find none. When we ask what it is that gives a thing its identity, we stumble not upon ontological facts but upon conventions. For a thing to be nonempty would be for it to have an essence discoverable upon analysis, for it to be a substance independent of its attributes, or a bearer of parts, for its identity to be self-determined by its essence. A nonempty entity can be fully characterized nonrelationally.

For emptiness to be nonempty would be for it to be a substantial entity, an independent existent, a nonconventional phenomenon. On such a view, emptiness would be entirely distinct from any conventional phenomenon. It would, on such a view, be the object of correct perception, while conventional phenomena would be the objects of delusive perception. While conventional phenomena would be dependent upon conventions, conditions, or the ignorance of obstructed minds, emptiness, on such a view, would be apparent precisely when one sees through those conventions, dispels that ignorance, and overcomes those obstructions. Though such a position might appear metaphysically extravagant, it is hardly unmotivated. For one thing, it seems that emptiness does have an identifiable essence - namely the lack of inherent existence. So if to be empty is to be empty of essence, emptiness fails on that count to be empty. Moreover, since all phenomena, on the Madhyamika view, are empty, emptiness would appear to be eternal and independent of any particular conventions and, hence, not dependently arisen. The two truths, on such an ontological vision, are indeed radically distinct from one another.

But this position is, from Nāgārjuna's perspective, untenable. The best way to see that is this: Suppose that we take a conventional entity, such as a table. We analyze it to demonstrate its emptiness, finding that there is no table apart from its parts, that it cannot be distinguished in a principled way from its antecedent and subsequent histories, and so forth. So we conclude that it is empty. But now let us analyze that emptiness - the emptiness of the table - to see what we find. What do we find? Nothing at all but *the table's* lack of inherent existence. No conventional table, no emptiness of the table. The emptiness is dependent upon the table and is, therefore, itself empty of inherent existence, as is the emptiness of *that* emptiness, and so on, ad infinitum. To see the table as empty, for Nāgārjuna, is' not to somehow see "beyond" the illusion of the table to some other, more real entity. It is to see the table *as conventional; as dependent.* But the table that we see when we see its emptiness is the very same table, seen not as the substantial thing we instinctively posit, but rather as it is. Emptiness is hence not different from conventional reality - it is the fact that conventional reality is conventional. Hence it must be dependently arisen since it depends upon the existence of empty phenomena. Hence emptiness itself is empty. This is perhaps the most radical and deep step in the Madhyamika dialectic, but it is also, as we shall see, the step that saves it from falling into metaphysical extravagance and brings it back to sober pragmatic skepticism. (fn 124. That is, skepticism in the Pyrrhonian. or Humean sense: See Garfield (1990).)

Kārikā XXIV.37

न कर्तव्यं भवेत्किंचिदनारब्धा भवेत्क्रिया।
कारकः स्यादकुर्वाणः शून्यतां प्रतिबाधतः॥३७॥

na kartavyaṃ bhavet kiṃcid anārabdhā bhavet kriyā |
kārakaḥ syād akurvāṇaḥ śūnyatāṃ pratibādhataḥ ||37||

若破於空義 即應無所作
無作而有作 不作名作者

ruò pò yū;yú;wū kōng yì jí yīng wú suǒ zuò
wú zuò ér yǒu zuò bù zuò míng zuò zhě

|སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ལ་གནོད་བྱེད་ན། །བྱ་བ་ཅི་ཡང་མེད་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།
|རྩོམ་པ་མེད་པའི་བྱ་བར་འགྱུར། །མི་བྱེད་པ་ཡང་བྱེད་པོར་འགྱུར།།

| stoṅ pa ñid la gnod (3)byed na | | bya ba ci yaṅ med 'gyur źiṅ |
| rtsom pa med pa bya bar 'gyur | | mi byed pa yaṅ byed por 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 37 - For one who destroys Sunyata, it will be like a doer without an action, a non-activating action, or with nothing to act upon.

JONES (Skt):
[37] For one who rejects emptiness, there would be nothing whatsoever that could be done; there would be uninitiated actions' there would be an actor with no action.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
For one who contradicts emptiness there would be nothing that ought to be done; activity would be uninitiated and an agent would be non-acting.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
From the denial of openness, there would be nothing to be done,
activity would not be a bit commenced, and the doer would not be doing.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
37. Anything, which has been accomplished, does not exist at all.
There are the states, which have begun to be produced already,
And at that time what we should do carefully to begin with, might not be to produce a concrete thing directly,
But it might be sure that we should guard our balanced autonomic nervous system stable.

SPRUNG (Skt):
37 For one repudiating the absence of being in things, nothing whatsoever could be achieved through action; an act would not need to be actually carried out and an agent would exist without effecting anything.

STRENG (Skt):
37. If you deny emptiness, there would be action which is un-activated. There would be nothing whatever acted upon, and a producing action would be something not begun.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v37 If you reject the idea of emptiness
Then there will be nothing which is done,
There will be doing without doing
And a non-doer will be called a doer.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If one undermines emptiness, there would be no actions at all and actions without an author and agents who do not act.

DOCTOR (Tb):
I denial of emptiness
Will preclude all action.
There will be actions without initiation,
As well as agents without anything done. [XXIV.37]

GARFIELD (Tb):
37. If emptiness itself is rejected,
No action will be appropriate.
There would be action which did not begin,
And there would be agent without action.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
37. To deny emptiness is to assert that
No action is possible;
That there can be action without effort;
And that there can be an agent who performs no action.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If you deny Emptiness, there would be actions that are uninitiated and agents without action.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/37 If you reject the idea of emptiness, then all (karmic) effects will be without a doer and without a cause. There would be doing without an doing, and there would be doers but nothing which was done. There would also be actions, rewards and retributions and reception without any doer. But this is not correct, and therefore one should not deny emptiness.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If things were not devoid of an inherent nature they would have to be self-existent. In that case nothing can be achieved by anyone, in any way, on behalf of what is self-existent, because it already exists. No one makes the openness of space. An act would not enact anything. There would be an act, the agent of which did not effect anything. But this is not the way things are;thereforethings are not non-devoid of self-existence.

Further,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The unfortunate consequences of upholding a substantialist theory and denying emptiness are listed here. Interestingly, all of them pertain to human behavior and moral responsibility. This says much about the concerns of Nagarjuna, who by popular acclaim is more a logician primarily concerned with language and truth and therefore with ultimate reality, rather than a moral philosopher interested in axiology and, for that reason, emphasizing the conception of "ultimate fruit." He is supposed to have scorned any speculation about human behavior (karma), what human behavior ought to be (kartavya), and who a responsibile human agent (kurvana) is.

In brief, a substantialist view leads to a denial of the human element functional in this world, an element that is generally described as "disposition" (samskara). Not only does it negate the world conditioned by human dispositions (i.e., the samskrta), it also denies any activity and creativity in the natural world (see XXIV. 38 that follows).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

37. Without viewing the world as empty, we can make no sense of any human activity. Action would be pointless since nothing could be accomplished. Any existent action would have to have been eternal, and anyone who is an agent would be so independently of any action since agency would be an essential attribute.

Kārikā XXIV.38

अजातमनिरुद्धं च कूटस्थं च भविष्यति।
विचित्राभिरवस्थाभिः स्वभावे रहितं जगत्॥३८॥

ajātam aniruddhaṃ ca kūṭaśthaṃ ca bhaviṣyati |
vicitrābhir avasthābhiḥ svabhāve rahitaṃ jagat ||38||

若有決定性 世間種種相
則不生不滅 常住而不壞

ruò yǒu jué dìng xìng shì jiān zhǒng zhǒng xiàng;xiāng
zé bù shēng bù miè cháng zhù ér bù huài

།རང་བཞིན་ཡོད་ན་འགྲོ་བ་རྣམས།།མ་སྐྱེས་པ་དང་མ་འགགས་དང་།
།ཐེར་ཟུག་ཏུ་ནི་གནས་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།།གནས་སྐབས་སྣ་ཚོགས་བྲལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| raṅ bźin yod na ’gro ba rnams | | ma skyes pa daṅ ma ’gags daṅ |
| ther zug tu ni gnas ’gyur źiṅ | | gnas skabs sna (4)tshogs bral bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 38 - From the standpoint of self-existence, the world will be removed from the various conditions and it will be non-originative, non-destructive, and immovable.

JONES (Skt):
[38] The world would then be unarisen, unceased, and immutable since it would be devoid of varying conditions in its self-existent state.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
In a substantialist view, the universe will be unborn, non-ceased, remaining immutable and devoid of variegated states.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
In the self-nature doctrine, the world, void of a state of diversity,
will be unborn, unceasing, and unchanging.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
38. The state, which has not been born, has been kept by our own will,
The possibility for me to stand at the highest lank, can also be realized in future.
Being decorated with miscellaneous colors, and being kept with stabilities,
It might be the common vulgar habits in the secular societies to left the world as the object for giving up.

SPRUNG (Skt):
38 On the thesis of self-existence all things will be unborn, immutable and imperishable; they will be without diversity of states.

STRENG (Skt):
38. According to the doctrine of "self-existence" the world is free from different conditions; Then it will exist as un-produced, undestroyed and immutable.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XXIV.38 If *svabhāva* existed, the world would be without origination or cessation, it would be static and devoid of its manifold states.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v38 If they had fixed, existent natures
The various characteristics in the world
Would be non-arising and non-ceasing
permanently abiding and imperishable.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there were inherent nature, all beings would be unborn and unceasing, would be fixed in place forever, separated from the variety of situations.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If beings had any nature,
They would not be born or die.
Indeed, they would remain immutable
And would not know a variety of states. [XXIV.38]

GARFIELD (Tb):
38. If there is essence, the whole world
Will be unarising, unceasing,
And static. The entire phenomenal world
Would be immutable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
38. If there were essence, all beings
Would be birthless, deathless,
And eternally enduring.
They would be void of a variety of states.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
In the substantialist view, the universe will be unborn, non-ceased, remaining immutable and devoid of variegated states.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/38 If dharmas had fixed natures, then all the various characteristics in the world, (of) gods and men, animals, and all things, would neither arise nor cease, and would abide eternally without perishing, and why? Because that which has a real nature cannot be altered. But we can manifestly see that all things have the characteristic of change, arising, ceasing, and undergoing transformations. Therefore, they cannot have fixed natures.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If things were self-existent, then, because the self-existent is uncreated and ineluctable, the totality of creation would be unborn and imperishable; being unborn and imperishable all things would be unchanging. For the proponents of non-devoidness all things do not arise in dependence, are without a diversity of states and are unrelated to causal conditions.

It is said in the *Pitaputrasamagama Sutra*: 'If anything were non-devoid, Buddha would make no statement about it; for it is certain that whatever exists of and through itself is immutable and unvarying and neither grows nor diminishes.' And the *Hastikaksya Sutra* says: 'If there were a self-existent reality at all the Buddha and his followers would dwell there; but an immutable reality is not achieved and a wise man does not exist beyond all phenomena.'

For the theory of self-existence it is not only personal everyday transactions which are unintelligible, but also moral and religious striving. Nagarjuna expounds:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The assumption of a substance (svabhava) would deprive the natural world, the world of dependent arising, of all the variety (vicitra) and freshness and leave it sterile and unproductive. This, indeed, is the Buddha's criticism of eternalism (sasssta-ditthi) when he maintained that according to this view the self and the world are sterile, immovable, and remaining stable like a pillar," (D 1.14; S 3.202, 211, etc., yatha sassato atta ca vanjho kutattho esikatthayitthito).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

38. Without viewing the world as empty, we can make no sense of impermanence or dependent origination and hence no sense of change.

Kārikā XXIV.39

असंप्राप्तस्य च प्राप्तिर्दुःखपर्यन्तकर्म च।
सर्वक्लेशप्रहाणं च यद्यशून्यं न विद्यते॥३९॥

asaṃprāptasya ca prāptir duḥkhaparyantakarma ca |
sarvakleśaprahāṇaṃ ca yady aśūnyaṃ na vidyate ||39||

若無有空者 未得不應得
亦無斷煩惱 亦無苦盡事

ruò wú yǒu kòng zhě wèi dé;děi;de bù yīng dé;děi;de
yì wú duàn fán nǎo yì wú kǔ jìn shì

།གལ་ཏེ་སྟོང་པ་ཡོད་མིན་ན། །མ་ཐོབ་ཐོབ་པར་བྱ་བ་དང་།
།སྡུག་བསྔལ་མཐར་བྱེད་ལས་དང་ནི། །ཉོན་མོངས་ཐམས་ཅད་སྤོང་བའང་མེད།།

| gal te stoṅ pa yod min na | | ma thob thob par bya ba daṅ |
| sdug bsṅal mthar byed las daṅ ni | | ñon moṅs thams cad spoṅ ba'aṅ med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 39 - If everything is non-sunya, then the attainment of a person who aspires, the actions leading to the cessation of suffering, and the destruction of all defilements will not exist (i.e., be possible).

JONES (Skt):
[39] If the world is non-empty, there is no attaining what has not already been attained - the act of ending suffering and eliminating of the afflictions would not be found.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the non-empty [is evident], then reaching up to what has not been reached, the act of terminating suffering as well as the relinquishing of all defilements would not be evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If what is not open does not occur, there is abandonment of a defilements and action that is the end of suffering and attainment of the unattained.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
39. The problem might belong to the stage of accomplishment, or the stage of unsuccessful situations.
Pain, a boundary line, and Action itself.
All are pains, or giving up, and then,
Inadequate state of the autonomic nervous system isn't recognized.

SPRUNG (Skt):
39 If things are non-devoid there can be no eradication of the afflictions, no action to end unregenerate existence and no attainment of the unattained.

STRENG (Skt):
39. If non-emptiness does not exist, then something is attained which is not attained; There is cessation of sorrow (dukkha) and actions, and all evil is destroyed.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v39 If there is not emptiness
One who has not yet attained will never attain
Nor will the defilements be cut off,
Nor will there be termination of suffering.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If [things] were not empty, there could be no attainment of what had not been attained, no ending of anguish and no letting go of all actions and afflictions.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Were it not for emptiness,
The unattained could not be attained,
There would be no liberation from suffering,
And no elimination of action and affliction. [XXIV.39]

GARFIELD (Tb):
39. If it (the world) were not empty,
Then action would be without profit.
The act of ending suffering and
Abandoning misery and defilement would not exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
39. If they were nonempty,
Then there would be neither achievement of that which has not been achieved;
Nor the act of ending suffering;
Nor the abandonment of all of the afflictions.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If things are non-Empty, there can be no attainment of the unattained, no eradication of the defilements, no ending of dukkha.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/39 If there were no dharma of emptiness, then those of merit and virtue, both in this world and in the worlds beyond, who had not yet attained (nirvana) would all be unable to attain it, and there could be none who cut off the defilements, and no termination of suffering, and why? Because of fixed natures.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

That is, if the totality of things is non-devoid — self-existent — then what is unattained is purely and simply unattained and no unattained moral fruition could ever be attained; any action to end unregenerate existence which had not existed previously could not exist now; an eradication of the afflictions which did not exist earlier could not exist later. All this being so it follows that, on the theory that each thing has its being in itself, everything in this world (*sarvam etad*) fails to make sense. So:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The substantialist view would not only negate the world determined by human dispositions (samskrta) and the natural world of dependent arising (pratitysamutpanna), but also the ideal world, the world of freedom. Nirvana would remain inexplicable in the context of a substantialist world-view. This is the subject matter of the next chapter. Before proceeding to explain freedom, Nagarjuna has a quotation from the Buddha (XXIV.40).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

39. Perhaps most important from the standpoint of Buddhist phenomenology and, though not hard to see, easy to overlook: We are driven to reify ourselves, the objects in the world around us, and in more abstract philosophical moods - theoretical constructs, values, and so on because of an instinctual feeling that' without an intrinsically real self, an intrinsically real world, and intrinsically real values, life has no real meaning and is utterly hopeless. Nāgārjuna emphasizes at the close of this chapter that this gets things exactly backward: If we seriously and carefully examine what such a reified world would be like, it would indeed be hopeless. But if instead we treat ourselves, others, and our values as empty, there is hope and a purpose to life. For then, in the context of impermanence and dependence, human action and knowledge make sense, and moral and spiritual progress become possible. It is only in the context of *ultimate nonexistence* that *actual existence* makes any sense at all.

Kārikā XXIV.40

यः प्रतीत्यसमुत्पादं पश्यतीदं स पश्यति।
दुःखं समुदयं चैव निरोधं मार्गमेव च॥४०॥

yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṃ paśyatīdaṃ sa paśyati |
duḥkhaṃ samudayaṃ caiva nirodhaṃ mārgam eva ca ||40||

是故經中說 若見因緣法
則為能見佛 見苦集滅道

shì gù jīng zhōng shuì ruò jiàn yīn yuán fǎ
zé wéi néng jiàn fú;fó jiàn kǔ jí miè dào

།གང་གིས་རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་པར་འབྱུང༎མཐོང་བ་དེས་ནི་སྡུག་བསྔལ་དང་།
།ཀུན་འབྱུང་དང་ནི་འགོག་པ་དང༎ལམ་ཉིད་དེ་དག་མཐོང་བ་ཡིན༎

| gaṅ gis rten ciṅ ’brel par ’byuṅ | | mthoṅ ba de ni sdug bsṅal (5)daṅ
| | kun ’byuṅ daṅ ni ’gog pa daṅ | | lam ñid de dag mthoṅ ba yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 40 - One who rightly discerns relational origination will, indeed, rightly discern universal suffering, its origination, its extinction, and the way to enlightenment.

JONES (Skt):
[40] But whoever sees dependent-arising sees this and also sees suffering, its arising, its cessation, and the path leading to its cessation.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whoever perceives dependent arising also perceives suffering, its arising, its ceasing and the path [leading to its ceasing].

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
He who sees interdependent origination sees this;
suffering, arising and ceasing, and also the path.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
40. A person, who clearly look at the conspicuous and synthetic existing world as the Real World,
Might be a person, who can look at the things and phenomena as the Real World really.
To such a kind of person, pain and the synthetic Real World are perfectly as they are,
And the Self-Regulations and Morals are also perfectly the same as they are.

SPRUNG (Skt):
40 One who sees all things as arising in dependence, sees unregenerate existence and its origin, its cessation and the path to its cessation as they truly are.

STRENG (Skt):
40. He who perceives dependent co-origination (patytya-samutpada) Also understands sorrow (dukkha), origination, and destruction as well as the path of release.

ROBINSON (Skt):
He who sees this dependent co-arising sees suffering, arising, cessation, and path.

BOCKING (Ch):
24v40 This is why it is said in the sutras
That if you perceive the dharma of causality
Then you can perceive the Buddha.
And perceive suffering, accumulation, cessation and the Way.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
He who sees contingent emergence sees anguish and origins and cessation and the path itself.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The one who sees
Dependent origination
Sees suffering, its origin,
Cessation, and the path. [XXIV.40]

GARFIELD (Tb):
40. Whoever sees dependent arising
Also sees suffering
And its arising
And its cessation as well as the path.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
40. Whoever sees dependent arising
Also sees suffering,
And its origin,
And its cessation, as well as the path.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Whoever sees dependent arising sees dukkha, its arising, its cessation, and the Path leading to its cessation.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/40 If a person perceives that all dharmas arise from causes and conditions, such a, person can perceive the Buddha's dharma-body and augment his insight. He can perceive the four holy truths of suffering, accumulation, cessation and the Way, and perceiving the four holy truths he can attain the four fruits and extinguish all the afflictions. Therefore, you should not deny the principle of emptiness. If you deny the principle of emptiness then you deny the doctrine of causality, and if you deny the doctrine of causality you deny the three jewels. And if you deny the three jewels, you deny yourself.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

That is, one who, with perfect clarity, sees absence of self- existence as the mark of the dependent arising of all the putative elements of existence, he sees the four Buddhist truths as they really are in truth (*yathabhuta*, *tattvatah*).

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Buddha maintained that he who perceives dependent arising perceives the dhamma (M 1.190-191; Chung 7.2 [Taisho 1.467a). Perceiving dependent arising is not merely perceiving "things as they have come to be" (yathabhuta), but also seeing how a human being placed in such a context of dependent arising experiences suffering (duhkha); what causes such suffering; what kind of freedom can be attained and what the path is that leads to the attainment of freedom and emancipation. Dependent arising and the four noble truths are, therefore, the foundations on which the whole edifice called Buddhism is built. Any school of Buddhism that refuses to recognize the centrality of these doctrines would loose its claim to be a legitimate part of that tradition. These constitute the truths that Nagarjuna was attempting to explicate in the present chapter.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

40. Nāgārjuna closes as he opens, with the Four Noble Truths, this time connecting them not negatively, as in the beginning, to emptiness, but positively, to dependent arising. Understanding the nature of dependent arising is itself understanding emptiness and is itself the understanding of the Four Noble Truths. It is absolutely critical to understanding the dialectical structure not only of this chapter but of the entire text to see that this doctrine of the emptiness of emptiness that is the central thesis of Madhyamika philosophy emerges directly from XXIV: 18. For the emptiness of emptiness, as we have just seen, simply amounts to the identification of emptiness with the property of being dependently arisen and with the property of having an identity just in virtue of conventional, verbal designation. It is the fact that emptiness is no more than this that makes it empty, just as it is the fact that conventional phenomena in general are no more than conventional and no more than their parts and status in the causal nexus that makes them empty.

Paradox may appear to loom at this point. For, one might argue, if emptiness is empty, and to be empty is to be merely conventional, then the emptiness of any phenomenon is a merely conventional fact. Moreover, to say that entities are merely conventional is merely conventional. Hence it would appear optional, as all conventions are. Hence it would seem to be open to say that things are in fact nonconventional and therefore nonempty. This would be a deep incoherence indeed at the heart of Nāgārjuna's system. But the paradox is merely apparent. The appearance of paradox derives from seeing "conventional" as functioning logically like a negation operator - a subtle version of the nihilistic reading Nāgārjuna is at pains to avoid, with a metalinguistic twist. For then, each iteration of "conventional" would cancel the previous occurrence, and the conventional character of the fact that things are conventional would amount to the claim that really they are not, or at least that they might not be. But in Nāgārjuna's philosophical approach, the sense of the term is more ontological than logical: To say of a phenomenon or of a fact that it is conventional is to characterize its mode of subsistence. It is to say that it is without an independent nature. The fact that a phenomenon is without independent nature is, to be sure, a further phenomenon - a higher order fact. But that fact, too, is without an independent nature. It, too, is merely conventional. This is another way of putting the strongly nominalistic character of Madhyamika philosophy. So a Platonist, for instance, might urge (and the Madhyamika would agree) that a perceptible phenomenon is ultimately unreal. But the Platonist would assert that its properties are ultimately real. And if some Buddhist-influenced Platonist would note that among the properties of a perceptible phenomenon is its emptiness and its

conventional reality, s/he would assert that these, as properties, are ultimately real. This is exactly where Nāgārjuna parts company with all forms of realism. For he gives the properties a nominalistic construal and asserts that they, including the properties of emptiness and conventionality, are, like all phenomena, merely nominal, merely empty, and merely conventional. And so on for their emptiness and conventionality. The nominalism undercuts the negative interpretation of "conventional" and thereby renders the regress harmless.

So the doctrine of the emptiness of emptiness can be seen as inextricably linked with Nāgārjuna's distinctive account of the relation between the two truths. For Nāgārjuna, as is also evident in this crucial verse, it is a mistake to distinguish conventional from ultimate reality - the dependently arisen from emptiness - at an ontological level. Emptiness just is the emptiness of conventional phenomena. To perceive conventional phenomena as empty is just to see them as conventional and as dependently arisen. The difference - such as it is - between the conventional and the ultimate is a difference in the way phenomena are conceived/perceived. The point must be formulated with some delicacy and cannot be formulated without a hint of the paradoxical about it: Conventional phenomena are typically represented as inherently existent. We typically perceive and conceive of external phenomena, ourselves, causal powers, moral truths, and so forth as independently existing, intrinsically identifiable, and substantial. But though this is, in one sense, the conventional character of conventional phenomena - the manner in which they are ordinarily experienced - to see them this way is precisely not to see them *as conventional.* To see that - they are merely conventional, in the sense adumbrated above and defended by Nāgārjuna and his followers, is thereby to see them as empty, and this is their ultimate mode of existence. These are the two truths about phenomena: On the one hand, they are conventionally existent and the things we ordinarily say about them are in fact true, to the extent that we get it right on the terms of the everyday. Snow is indeed white, and there are indeed tables and chairs in this room. On the other hand, they are ultimately nonexistent. These two truths seem as different as night and day - being and nonbeing. But the import of this chapter and the doctrine we have been explicating is that their ultimate nonexistence and their conventional existence are the same thing. Hence the deep identity of the two truths. And this is because emptiness is not other than dependent arising and, hence, because emptiness is empty.

Finally, at this stage we can see why Chapter I opens the text. The discussion of the emptiness of conditions and their relation to their effects is not only essential groundwork for this central argument, but in fact anticipates it and brings its conclusion to bear implicitly on the whole remainder of the text, allowing us, once we see that, to read the entire text as asserting not only the emptiness of phenomena, but that emptiness understood as empty. To see this, note that this entire account depends upon the emptiness of dependent origination itself. Suppose for a moment that one had the view that dependent arising were nonempty (not a crazy view and not *obviously* incompatible with, and arguably entailed by, certain Buddhist doctrines). Then from the identification of emptiness with dependent arising would follow - the nonemptiness of emptiness. Moreover, if conventional phenomena are empty, and dependent arising itself is nonempty and is identified with emptiness, then the two truths are indeed two in every sense. Emptiness-dependent arising is self-existent, while ordinary phenomena are not, and one gets a strongly dualistic, ontological version of an appearance-reality distinction. So the argument for the emptiness of emptiness in Chapter XXIV and the identity of the two truths with which it is bound up depend critically on the argument for the emptiness of dependent origination developed in Chapter I. Having developed this surprising and deep thesis regarding the identity of the two truths, Nāgārjuna turns in the next chapter to the nature of the relation between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and the nature of nirvāṇa itself.

ॐ

Chapter XXV

निर्वाणपरीक्षा पञ्चविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀涅槃品第二十五(二十四偈)

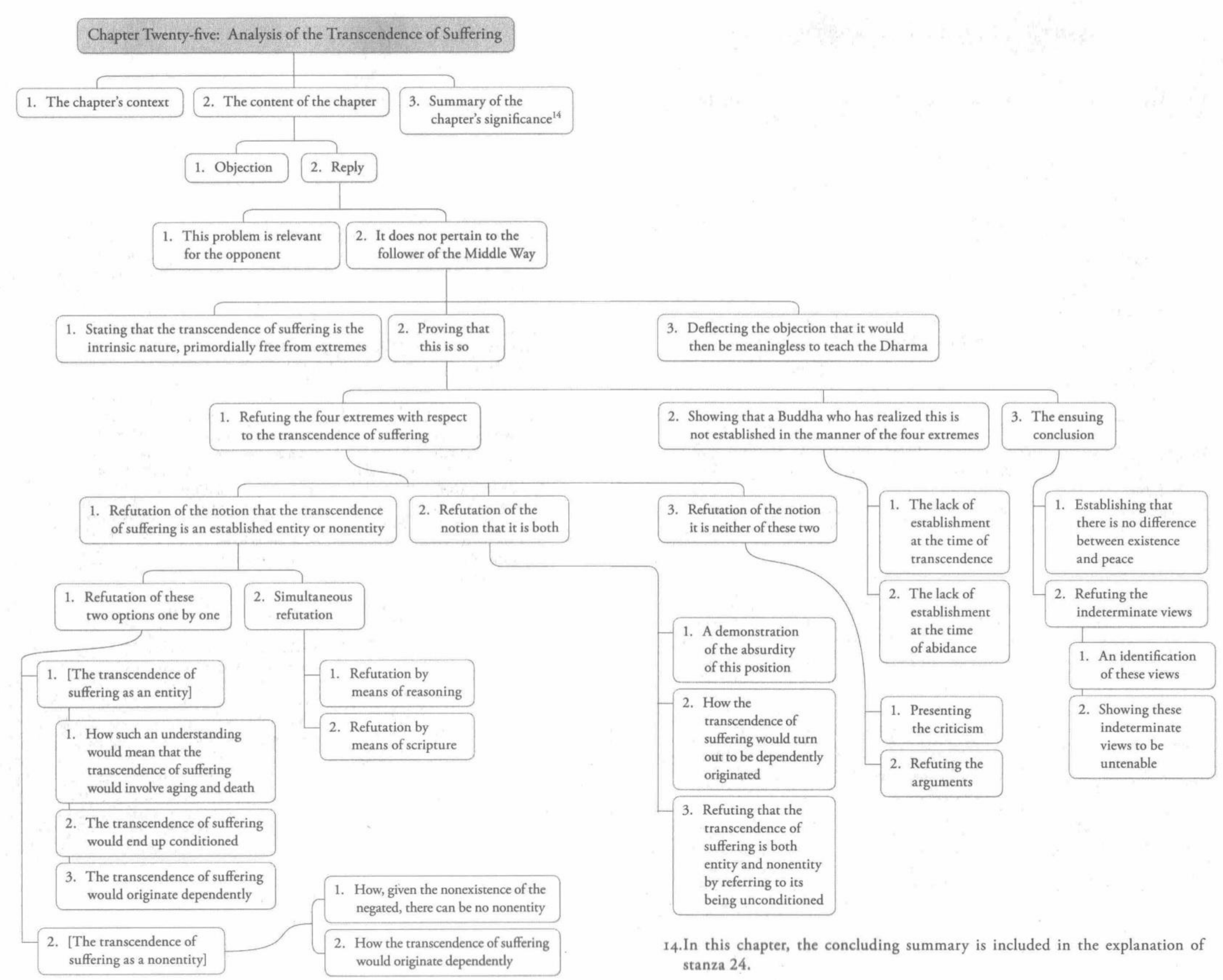
།མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་ལྔ་པའོ།།

nirvāṇaparīkṣā nāma pañcaviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XXXV: Examination of Nirvana

Chapter XXV

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We have now completed the first of the two parts of the section on the rebuttal of refutations—the examination of the Four Noble Truths. This chapter constitutes the second part—the examination of nirvana.

EXPLANATION:

This section has two parts: the objection and the reply.

SUMMARY:

One should ascertain that if things existed essentially, such things as the abandonment of that which is to be abandoned and the attainment of nirvana would not be possible, but they are completely tenable according to the position that everything is empty of essential existence.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XXV - Examination of Nirvana

This chapter then discusses the central concept of nirvana which has attracted so much attention from all quarters of the world. Nagarjuna, first of all, presents the opponent's view on the problem of nirvana, i.e., if everything is granted as either sunya or asunya. Stcherbatsky, incidentally, employs the English word, "relative", for Sunya but despite his expressed proclivity for scientific correlation and understanding the translation is inaccurate and even misleading. At any rate, Nagarjuna is quick to assert that nirvana is not the idea of existence known by worldly characterization. It admits of nothing to be cast off, gained, broken off or remaining constant, extinguished or produced, for it, in reality, belongs to the uncreated realm (asamskrta). In Verses 17 & 18, the patent questions on Buddha's existence, before and after nirodha, are discussed but these are disposed of immediately in view of their conceptual un-tenability. Then in Verses 19 & 20, the essence of the chapter and indeed the crux of the Mahayana or Buddhism in general is stated, i.e., that there is no distinction between nirvana and samsara, and also no difference in their spheres of action. With this identity Nagarjuna, in a broad sweep, destroys any adherence to false polar or contrasting distinctions, such as, natural and supernatural, mundane and supermundane, and normal and supernormal.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

25. *Freedom (nivana)*. This is undoubtedly the most significant chapter in the book. The interpretation of the contents of this chapter by Stcherbatsky125 has dominated the Western understanding of Madhyamika thought for a considerable period of time. Elsewhere, we have disagreed with Stcherbatsky's interpretation of early Buddhism, allowing him his interpretation of Madhyamika philosophy. Since Stcherbatsky's perception of Nagarjuna was colored by his understanding of early Buddhism, the rejection of the latter should mean the rejection of the former too, if we are to consider Nagarjuna's philosophy as a continuation of the ideas of early Buddhism. Without devoting much time to an examination of Stcherbatsky's views at this point, we will present the contents of Chapter XXV in the light of the analysis of Nagarjuna's ideas that we have already presented. Other modern scholars have rejected Stcherbatsky's ideas and have presented views about nirvana that do not appear to accord with what Nagarjuna has said in the previous chapterse. One of these is the view presented by Inada that nirvana represents the "uncreated realm" (*asamskrta*).126 The view that nirvana, as *asamskrta*, belongs to the "uncreated realm," a view which is popular with both the so-called Theravada and Mahayana interpreters (especially of the modern world), may lose its tenability if the contents of this chapter are analysed in the light of what went before rather than in isolation.

The attempt to explain Nagarjuna's conception as one that is found in the Mahayana tradition is based upon a complete misreading of Chapters XVI-XXI of the *Karikas* that deal with the notion of the human personality, human behavior, and moral responsibility. Such a misreading compels Inada to reject the value of the two chapters (XXVI-XXVII) that follow the chapter on nirvana (XXV), saying: "With the discussion of Nirvana in the last chapter the treatment from the standpoint of Mahayana had basically come to a close. In this chapter and the final one to follow, Nagarjuna goes into the analysis of the Hinayana doctrines."127

Our analysis of the *Karikas* so far did not reveal any specific Mahayana doctrine presented by Nagarjuna that may be contrasted with the so-called Hinayana, and we have therefore no reason to look at Nagaruna's conception of nirvana as that of Mahayana or reject the last two chapters of the treatise as being representative of the Hinayana doctrines. In fact, to assume that such an outstanding philosopher as Nagarjuna, who presented the world with such a beautifully executed philosophical classic, could simply add two chapters utterly irrelevant to the basic theme of his work does not contribute either to the understanding of his philosophy or an appreciation of his genius.

Nagarjuna begins his analysis of nirvana anticipating the same kind of objection that the substantialist raised against reconciling "emptiness" with the four noble truths. "If all this is empty, there exists neither arising nor ceasing. [As such] through the relinquishing or ceasing of what does one expect freedom?" (XXV.1). It is necessary to keep in mind here the conception of a thing (*dharma*) that the substantialist envisaged, which was the main subject of scrutiny on the part of Nagarjuna. The substantialist had difficulty with the conception of emptiness (*sunyata*) primarily because an existent or phenomena (*dharma*) for him was one that posse d self-nature (*svabhava*). As emphasized earlier, if not for that assertion of the substantialist, Nagarjuna had no reason or provocation to compose the present treatise. This is clearly evident from Nagarjuna's immediate response to the substantialist: "If all this is non-empty, there exists neither arising nor ceasing. Through the relinquishing and ceasing of what does one expect freedom?" (ibid. 2).

For Nagarjuna, to say that something is not empty (*asunya*) means that it has substantial existence (*svabhava*) during the past, present and future, and if so it would be meaningless to speak of its arising and ceasing. This would certainly render "freedom" impossible.

Once again, keeping the substantialist view in mind, would it be possible to speak of "freedom" (*nirvana*) as the relinquishing of something that is substantial and the attainment of something completely new or different. This was another important assertion of the substantialist. For him, "freedom" represented a totally different *state* of existence (*astitva*), an existence that is not only permanent and eternal but also perfectly blissful and happy. Freedom or *nirvana* thus turns out to be a metaphysical notion, like the Hindu *brahman*, uncaused, uncreated and, therefore, beyond all spatial and temporal determination. Considering these two views, namely,

1. the substantialist conception of ordinary existence, and

2. the substantialist notion of freedom,

Nagarjuna proceeds to define freedom (*nirvana*). "Unabandoned and unachieved, uninterrupted and impermanent, unextinguished and non-arisenthis is called freedom" (ibid. 3).

Here are three sets of negations, and unless we are careful in analysing these three as *sets*, it is possible to arrive at conclusions not intended by Nagarjuna himself. The following analysis of the sets will be made not only on the basis of the conception of *nirvana* presented in early Buddhism but also in the light of the substantialist views that Nagarjuna was confronted with.

1. *Unabandoned and unachieved (aprahinam asam-praptam*): It *(nirvana*) is neither casting off nor reaching. These two activities are complementary, and hence to be taken together. Casting off something and reaching for something completely different represents the substan-tialist or absolutist way of explaining freedom (XVI.10). The attainment of freedom from the three poisons of lust (*raga*), hatred (*dvesa*), and confusion (*moha*) by a person who is understood as "being in a process of becoming" (*bhava*) conditioned by various factors (not merely the three poisons) need not be explained in terms of the dual func-tion of casting off and reaching. While on the one hand, one may be casting off the three poisons and not everything, on the other hand there is nothing that is reached for. If there were to be seomthing to be reached for, that would again be a *source* of bondage rather than freedom.

2. *Uninterrupted and impermanent (anucchinnam asa svatam*): It is neither interrupted nor eternal. These again are complementary. Cutting off something completely and attaining a state of permanent existence is once again part of the substantialist conception of freedom. As explained in relation to the previous characteristics, a person who has attained freedom certainly cuts off the three poisons. However, this does not mean that "what is distinguishable is also separable" (Humean explanation of distinction). In the Buddhist context, a human being who has eliminated the three poisons, that is, the Buddha or the *arhant*, still continues to be a human being with a body as well as the associated feelings, perceptions, dispositions, and consciousness, and this continuation is on the basis of "dependent arising" (*paticcasamuppada*). Separation of "buddhahood" from that psychophysical personality led to all the metaphysical issues that the Buddha as well as Nagarjuna were trying to deal with (see Chapter XXII on "The Examination of *Tathagata*). Hence the state of Buddhahood, if such a terminology can be used in any meaningful sense, did not signify either a complete interruption or eternality.

3. *Non-ceased and non-arisen* (*aniruddharn anutpannam*): It is neither ceased nor arisen. Considering this pair of complementary characteristics independently and in isolation from everything that has so far been said by Nagarjuna, it would be very easy to assume that nirvana, in his view, transcends all descriptions and characterization. However, if what has been said about arising and ceasing, especially in the chapters on "The Examination of Causality" (Chapter I) as well as in "The Examination of Dispositions" (Chapter VII) were to be taken seriously, one would refrain from such generalizations. Instead, the conceptions of arising and ceasing, as well as the arisen and the ceased, would be placed in the context of a substantialist view of either exitence (*astitva*) or non-existence (*nastitva*).

Just as much as ordinary existence (*bhava*) and its fruits (*artha*) cannot be defined utilizing the substantialist conceptions of arising and ceasing, even so existence (*bhava*) and its ultimate fruit (*parartha*) cannot be explained on the basis of a similar conceptual framework.

This, indeed is what Nagarjuna wants to emphasize in the verse that follows (XXV.4) where he takes up the notion of *bhava* (=*svabhava*): "Freedom is not an existent. [If it were,] it would follow that it has the characteristics of old age and death. Indeed, there is no existent without old age and death."

A substantialist speaking about the characteristics of the existent will have to maintain that the existent, by its own nature, is invariably associated with old age and death. This would mean that no one will be able to attain freedom,

unless he becomes a different sort of existent, an existent that is totally different from what he is. This, indeed, is the absolutist's notion of freedom. It is a total freedom that has nothing to do with ordinary human existence characterized by old age and death. And for the Buddha as well as for Nagarjuna freedom makes no sense in such a context.

On the contrary, if the existent (*bhava*) is defined as freedom (*nirvana*), and an existent by definition is "dispositionally determined" (*samskrta*), freedom itself would be "dispositionally determined" (*nirvanam samskrtam bhavet*). However, there is no existent that is not dispositionally determined (*na asamskrto hi vidyate bhavah*). Therefore, freedom could not be an existent.

Having expressed his view that nirvana cannot be understood as an existent (*bhava*) in a substantialist sense, Nagarjuna, utilizing the argument from relativity he used in Chapter I to refute "other-nature" (*parabhava*), proceeds to reject the view that nirvana is a non-existent (*abhava*).

Most of the confusion regarding the contents of this chapter can be cleared up and the relationship between early Buddhist and Nagarjunean conceptions of freedom can be established by a careful examination of the following two verses:

Whatever is of the nature of coming and going, that occurs contingently or dependently. However, freedom is indicated as non-contingent and independent.

The teacher has spoken of relinquishing of both becoming and other-becoming. Therefore, it is proper to assume that freedom is neither existence nor non-existence (XXV.9-10).

Nagarjuna is here reiterating the extremely important distinction made by the Buddha between *bhava* and *bhava*. Discussing the contents of Chapter XXI ("The Examination of Evolution and Dissolution"), it was pointed out that in the early discourses the term *bhava* (becoming) was utilized by the Buddha to explain the human life process. Human life as a wandering (*samsara*) was characterized by two motivations or cravings (*tanha*), the first of which is craving for continued becoming (*bhava-tanha)* or survival (*punabbhava*). This is one of the most dominant motivations for action. When continued becoming, with its attendant suffering or frustrations, fails to satisfy a man, he desires to "become something else" (*vi-bhava*), the attainment of permanent and eternal happiness in heaven or in the state of *brahman* being only one of them. According to the Buddha this process of becoming something else, i.e., the dissolution of the present existence and the attainment of a permanent state of existence is another form of craving (*vibhava-tanha*), which, instead of leading on to the desired form of existence, contributes to further becoming (*punabbhava*).

After having rejected the conception of self (*atman*) understood as permanent existence (*atthita*. *astitva*), the Buddha used the term *bhava* to explain the process of becoming. The metaphysicans, as pointed out before, immediately brought back the notion of *atman* or *astitva* into the Buddhist doctrine when they began speculating on *bhava*, two species of which were "self-nature" (*svabhava*) and "other-nature" (*parabhava*). Nagarjuna seems to have been well aware of the Buddh'as discourse on becoming (*bhava*) and otherbecoming (*vibhava*). He realized that this was the life-process or the wandering (*samsara*) that the Buddha spoke of. In addition, he was also aware that, while encouraging the people to abandon both becoming and other-becoming, the Buddha did not present a permanent and eternal life (*bhava*, *astitva*) or complete annihilation (*abhava, nastitva*) as "freedom" (*nirvana*). This awareness is succinctly presented in XXV.10 quoted above. If Nagarjuna's analysis of *bhava-vibhava* and *bhava-abhava* is compatible with the Buddha's own analysis of *bhava-vibhava* and *atthita-n 'atthita (astitva-nastitva*), Nagarjuna will be confonted with the same set of problems that the Buddha faced in explaining freedom. Thus, after rejecting the explanation of freedom in terms of *bhava-abhava* or a combination or denial of both (XXIV.11-16), in the next two verses Nagarjuna refuses to use such terminology to explain the freedom attained by the enlightened one, either while he is still alive (*tisthamana = sopadiseas-nibbana*) or when he passes away (*param nirodhad = anupadisesa-nibbana*) (XXV.17-18). This leads Nagarjuna to make a remark which elicited two polar interpretations:

The life-process has nothing that distinguishes it from freedom. Freedom has nothing that distinguishes it from the life-process.

Whatever is the extremity of freedom and the extremity of the life-process, between them not even the subtlest something is evident (XXV.19-20).

The two polar interpretations to which these statements led are as follows: The adherents and sympathizers of Mahayana has interpreted these statements as implying essential identity of samsara and nirvana, which they recognize as a uniquely Mahayana view of nirvana that goes beyond even the Buddha's own explanations. The so-called Theravadins for whom such identification is rather unpalatable have condemned it by saying that this represents a complete aberration of the salient teachings of the Buddha as represented in the early discourses. However, a careful and sympathetic examination of these two statements, placing them specifically in the context in

which they were made, would certainly eliminate such conflicting views and lead to a better understanding of both the Buddha and Nagarjuna. In order to do so, it would be necessary to examine two of the key terms that occur in these two verses, namely, *visesana* and *koti*.

These two terms are better understood in the philosophical background in which Nagarjuna was writing. Though the background in which the Buddha presented his views about nirvana was not as sophisticaed, it was not different. The distinction made by the essentialists of the pre-Buddhist tradition between ordinary human existence (*samsara*) and the state of freedom (*nirvana*) led them to two contradictory conclusions. First, a person has to completely abandon one in order to reach the other. It was not only attachment to the senses or the objects of sense that had to be abandoned, but the senses or the objects of sense themselves. Freedom was thus reached on the basis of a non-sensuous insight, and the "freed one" (*nibbuta*) is one who has developed a form of knowing that transcends all forms of sensory perception, including the duality of subject and object. This was the state of *nirvana* enjoyed by the "freed one" as long as his body, together with the senses lasted. However, when that psychophysical personality is destroyed at death, the "freed one" enters into the state of eternal and blissful life (*brahman*). Secondly, since such an absolute distinction between *samsara* and *nirvana* could not explain how one could reach a state that is qualitatively distinct, the essentialists also had to believe that underlying *samsara* is the reality (*atman*) that reaches *nirvana*.

On the one hand, there is a point at which a transition is made from bondage to freedom, a transition from one state of existence to something that is completely and absolutely different, so much so that the one has nothing to do with the other. On the other hand, there is a subtle personality (*atman*) that continued from the time of the origin of existence and which lay concealed within the psychophysical personality.

With the development of metaphysical speculations in Buddhism, it was not surprizing to see two similar conclusions reached by these metaphysicians, especially the Sautrantikas. On the one hand, the Sautrantikas emphasized distinctions (*visesana*) in order to reject a permanent and eternal substance (*svabhava*). Yet, when the need arose for an explanation of the identity of bondage and freedom, they insisted upon a "seed of release" (*moksa-bija*) (see annotation of XXV.19-20). Thus, the first of these two verses (19) is intended to reject the Sautrantika notion of distinction (*visesana*), while the second (20) purports to deny their conception of "the seed of release", which is not at all different from the Sarvastivada conception of substance (*svabhava*).

Before and during Nagarjuna's day, traditional Indian philosophy was also dominated by two similar essentialist enterprises, namely, determining identity (*sarupya*) and differences (*visesana*). The speculations of the Sankhya school concentrated on the problem of identity. The possible influence of this school on the Sarvastivada theories has already been noted elsewhere.128 The Vaisesika school, as its name implies, focussed on the distinctions (vise*sana*) in the hope that such a process would eventually lead to the discovery of the nature of ultimate reality. Some of the speculations of the Sautrantika school reflect this trend. The notions of self-nature (*svabhava*) and other-nature (*parabhava*) were the direct results of such an essentialist search.

Thus, when Nagarjuna says: "The life-process has nothing that distinguishes it from freedom. Freedom has nothing that distinguishes it from the life-process" (XXV.19), to assume that he was presenting an *identity* of *samsara* and *nirvana* would be too hasty a conclusion. In fact, such an assumption would undermine all the attempts he made to refute the notion of identity in the preceding chapters. Instead, Nagarjuna's attempt in this chapter is focussed on a denial of any ultimate substance, a *dharma*, that would make either *samsara* or *nirvana*, either bondage or freedom a unique entity and this, indeed, is what is emphasized in the concluding verse: "The Buddha did not teach the appeasement of all objects, the appeasement of obsessions and the peaceful as something to someone at some place," (XXV.24).

The method of criticism adopted here is in no way different from that he utilized in Chapter I in his rejection of the metaphysical theories of causality. In that chapter, there was no denial of a cause (*pratyaya*) or an effect (*artha*) and the arising of the latter depending upon the former, so long as these two events and their mutual dependence is *not* explained on the basis of a theory of self-nature or other-nature. Similarly, in the present chapter, there is no denial of the four noble truths that include the fruit and the ultimate fruit (*paramartha*), so long as these are not conceived of in the form of unique entities (*bhava*, *svabhava*), which indeed was the way in which the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas defined *dharma*. The concluding verse of this chapter is not properly explained except in the background of these two definitions, namely, the Sarvastivada definition of *dharma* as "that which upholds the unique and general characteristics" (*sva-samanya-laksanadharanat dharmah*)129 and the Sautrantika definition that refers only to "unique characteristics" (*svalaksana).130*

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Nirvana

[The first stanza is included in a footnote and left out of the main body of the text]

[
Were everything empty,
Nothing would happen.
Nirvana would be a letting go
And stopping of what?
]

Were everything not empty,
Nothing would happen.
Nirvana would be a letting go
And stopping of what?

Nothing let go of, nothing attained,
Nothing annihilated, nothing eternal,
Unceasing and unborn
That is nirvana.

If it were something,
Nirvana would he contingent
And would wither and die
Like all other things.

Can nirvana he nothing?
Not to be something
Does not mean to be nothing.
Were nirvana nothing,
It would be contingent
Like all other nothings.

Things are created and contingent;
Nirvana is neither:
The letting go of what rises and passes
Is neither something nor nothing.

Were nirvana both something and nothing,
Things and nothings would be free
Or nirvana would be as contingent as they:
Darkness and light cannot be one.

Can I experience nirvana
As neither something nor nothing?
This would be possible
Only if something or nothing were.

After the Buddha died,
He was not seen as existing or not.
Even when he lived
He was not seen as such.

Life is no different from nirvana,
Nirvana no different than life.
Life's horizons are nirvana's:
The two are exactly the same.

Visions of the beyond,
Of eternity, annihilation
Depend on how you see
Nirvana, the past and the future.

What finitude in empty things?
What infinity?
What this? What else?
What stays? What changes?

The dissolving of objects
And easing of fixations is peace.
The Buddha never taught
Anyone anything.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

25. Nirvana

Nirvana in Buddhism is not an entity acquired or a place gone to after death. Rather it is the state of a person in which the "fires" of hatred, greed, and delusion have been extinguished; the enlightened - the "nirvanized" – then see things as they really are. *Samsara* is the cycle of rebirths that depends on those "fires" to keep going. So when Nagarjuna is saying nirvana and *samsara* are not different, he is making a bold claim. Note that Nagarjuna does not say that *samsara* and nirvana are the *same* but only that they are *not different:* only entities that exist by self-existence can be the same or different, and thus things empty of self-existence cannot be related that way. (This will be discussed in the Essay.)

More generally, once we see that there are no discrete, self-existent entities and stop projecting such entities onto reality, then we also see that there is no real (self-existent) doctrine taught by the Buddha and no real (self-existent) people to hear it (25.24). Thus, the Buddha is the "silent one *(muni)*" - he did speak but not any real entities, and thus from the ultimate point of view he was silent. (See 22.3-4.) Indeed,

from the ultimate point of view, there is no real (self-existent) Buddha to teach the equally unreal doctrine. (See also SS 70.)

Also note that Nagarjuna strives to show that nirvana cannot be portrayed as anything positive, including an entity *(bhava).* (See also SS 25.) And since nirvana was never an entity, it cannot be a non-entity (v. 7) since a non-entity *(abhava)* involves a change in an entity (15.5); and a change is dependent, so whatever is not dependent cannot be a non-entity (v. 8). Nirvana is not dependent and not conditioned (v. 9, but see 24.31), while *dharmas* (the basic factors of the phenomenal world) all rise dependently (24.19). The four options of "exist," "not exist," "both exist and not exist", and "neither exist nor not exist" are shown not to apply 10 nirvana (vv. 6-18) in order to show in the strongest terms that to think "nirvana" in terms of "exists" in any fashion is wrongheaded.

In verses 22-23, Nagarjuna's expands that claim that "There is not the slightest difference of nirvana from cyclical existence" (v. 19) to all the basic phenomena of Buddhist ontology: since all basic factors of experience *(dharmas)* are empty, what can be the same or different?

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

25

An Examination of Nirvana

In the Prajnaparamita Sutras, the Buddha taught:

Nirvana, too, is just like a dream.

NAGARJUNA COMPOSED THIS CHAPTER in answer to those who argued, "If everything is empty, how could there be any nirvana, the 'transcendence of suffering'? If the things that compose samsara—the aggregates, mental afflictions, and karmic actions—do not exist in the first place, how could there be any transcendence of them? In fact, nirvana does exist, and therefore the samsara that it transcends must also exist. The aggregates, mental afflictions, and karmic actions all exist, because the arhats who achieve their cessation exist, and the arhats exist because the nirvana they attain exists." Thus, in order to help these people correct their mistaken belief in the true existence of things, Nagarjuna presents an analysis of nirvana and proves that it too is empty of its own essence.

The Buddha taught about nirvana in different ways, depending on the needs of his disciples. To those who were weary of samsara's suffering, who were depressed by it, the Buddha taught about nirvana as if it truly existed. To them he described nirvana as the genuine and irreversible liberation from samsara, the peace that was the cessation of samsara's suffering. Now that those people had hope that there was in fact a way they could gain freedom from samsara's misery, they were filled with longing to attain it, so they renounced samsara and became eager entrants into the path of Dharma. Then, however, to his disciples who were fixated on the idea that nirvana was real, the Buddha taught that nirvana does not inherently exist after all, that it too is just like a dream. Finally, to his most apt disciples, the Buddha described the true nature of nirvana, which, like the nature of all other phenomena, cannot be described as being existent or nonexistent because it is beyond all conceptual fabrications.

Thus, the way that the stages of the teachings proceed is as follows: First, it must be explained that samsara is of the nature of suffering, because if one is still distracted by the thought that one can get some happiness out of this existence, one will not think about the Dharma. Therefore, it first must be taught that everything in existence is of the nature of suffering. Then, when that thought of everything in existence being of the nature of suffering gets really depressing, one is introduced to the concept of nirvana and is taught that the possibility of liberation from this suffering exists. This eases one's sadness and gives one great incentive to practice the Dharma with the goal of attaining nirvana's peace. However, there is still this thought that nirvana is something real, and if one does not free oneself from that, one will never be able to attain nirvana. Therefore, one is then taught that nirvana does not truly exist, that it has no inherent nature. Finally, what remains is this clinging to nirvana being nonexistent, which also is an obscuration to one's wisdom. In order to be free from that, one is taught that the nature of nirvana transcends both existence and nonexistence, and that this is the ultimate description of genuine reality.

Since Nagarjuna is responding to criticism from those who believe that nirvana truly exists, he must begin with the second stage and demonstrate that nirvana is empty of inherent nature. One way he does this is by asking, "If nirvana exists, then does it exist before the suffering of samsara that it transcends, or after it? Which one of these comes first?"

Nirvana could not exist before samsara's suffering, because if it did, what suffering would it transcend? There would be no meaning to nirvana's defining characteristics of being the transcendence of suffering if that were the case.

Samsara could not exist before nirvana either, because if it did, then the transcendence of suffering would be a newly created thing, a fabricated entity, subject to the same decay as every other thing that arises anew. Attaining nirvana would not guarantee permanent liberation from samsara, because nirvana would eventually decay just like everything else. The naturally present nirvana would not be the basic nature of reality that the Buddha described it to be (fn "Naturally present nirvana" is a synonym for the dharmakaya of natural purity.). Furthermore, if samsara existed before nirvana, and thus nirvana arose after samsara ceased, what would there be

in between the two? Samsara's suffering would stop, then there would be a gap that would be neither samsara nor nirvana, then nirvana would arise from out of that nothingness without a cause.

Samsara and nirvana cannot exist simultaneously either, for all the reasons presented in earlier chapters that negate the possibility that two dependent phenomena could truly exist simultaneously. Furthermore, if you think about it from the perspective of the continuum of one individual's existence, how could samsara and nirvana both be present in one individual's mindstream at the same time? It would be impossible for one individual to both suffer and transcend suffering simultaneously.

Thus runs the logical proof of nirvana's emptiness of true existence. If one asks, "Well, then what is the nature of nirvana after all?" Nagarjuna describes it in the third verse:

Nothing to abandon, nothing to attain,
Nothing extinct, nothing permanent,
No cessation, no arising—
This is how nirvana is taught to be.

In the abiding nature of reality, there are no mental afflictions to begin with, and therefore there is nothing to abandon—there is nothing flawed that needs to be gotten rid of or removed. There are also no qualities of nirvana that somehow first do not exist and then later need to be created or attained. Furthermore, the continuum of an individual's aggregates does not become extinct at the point of nirvana, nor does it remain in a permanent, unchanging state. Finally, nothing existent ceases and nothing nonexistent arises. This is essential reality, dharmata, and this is precisely how nirvana is taught to be. In short, it is dharmadhatu, the expanse of genuine reality, beyond abandonment and attainment, extinction and permanence, and arising and ceasing. This is the natural nirvana, the nirvana that is the true nature of reality, the essence of all the infinite phenomena that appear. This natural nirvana is different from the nirvana that one achieves at the time of enlightenment, when even one's most subtle obscurations are purified and one's realization of the natural nirvana becomes completely perfect. That is called "nirvana free of fleeting stains." At the time of enlightenment, the Buddha is said to be endowed with two types of purity: naturally present purity and the purity of being free from fleeting stains. In this verse, it is the first of these two that is emphasized (fn For a similar discussion of the two types of dharmakaya that parallel the two types of nirvana, see note above.).

The Heart of Wisdom Sutra teaches:

All phenomena are emptiness: They have no characteristics, no birth, no cessation, no stains, no freedom from stains, no decrease, and no increase.

The meaning of this third verse and that of this passage from the sutra are the same. Furthermore, Nagarjuna's verse describes how nirvana is free from all extremes, and so it is very important. You should definitely memorize it.

In his song Eight Ornaments of the Profound Meaning, Milarepa sang:

To bring one's thoughts to the point of their exhaustion,
Is this not buddhahood gained in a single life?

This is also in harmony with what Nagarjuna is teaching here. Perfect realization of reality beyond extremes means that all concepts of those extremes utterly cease. That is how it is described, but at the same time, since thoughts have no inherent nature in the first place, there is no real cessation of them either.

The nineteenth verse describes how samsara and nirvana are actually undifferentiable:

Samsara is not the slightest bit different from nirvana.
Nirvana is not the slightest bit different from samsara.

From the perspective of precise knowledge analyzing the nature of genuine reality, once the true existence of nirvana is refuted, then one realizes that there is no samsara that is even the slightest bit different from nirvana, and no nirvana that is even the slightest bit different from samsara. In short, samsara and nirvana are of the nature of equality, because both have a nature beyond all conceptual fabrications about what it might be, and because both in their true nature are originally pure.

As the Fifth Karmapa Deshin Shekpa states:

Whatever is the suchness of samsara, that is nirvana.

Thus, there is no difference between the suchness of samsara and the suchness of nirvana. Samsara and nirvana are therefore equality. There is no difference between them in the true nature of reality.

In the Mahayana sutras, the Buddha taught the ten types of equality—the ten ways in which all things are essentially the same. The ultimate meaning of all of them, what they all point to, is the equality of samsara and nirvana.

For this reason, the twentieth verse states:

The true nature of nirvana
Is the true nature of samsara,
And between these two
There is not even the tiniest, subtlest difference.

The essential reality of samsara is the essential reality of nirvana, and in this essential reality, there is not even the slightest difference between them. Samsara and nirvana are equality.

The great siddha Dombi Heruka sang:

Existence and peace are equality,

Free from all conceptuality,
So striving and straining to accomplish some goal—
Oh, what a tiring thing to do!

Body and mind, nonduality—
Spacious and relaxed transparency.
To think that body and mind are two different things
Is a neurotic, crazy, afflicted thing to do!

Self and other not two in dharmakaya,
To cling to good and bad—I pity the fool!

These verses teach of the equality of samsaric existence and nirvanic peace, the equality of body and mind, and the equality of self and other.

You can have a dream of being bound in iron chains and then being set free. When you do not know you are dreaming, these two states seem to be different: Being bound in chains is bad, being set free from them is good, and they both seem to be real. When you know that you are dreaming, you know that both are mere appearances. In the abiding nature of reality, the bondage and the liberation are equality—between the true nature of bondage and the true nature of liberation, there is not the slightest difference. This is how you should understand it.

Therefore, happiness and suffering are just the way things appear to be. The way things really are is that happiness and suffering are equality. In his vajra song of realization, The Eight Types of Nonduality, Gyalwa Gotsangpa sang:

Complete happiness and comfort and
Overwhelming pain and suffering
These distinctions don't exist in the pure expanse—
So! How joyful! How happy! Sudden victory!

The equality of samsara and nirvana is also an integral part of the view of Dzogchen. In his commentary, Ju Mipham Rinpoche describes from his own personal experience how it is that one must rely on Nagarjuna's reasonings in order to realize Dzogchen's view:

In the infinite expanse of equality without reference point, all the phenomena of samsara and nirvana are perfectly complete—this is the supreme vehicle's profound view of Dzogchen. Thanks to the noble Nagarjuna's king of reasonings, the light of wisdom's brilliant flame shone upon me, dispelling the darkness of doubts and causing profound certainty to arise. Ema! A la la! How wonderful! How blissful!

Furthermore, since one must rely on Nagarjuna's reasonings in order to realize the essence of Dzogchen, it is the same for Mahamudra. Those who studied at the shedras (philosophical universities) in Tibet studied The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way and Chandrakirti's Entering the Middle Way and other similar texts over the course of many years. Mahamudra and Dzogchen were not studied, however, because it is the Middle Way texts that are filled with such a vast array of different arguments and logical reasonings that one can pursue the study of them in a manner that is both subtle and profound.

In the Mahamudra teachings as well, we find statements such as this one from Karmapa Rangjung Dorje's Mahamudra Aspiration Prayer:

As for mind, there is no mind! Mind is empty of essence.

If you gain certainty in mind's emptiness of essence by analyzing it with the reasoning that refutes arising from the four extremes and with others as well, then your understanding of Mahamudra will become profound. Otherwise, you could recite this line, but in your mind it would be nothing more than an opinion or a guess. The eleventh verse in the Mahamudra Aspiration Prayer reads:

It is not existent—even the Victorious Ones do not see it,
It is not nonexistent-—it is the basis of all samsara and nirvana,
It is not the contradiction of being both—it is the Middle Way path of union—
May we realize mind's essential reality, free from extremes.

Here as well, to understand this refutation of the extremes of existence and nonexistence with regard to the mind, one needs to have a good understanding of Nagarjuna's reasonings, for example, the reasonings behind this verse from chapter 22, "An Examination of the Tathagata" (verse 11):

The Tathagata cannot be called "empty," nor "not empty," nor both, nor neither.
Use these terms as conventional designations.

Once one has analyzed using logical reasoning, it is impossible to assert anything about the true nature of reality. When we describe conventional appearances, however, the use of terms and designations is appropriate.

If you study these reasonings presented in The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way, when you receive Mahamudra and Dzogchen explanations of emptiness and lack of inherent reality, you will already be familiar with what is being taught and so you will not need to learn anything new.

Mipham Rinpoche composed a brief text called The Beacon of Certainty, in which he states:

In order to have perfect certainty in alpha-purity,
One must have perfect understanding of the view of the Consequence school.

Alpha-purity, or original, primordial purity, is the view of Dzogchen, and in order to perfect that view, one must perfect one's understanding of the Middle Way Consequence school's view. What this implies is that the view of alpha-purity and the view of the Consequence school are the same.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XXV

निर्वाणपरीक्षा पञ्चविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्। nirvāṇaparīkṣā nāma pañcaviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀涅槃品第二十五(二十四偈) **zhōng lùn guān niè pán pǐn dì èr shí wǔ (èr shí sì jié;jì)**

།མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་ལྔ་པའོ།། | mya ṅan las ’das pa brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa ñi śu lṅa pa’o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XXV - Examination of Nirvana

JONES (Skt):
25. Nirvana

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Freedom

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
25. Analysis of *Nirvāṇa*

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[25] Examination of Nirvana, the free and serene state (24 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
Nirvāṇa

STRENG (Skt):
Section 25 - An Analysis of Nirvana In 24 verses (Which may originally have been the final chapter.)

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
Chapter XXV
EXAMINATION OF NIRVANA

ROBINSON (Skt):
25. Nirvana.

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 25 Contemplation of Nirvana 24 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Nirvana

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XXV - Analysis of the Transcendence of Suffering

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XXXV: Examination of Nirvana

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XXV - Examination of Nirvana

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of Nirvana

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 25: AN EXAMINATION OF NIRVANA

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/0 Question:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter XIX]

The problem

Some argue:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Twenty Five Examination of Freedom (Nirvana-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XXV Examination of Nirvāṇa

This chapter continues the study of the nature of what are often thought of as ultimate realities and that of their relation to the conventional world. It follows quite naturally on the preceding chapter, which considered the relation between emptiness and the conventional world. For insight into emptiness is, from the stand· point of Madhyamika philosophy, an important precondition for entry into nirvāṇa. And just as the ultimate truth is related to the conventional as an understanding of the way things really are as opposed to the way they appear to be, nirvāṇa is related to saṃsāra as a state of awareness of things as they are as opposed to a state of awareness of things as they appear to be. But given the results of Chapter XXIV, and the surprising identification in entity of the conventional with the ultimate and the doctrine of the emptiness of emptiness, one might well wonder about the status of nirvāṇa. Is it no different from saṃsāra? If it is, how, and how is it related to saṃsāra? If not, why pursue it, or better, why aren't we already there? Is nirvāṇa empty? If not, how does it escape the Madhyamika dialectic? If it is, can it really be different from saṃsāra? Nāgārjuna begins the examination with a challenge from the reificationist, raised by the previous chapter:

Kārikā XXV.1

यदि शून्यमिदं सर्वमुदयो नास्ति न व्ययः।
प्रहाणाद्वा निरोधाद्वा कस्य निर्वाणमिष्यते॥१॥

LVP 519,4-5 - LVP 541,6-7
yadi śūnyam idaṃ sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ |
prahāṇād vā nirodhād vā kasya nirvāṇam iṣyate ||1||

若一切法空 無生無滅者
何斷何所滅 而稱為涅槃

T1564: vol 30, pg 34c13
ruò yī qiè fǎ kōng wú shēng wú miè zhě
hé duàn hé suǒ miè ér chèn wéi niè pán

།གལ་ཏེ་འདི་དག་ཀུན་སྟོང་ན།།འབྱུང་བ་མེད་ཅིང་འཇིག་པ་མེད།
།གང་ཞིག་སྤོང་དང་འགགས་པ་ལས།།མྱ་ངན་འདའ་བར་འགྱུར་བར་འདོད།།

Tg tsa 16a5-6 - Tg tsa 17a5
|| gal te ’di dag kun stoṅ na | | ’byuṅ ba med ciṅ ’jig pa med |
| gaṅ (6)źig spoṅ daṅ ’gags pa las | | mya ṅan ’da’ bar ’gyur bar ’dod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 (The opponent contends) If all is sunya and there is neither production nor destruction, then from whose abandonment (of defilements) or from whose extinction (of suffering) can nirvana be attributed? - Note: Once again, sunya is left untranslated.

JONES (Skt):
[*Objection:* 1] If all this is empty, then there is neither the arising nor the ceasing of things. So, by the removal or cessation of *what* is nirvana sought?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If all this is empty, there exists neither arising nor ceasing. [As such,] through the relinquishing and ceasing of what does one expect freedom?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If all this is open, there is neither arising nor passing away.
Whose liberation is presupposed either through abandonment or through cessation?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. When the Serene State of the Balanced Autonomic Nervous System is this world totally,
There might be no appearance actually, and there is no disappearance at all.
If we are free from escape and free in self-regulation,
What kinds of balanced situations of the Autonomic Nervous System can manifest itself even in future?

SPRUNG (Skt):
1 If everything is devoid of self-existence, nothing can come to be or cease to be; from the total extinction or cessation of what, then, is *nirvāṇa* thought to result?

STRENG (Skt):
1. If all existence is empty, there is no origination nor destruction. Then whose nirvana through elimination of suffering and destruction of illusion would be postulated?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
I. If every thing is relative.
No (real) origination, no (real) annihilation.
How is Nirvana then conceived?
Through what deliverance, through what annihilation?

BOCKING (Ch):
25v1 If all dharmas are empty
With no arising and no ceasing
What is cut off, what extinguished
Which could be called nirvana?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If everything were empty, there would be no arising and perishing. From the letting go of and ceasing of what could one assert nirvana(-ing)?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If all of this were empty,
Nothing would arise or be destroyed.
Which elimination and cessation is it
That you assert leads to the transcendence of suffering? [XXV.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. If all this is empty,
Then there is no arising or passing away.
By the relinquishing or ceasing of what
Does one wish nirvana to arise?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. If all this is empty.
Then there is neither arising nor passing away.
Through the abandonment or cessation of what
Does one aspire to nirvana?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
[An opponent contends:] If all this is empty, there exists neither arising nor ceasing. By the relinquishing and ceasing of what does one expect Nirvana?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/1 If all dharmas are empty, then there is neither arising nor ceasing. Since there is nothing which arises and ceases, what is it that is cut off, or what is it that is extinguished, that would be called nirvana? Therefore, dharmas cannot be empty. Because dharmas are not empty, cutting-off of the afflictions and extinction of the five skandhas is called nirvana.

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Nirvāṇa has been described by the illustrious one as twofold for those persons who lead a chaste life, who are practising the discipline leading to perfect realization, and who are committed to living according to the Truth: namely, a *nirvāṇa* with a residua] base and a *nirvāṇa* without a residual base.

On the one hand, *nirvāṇa* with residual base (*sopadhisesa*) is conceived as resulting from the total extinction (*prahana*) of the basic afflictions ignorance, desire and the rest. What is called the base is adherence to personal existence, is being based in that. By the term base is meant the five possessive factors of personal existence which give rise to the existential fiction (*atmaprajhapti*) of the personal self. The base is the residue. Only a base which is residual is a 'residual base'. *Nirvāṇa* with a residual base means continuing to exist conjoined with a residual base. What kind of *nirvāṇa* is this? It consists of nothing more than the bare factors of personal existence freed from the deceptive afflictions such as the belief in a substantial personal self; it is like a town from which all criminal gangs have been purged. That is *nirvāṇa* with a residual base.

In the second case, the *nirvāṇa* in which there are not even the bare factors of personal existence is *nirvāṇa* without a residual base (*nirupadhisesa*). Where the residual base has vanished, it is comparable to a town from which all criminal gangs have been purged and which is itself destroyed.

In this connection it is said, 'The body has collapsed, ideas and perceptions gone. All feeling vanished, all dispositions quiescent and consciousness itself non-existent.' And thus, 'Through a body even to which one does not cling, one still has some feelings; *nirvāṇa* is the coming to an end of the discursive mind as of a light.'

So it is that *nirvāṇa* without residual base is attained by the cessation (*nirodha*) of the factors of personal existence.

How can this twofold *nirvāṇa* be made comprehensible? If there is to be *nirvāṇa*, both afflictions and the factors of personal existence must cease to be. However, if everything in the world is devoid of being (*sunya*), nothing whatever can either come to be or cease to be. How then can afflictions and the factors of personal existence come to be, whose ceasing to be would constitute *nirvāṇa*? Hence things are self-existent (*vidyate svabhava*).'

To this we reply: If we assume that things are self-existent, then

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Even though some of the problems relating to freedom (nirvana) have already been discussed in the context of a tathagata (Chapter XXII) and the four noble truths (Chapter XXIV), Nagarjuna singles out this topic for further analysis, especially in view of certain grave misconceptions that emerged as a result of a substantialist world-view. Without making any attempt to determine what these metaphysical views were, many a scholar has plunged himself into assertions about Nagarjuna's conception of freedom and produced views that are no less metaphysical than those rejected by Nagarjuna.

The present verse explains the difficulties the metaphysicians, who accepted substantial phenomena, experienced when they attempted to elucidate freedom. While the previous chapter dealt with the problems the substantialists faced when they accepted a notion of self-nature and tried to account for the four noble truths, especially the empirical fact of suffering (dubkha), the present context Nagarjuna is primarily concerned with the question of freedom from suffering. The substantialist dilemma here would be: How can freedom (nirvana) be explained, if the conception of emptiness is utilized not only to explain the empirical fact of suffering but also to elucidate nirvana) which, even though described as the cessation of suffering (duhkhanirodha), was also the ultimate or absolute reality.

After denying any substance (svabhava) in the conventional or the contextual (vyavahara), if Nagarjuna had not proceeded to extend that denial to the ideal (paramartha), the substantialist could have remained silent. However, when Nagarjuna universalized "the empty" (sunya) by saying "all this is empty" (sar- vam idam sunyam)and that included the substantialists' conception of "ultimate reality" (paramartha) understood in various ways, either as "atomic reality" (paramanu) or the "seed of release" (moksa-bija) or the "originally pure thought" (prakrti-prabhasvara-citta)(see XXIV. 32)-he was threatening the very foundation of substantialist metaphysics. In the next twenty-three verses, Nagarjuna proceeds to demolish that foundation.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. Nirvāṇa is defined as a state one achieves when delusion and grasping cease, and when one relinquishes saṃsāra and its entities. But if there is neither self, nor object, nor delusion, nor grasping, who relinquishes what, and in what manner? Moreover, if there is no arising or passing away from the ultimate point of view, how can nirvāṇa arise or saṃsāra pass away? Nāgārjuna replies, using the same dialectical strategy deployed in the previous chapter:

Kārikā XXV.2

यद्यशून्यमिदं सर्वमुदयो नास्ति न व्ययः।
प्रहाणाद्वा निरोधाद्वा कस्य निर्वाणमिष्यते॥२॥

yady aśūnyam idaṃ sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ |
prahāṇād vā nirodhād vā kasya nirvāṇam iṣyate ||2||

若諸法不空 則無生無滅
何斷何所滅 而稱為涅槃

ruò zhū fǎ bù kōng zé wú shēng wú miè
hé duàn hé suǒ miè ér chèn wéi nié pán

།གལ་ཏེ་འདི་ཀུན་མི་སྟོང་ན།།འབྱུང་བ་མེད་ཅིང་འཇིག་པ་མེད།
།གང་ཞིག་སྤོང་དང་འགགས་པ་ལས།།མྱ་ངན་འདའ་བར་འགྱུར་བར་འདོད།།

| gal te ’di kun mi stoṅ na | | ’byuṅ ba med ciṅ ’jig pa med |
| gaṅ źig spoṅ daṅ ’gags pa las | | mya ṅan ’da’ bar ’gyur bar ’dod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):

Verse 2 (Nagarjuna asserts) If all is asunya and there is neither production nor destruction, then from whose abandonment (of defilements) or from whose extinction (of suffering) can nirvana be attributed? - Note: Nagarjuna, in the previous chapter, has stated that the critic of sunya does not really know its meaning and thus cannot understand sunya with respect to ordinary activities. Nagarjuna reveals the fallacy of understanding sunya in terms of self-existence (svabhava) and, analogously, demonstrates the absurdity of premising even the concept of asunya, as it is done in this verse.

JONES (Skt):

[*Reply:* 2] If everything is *not* empty, then there is neither the arising nor the ceasing of things. So, by the removal or cessation of *what* is nirvana sought?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):

If all this is non-empty, there exists neither arising nor ceasing. [As such,] through the relinquishing and ceasing of what does one expect freedom?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):

If all this is not open, there is neither arising nor passing away.
Whose freedom is presupposed either through abandonment or cessation?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):

2. When the Troubled State of the unbalanced Autonomic Nervous System is the Universe itself,
There might be no appearance actually, and there is no disappearance at all.
If we are free from escape and free in self-regulation,
What kinds of balanced situations of the Autonomic Nervous System can manifest themselves even in future?

SPRUNG (Skt):

2 If everything in the world is not devoid of being, nothing can come to be or cease to be. From the total extinction or cessation of what, then, is *nirvāṇa* thought to result?

STRENG (Skt):

2. If all existence is non-empty, there is no origination nor destruction. Then whose nirvana through elimination of suffering and destruction of illusion would be postulated?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):

II. Should every thing be real in substance.
No (new) creation, no (new) destruction,
How would Nirvana then be reached?
Through what deliverance, through what annihilation?

BOCKING (Ch):

25v2 If dharmas were not empty
Then they would neither arise nor cease.
What would be cut off, what extinguished
Which could be called nirvana?

BATCHELOR (Tb):

If everything were not empty, there would be no arising and perishing. From the letting go of and ceasing of what could one assert nirvana(-ing)?

DOCTOR (Tb):

If all of this were not empty,
Nothing would arise or be destroyed.
Which elimination and cessation is it
That you assert leads to the transcendence of suffering? [XXV.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):

2. If all this is nonempty,
Then there is no arising or passing away.
By the relinquishing or ceasing of what
Does one wish nirvana to arise?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):

2. If all this is nonempty,
Then there is neither arising nor passing away.
Through the abandonment or cessation of what
Does one aspire to nirvana?

HAGEN (paraphrase):

If all this is non-empty, there exists neither arising nor ceasing. By the relinquishing and ceasing of what does one expect Nirvana?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/2 If everything in the world were not empty, there would be neither arising nor ceasing. What would be cut off, and what extinguished, which could be called nirvana? Therefore neither existence nor nonexistence is the gate that leads to nirvana. That which is called nirvana ...

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

As the self-existent is ineluctable (*anapayitva*), if the factors of personal existence and the afflictions are self-existent, how could there be cessation of them, a cessation which must precede *nirvāṇa*' (fn 1 Thus far the orthodox Buddhist opponent.). For this reason it is the proponents of the reality of things (*svabhavavadinah*) for whom *nirvāṇa* is not logically possible. The proponents of the absence of being in things, however, do not argue for a *nirvāṇa* characterized as the cessation of the afflictions and the factors of personal existence and so they are not guilty of this error; it does not constitute a reproach for them.

Statement of the Madhyamika position

But, if the proponents of the absence of being do not accept a *nirvāṇa* understood as the cessation of the afflictions and the factors of personal existence, how do they conceive the nature of *nirvāṇa*?

Nagarjuna says,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As in the previous chapter, it is because of his preference for an empirical explanation of things in terms of arising and ceasing (udaya-vyaya) that Nagarjuna is not willing to accept a metaphysical substance. Hence his argument that relinquishing (prahana) and ceasing (nirodha) are meaningless in the context of the "nonempty" (asunya). Thus, for Nagarjuna, the non-empirical view is the one expressed in the form, "All this is non-empty (sarvama idam asunyam), rather than the view presented as "All this is empty" (sarvam idam sunyam). If, on the contrary, the substantialists were to accept the empirical phenomena to be empty, but not nirvana, still Nagarjuna could ask the question: If nirvana is a permanent and eternal substance, why talk of arising and ceasing, relinquishing and abandoning, for suffering (duhkha) or defilements (klesa) that need to be relinquished actually do not affect the originally pure existence?

For Nagarjuna and the Buddha, neither the empirical events nor the ultimate fruit were substantial. Neither samsara nor nirvana were absolute in any sense. As such, what Nagarjuna is presenting is not different from the empirical view of bondage and freedom explained in the Buddha's discourse to Katyayana.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. Nirvāṇa would be precluded not by the emptiness of saṃsāra, but rather by its inherent existence. For then it could not pass away. Nor could an inherently grasping grasper relinquish grasping, or an inherently existent delusion be alleviated. The achievement of nirvāṇa requires dependence, impermanence, and the possibility of change, all of which are grounded in emptiness.

Kārikā XXV.3

अप्रहीणमसंप्राप्तमनुच्छिन्नमशाश्वतम्।
अनिरुद्धमनुत्पन्नमेतन्निर्वाणमुच्यते॥३॥

aprahīṇam asaṃprāptam anucchinnam aśāśvatam |
aniruddham anutpannam etan nirvāṇam ucyate ||3||

無得亦無至 不斷亦不常
不生亦不滅 是說名涅槃

wú dé;děi;de yì wú zhì bù duàn yì bù cháng
bù shēng yì bù miè shì shuì míng niè pán

།སྤངས་པ་མེད་པ་ཐོབ་མེད་པ།།ཆད་པ་མེད་པ་རྟག་མེད་པ།
།འགག་པ་མེད་པ་སྐྱེ་མེད་པ།།དེ་ནི་མྱ་ངན་འདས་པར་བརྗོད།།

| spaṅs pa med pa thob med pa | (7)chad pa med pa rtag med pa |
| ’gag pa med pa skye med pa | | de ni mya ṅan ’das par brjod |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - What is never cast off, seized, interrupted, constant, extinguished, and produced... this is called nirvana.

JONES (Skt):
[3] Unrelinquished, unattained, unannihilated, non-eternal, unarisen, and unceased - this describes nirvana.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Unrelinquished, not reached, unannihilated, non-eternal, non-ceased and non-arisen—this is called freedom.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What is not abandoned and not attained, not interrupted and not permanent,
not destroyed and not produced, this is called *nirvāṇa*.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. What is not isolated, what has not arrived at the end still,
What hasn’t been stopped on the way, what is not having no end,
What is impossible to regulate, what is not accomplished,
That is called the Quiet and Serene State, Nirvana.

SPRUNG (Skt):
3 *Nirvāṇa* is said to be what can neither be made extinct, nor realized, through action, what neither terminates nor is everlasting, what neither ceases to be nor comes to be.

STRENG (Skt):
3. Nirvana has been said to be neither eliminated nor attained, neither annihilated nor eternal, Neither disappeared nor originated.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
III. What neither is released, nor is it ever reached,
What neither is annihilation, nor is it eternality,
What never disappears, nor has it been created.
This is Nirvana. It escapes precision.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Nirvana is defined as unabandoned, unattained, unannihilated, non-eternal, unextinguished, and unarisen.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v3 ... Is neither attained nor arrived at
Neither cut off nor permanent
Neither arisen nor ceased
This is what is called nirvana

BATCHELOR (Tb):
No letting go, no attainment, no annihilation, no permanence, no cessation, no birth: that is spoken of as nirvana.

DOCTOR (Tb):
No elimination and no attainment.
No annihilation and no permanence,
No cessation and no arising—
This is termed the transcendence of suffering. [XXV.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. Unrelinquished, unattained,
Unannihilated, not permanent,
Unarisen, unccased:
This is how nirvana is described.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. Unrelinquished, unattained,
Unannihilated, impermanent,
Unarisen, unceased:
This is how nirvana is described.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Nirvana is spoken of as always *thus* yet never acquired, neither permanent nor terminable, neither coming nor going.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Nothing to abandon, nothing to attain,
Nothing extinct, nothing permanent,
No cessation, no arising—
This is how nirvana is taught to be. (3)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/3 'Not attained' means that there is nothing in terms of either action or reward, which is attained. 'Not arrived at' means that it is not a place which can be arrived at; 'not cut off' means that since the five skandhas have been utterly empty from the beginning, when one attains the 'day and enters nirvana without residue there is nothing which is cut off. As for 'not permanent'; if there were dharmas that could be distinguished from each other these would be termed permanent, but since in the calm quiescence of nirvana there are no separately distinguishable dharmas, they are not termed permanent, and it is the same with arising and ceasing. Something which has characteristics such as these is called nirvana. Moreover, the sutras say that nirvana is neither existent, nor nonexistent, nor both existent and non-existent, nor neither existent nor nonexistent.

Nirvana means non-reception of all dharmas and inner peace and quiescence. Why is this?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

That is, *nirvāṇa* is neither something which can be extirpated, like desire, nor something which can be realized through action, like the fruit of moral striving; nor again something which terminates, like such things as the factors of personal existence, nor is it something imperishable like what is not devoid of being. *Nirvāṇa* is said to be what, in its own nature, neither comes to be nor ceases to be; its nature is the coming to repose, the stilling of all named things (*sarvaprapancopasama*).

If *nirvāṇa* is not of the nature of a named thing (*nisprapanca*), what of the concept of the afflictions, whose elimination is supposed to constitute *nirvāṇa*? What again, of the concept of the factors of personal existence, whose cessation is supposed to constitute *nirvāṇa*? So long as these conceptions (*kalpana*) prevail, there is no attainment of *nirvāṇa*. It is only by the dissipation of all named things that it is attained.

Let it be, one might object, that in *nirvāṇa* there are no afflictions and no factors of personal existence; but then they exist prior to *nirvāṇa*, and from their dissipation there is *nirvāṇa*.

Our rejoinder to that is: This way of taking the problem should be abandoned because things which are real in themselves prior to *nirvāṇa* cannot be, at a later time, non-existent. For this reason this conception must be given up by those seeking *nirvāṇa*. Nagarjuna will say (MMK XXV.20), 'The ontic range of *nirvāṇa* is the ontic range of the everyday world. There is not even the subtlest difference between the two.' This being so, it should be realized that in *nirvāṇa* there is no extinction of anything whatsoever, nor any cessation of anything whatsoever. *Nirvāṇa* is of the nature of the utter dissipation of reifying thought (*kalpana*) (fn 2 This is often taken to mean 'imaginings'. Throughout this passage it means attributing real existence to what words like *klesa* and *skandha* refer to: it means reification. This is, in the Madhyamika view, the aboriginal error.). As it has been said by the revered one, 'There is no annihilation of the elements of existence; elements of existence which do not exist can never exist; if one reifies, thinking "this exists" or "this does not exist", coursing so, afflicted existence will not come to rest.'

The meaning of this verse is this: In the perfected state (*nirvrti*) of *nirvāṇa* without residual base, there are none of the putative elements of existence, understood as individual life, actions and afflictions, nor any factors of personal existence, because they have totally disappeared. This is agreed to by proponents of all schools. That is to say, the putative elements of existence of-the everyday world do not exist in the perfected state. They are like such things as the fear of snakes, as which rope is mistakenly perceived in the dark, but which vanish when there is light. Such things are never real. Nor do the putative elements of existence, understood as individual life, act, afflictions and such things, at any time whatsoever truly exist in the everyday world of birth and death (*saṃsāravastha*). The rope as it is in the darkness, is not, in reality (svarupatah), a snake, because its factual, real (*sadbhuta*) snakeness is not apprehended by sight and touch either in darkness or in the light of day.

If it is asked, 'How, then, can there be an everyday world of birth and death (*saṃsāra*)?' The answer is: Things which do not really exist appear in fact to do so to ordinary, immature people who are in the grip of the illusory notions of 'me' and 'mine', just as non-existing hair, flies and so on do to those with diseased eyes. Buddha said, if one reifies, thinking "this exists" or "this does not exist" coursing so, afflicted existence will not come to rest.'

The assertion of being, the ontological thought that true being is found in individual things, is the view of the school of Jaimini, of Kanada, of Kapila and of all

the others right down to the Vaibhasikas. The assertion of non-being is the view of the cynics who are rooted in a way leading to calamity. There are the others (fn 3 The Sautrantika school of Buddhism.), the proponents of the non-existence of the states of past and future and of innate dispositions which are meaningfully related and intelligible, but who for the rest are proponents of being; and there are proponents of non-being who deny the ultimate reality of the empirical contents of the mind but who assert their contingent reality and who assert also an ultimate reality, and so are proponents both of being and of non-being (fn 4 The Yogacara school of Buddhism: briefly, external objects are unreal, but consciousness is real.). For those coursing so, afflicted existence and the cycle of birth and death will not come to rest (fn 5 In this paragraph Candrakīrti discounts all the major philosophical views current in the Indian tradition at his time with respect to the problem of being and non-being.). There is the verse: 'A man suspecting he has taken poison faints even when there is no poison in his stomach. Swayed by the care of me and mine, eternally he comes and dies without real knowledge of his self.' In this sense it should be understood that in *nirvāṇa* there is no cessation nor extinction of anything whatever. And therefore *nirvāṇa* is nothing but the ending of all reifying thought (*sarvakalpanaksayarupam eva*). To quote the *Ratnavali*: '*Nirvāṇa* is not utterly non-existent, for then how could it be the guide and substance of a way (*bhavana*)? *Nirvāṇa* is said to be the end of the distinction between existence and non-existence.' To those who, not effectively understanding that *nirvāṇa* is the achievement of ending all reifying thought, falsely imagine *nirvāṇa* to be something which positively exists, or does not, or does both, or neither (fn 6 These four possibilities are discussed, and rejected one after the other in *Kārikās* 4 to 16.), the following *kārikās* are addressed.

The first theory: nirvāṇa is ontic

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Having rejected a permanent and eternal substance which, as explained earlier (XXIV.38), "is unborn, unceased, remaining immovable and devoid of variegated situations," if Nagarjuna were to explain freedom in almost idential terms, his philosophy would not be any different from those of his substantialist opponents. Furthermore, it is the substantialists themselves who considered freedom (nirvana) as well as the non-defiled good seeds (anasravakusala-bija) or the seeds of release (moksa-bija) to be subtle (susuksma) and uncorrupted or undestroyed (na samudghata)(see XXIV.32). This leaves the interpreter of the present verse with only one escape-route, namely, to consider the six negations presented here to be simple negations of metaphysical existence (sat) or its associate, non-existence (asat).

How relinquishing (prahana) becomes problematic if one were to accept a self-nature (svabbava) has been explained at XXIV.27. The substantialists, as mentioned in the discussion of XXIV.32, were left with two distinct self-natures: the good (kusala) and the bad (akusala). Them problem was how any one of them, being permanent and eternal, could be relinquished.

If it is assumed that the "seed of release" (moksa-bija) is subtle and incorruptible and produces freedom (nirvana) as the "ultimate fruit" (parama artha or phala), Nagarjuna's refutation of it is clearly stated at XXIV,28. He explained how the reaching (samprapti = samadbigamana) of a fruit (phala) is made impossible by the recognition of a permanent and incorruptible self-nature. Thus, when freedom (nirvana) is explained as reqlinquishing (prahana) and reaching (samprapti), these should not be understood in a substantialist way. If they were so understood, the only way to explain the empirical conception of freedom is by negating them. Thus, in freedom there is "no thing" (na kascit)(XXV.24)a thing understood as being substantial or having self-nature-that is either relinquished (prahina) or reached (Samprapta).

The other four negations were discussed in relation to the Dedicatory Verses (as part of the eight negations). There too, it was pointed out that the fight negations were intended to eliminate the metaphysical notions of existence (astitva) and non-existence (nastitva). The same could be said of the two couplets in the present verse: anucchinnam/asasvatam and aniruddbam/anutpannam.

Thus, the sixfold activityrelinquishing, reaching, interruption, remaining constant, ceasing and arisingas explained by the metaphysicians need to be negated before an empiricist theory could emerge. Such metaphysical explana- tions can easily be abandoned if their foundations, namely, the metaphysical concepts of substantial existence (sat or astitva, bhava or svabhava) and nihilistic non-existence (asat or nastitva, abhava or parabhava), were to be given up. This, indeed, is the task that Nagarjuna sets up for himself in the following verses.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. It is important that these predicates are all negative in character, and that they are all expressed, both in Sanskrit and in the Tibetan translation, with explicitly negative particles (Skt: *a,* Tib: *med-pa).* The point is that no ascription of any predicate to nirvāṇa, for Nāgārjuna, can be literally true. For such a predication would purport to be an assertion that nirvāṇa is an ultimately existent phenomenon with a determinate property, and there are no ultimately existent phenomena, not even nirvāṇa. Because nirvāṇa can only be spoken of by contrasting it in some sense with saṃsāra and because there is no conventionally existent perceptible entity that could serve as a referent for the term, there is the terrible temptation when speaking of nirvāṇa to think that, to the extent that one is saying anything true of it in any sense, one is literally asserting an ultimate truth about an inherently existent thing or . state. One forgets that once one transcends the bounds of convention, there is no possibility of assertion. (fn 125. See Streng (1973), chap. 5.)

The discussion in XXV: 4-18 is framed by the tetralemma that would follow from considering nirvāṇa to be something independent about which something could be said; or as a proper subject for a theory; or as a genuine alternative to saṃsāra, from which it is inherently different. If it were so, it would have to either be existent, nonexistent, both, or neither. (Note that here Nāgārjuna uses the terms "existent"/"non-existent" in both their adjectival and nominal forms [Tib: *dngos/dngos-min/dngos-po/dngos-med,* Skt: *bhāva/bhāvo/abhāva/abhāvo]* deliberately calling attention to their correlation. I have generally translated the Tibetan *"dngospo"* as "entity" throughout this text. But for the purposes of this discussion in order to highlight the structure of the text, I switch in the next few verses to "existent.") Nāgārjuna will now argue that none of these alternatives is possible.

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Kārikā XXV.4

भावस्तावन्न निर्वाणं जरामरणलक्षणम्।
प्रसज्येतास्ति भावो हि न जरामरणं विना॥४॥

bhāvas tāvan na nirvāṇaṃ jarāmaraṇalakṣaṇam |
prasajyetāsti bhāvo hi na jarāmaraṇaṃ vinā ||4||

涅槃不名有 有則老死相
終無有有法 離於老死相

niè pán bù míng yǒu yǒu zé lǎo sǐ xiàng;xiāng
zhōng wú yǒu yǒu fǎ lí yū;yú;wū lǎo sǐ xiàng;xiāng

།རེ་ཞིག་མྱ་ངན་འདས་དངོས་མིན། །རྒ་ཤིའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།
།རྒ་དང་འཆི་བ་མེད་པ་ཡི། །དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ། །

| re źig mya ṅan ’das dṅos min | | rga śi’i mtshan ñid thal bar ’gyur |
| rga daṅ ’chi ba med pa yi | | dṅos po yod pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - Indeed, nirvana is not strictly in the nature of ordinary existence for, if it were, there would wrongly follow the characteristics of old age-death. For, such an existence cannot be without those characteristics.

JONES (Skt):
[4] To begin with, nirvana is not an entity. If it were, it would be characterized by aging and death, for indeed there is no entity without aging and death.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Freedom, as a matter of fact, is not existence, for if it were, it would follow that it has the characteristics of decay and death. Indeed, there is no existence without decay and death.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Firstly, *nirvāṇa* is not an existent characterized by old age and death.
Indeed, no being is without old age and death.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. The existence, which is great, can never be Nirvana.
And the expressions of "aging" or "death" can never be so direct expressions.
The expressions of "aging" and "death" exist as the adequate expressions.
And so it might be impossible for us to deny the adequacy of using the words of aging and death.

SPRUNG (Skt):
4 *Nirvāṇa* is not ontic (*bhava*), for then it would follow that it was characterized by decay and dissolution. For there is no ontic existent not subject to decay and dissolution.

STRENG (Skt):
4. Nirvana is certainly not an existing thing, for then it would be characterized by old age and death. In consequence it would involve the error that an existing thing would not become old and be without death.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
IV. Nirvana, first of all is not a kind of Ens,
It would then have decay and death.
There altogether is no Ens
Which is not subject to decay and death.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v4 Nirvana does not mean 'existent'
Existence has the characteristics of old age and death.
No existent dharma ever exists
Without the characteristics of old age and death.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Nirvana is not a thing. Then it would follow that it would have the characteristics of aging and death. There does not exist any thing that is without aging and death.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Now, the transcendence of suffering is not an entity,
For it would then be characterized by aging and death.
There is no entity that is free
From aging and death. [XXV.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. Nirvana is not existent.
It would then have the characteristics of age and death.
There is no existent entity
Without age and death.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. Nirvana is not a thing.
It would then have the characteristics of aging and death.
No thing exists
Without aging and death.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Nirvana is not existence. If it were, it would have the characteristics of decay and death since there is no existence without decay and death

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/4 Since, as we see with our eyes, all the myriad things arise and cease, these have the characteristics of old age and death. If nirvana were an existence, then it would have the characteristics of old age and death, but this is not the case, and this is why nirvana is not termed 'existent'. Also, we do not see any distinct fixed dharmas, free from arising and ceasing and old age and death, which could be called nirvana. If nirvana is an existence then it ought to have the characteristics of arising and ceasing, old age and death, but it is because it is free of the characteristics of old age and death, that we call it 'nirvana'. Further;.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

In this matter there are some who are committed to the idea that *nirvāṇa* exists ontically (*bhavatah*). They argue in this way. There is a real something (*padartha*), which is of the very nature of cessation. It is the definite termination to a personal flow of consciousness (*sarhtana*) which arose from actions deriving from the afflictions. It is analogous to a real dam in a stream of water. That is *nirvāṇa*. An element of existence which by nature is non-ontic is never observed to be an effective agent of this kind. But it is merely the end of the thirst to attain the experience of joy, that is called dispassion, cessation, or *nirvāṇa* (fn 7 An interjection by the Sautrantika school.). A mere termination is not capable of being an ontic existent. As it has been said, '*Nirvāṇa* is release from the everyday mind, like the going out of a light.' But it is logically impossible that the going out of a light could be a real thing.

There is this reply to that (fn 8 Another Buddhist school, the Vaibhasika.): It should not be thought that the termination of thirst is thirst-termination. Rather the end of thirst came about in something called *nirvāṇa* which is a real element of existence (dharma) and it is this that is properly thirst-termination. The light is merely a simile. This example should be understood to mean that the release from the everyday mind takes place in something which exists.

Nagarjuna now investigates the theory that *nirvāṇa* can be determined as an ontic existent. *Nirvāṇa* is not an ontic existent. Why not? Because it would follow that it would be subject to decay and death, decay and death being invariably the character of ontic existence. Therefore, such could not be *nirvāṇa*. He means that that would make *nirvāṇa* like consciousness and the other factors of personal existence which are subject to decay and death. Explaining the impropriety of the attributes, decay and death, he said: 'no ontic existent is not subject to decay and dissolution'. Anything not subject to decay and dissolution is something which cannot possibly exist ontically for example the 'sky-flower', which is not subject to decay and dissolution.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Inada takes bhava in the present context as the nature of ordinary existence. Instead, the term is better explained as a reference to metaphysical existence (astitva), as has been the case with Nagarjuna (see especially, XXI.15-16; also XXV. 10). The metaphysicians who admitted bhava or svabhava as eternal and permanent entities never attempted an empirical justification of these entities. They seem to have assumed that these are known through "omniscience" (sarvajnatva). Nagarjuna, realizing the Buddha's attitude toward such knowledge-claims (see discussion of Sabba-sutta at IX.3) and, therefore, making no reference to such knowledge at all in the present text, simply noted the implications of this metaphysical speculation and insisted that such existence (bhava, svabhava) is invariably associated with characteristics (laksana), like decay and death (jara-marana). Thus, freedom will not include freedom from decay and death and this would contradict the Buddha's claim that he is freed from the recurrent cycle of births and deaths. On the contrary, if the metaphysicians insisted that there is no invariable connection between existence (bhava) and characteristics (laksana), then they could claim that after parinirvana a freed person can retain the eternal existence and drop the characteristics. Nagarjuna was quite certain that this is an extension of the metaphysical position and is in conflict with the non-substantialist teachings of the Buddha (see XXV. 17).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. Nirvāṇa is negatively characterized as release from saṃsāra and the constant flux, aging, death, and rebirth it comprises. But that means that since all entities have these characteristics, nirvāṇa cannot be thought of as an existent entity. And here we must be very careful: The point isn't that nirvāṇa can't be thought of as inherently existent. For inherently existent entities, if there were such things, would not have these characteristics. In this discussion, Nāgārjuna is rejecting the notion that nirvāṇa can be thought of as existent in any sense at all - even as a conventional entity. That is why we must be so careful in our discourse - very careful indeed - for, as we shall see in a moment, neither do we want .to say that nirvāṇa is nonexistent. But moreover, Nāgārjuna will want in another sense to identify nirvāṇa and saṃsāra (see XXV: 19,20 below), and there is clearly a sense in which we can say that samsaric phenomena exist and a sense in which we can say that they do not. (Again, see the discussion of the positive tetralemma in XVIII: 8 above.) The point here is that though things seen from the standpoint of saṃsāra and from the standpoint of nirvāṇa are not different in entity, from the standpoint of saṃsāra they can be characterized and appear *as entities.* But from the standpoint of nirvāṇa, no characterization is possible since that involves the dualities and dichotomies introduced by language, including the positing of entities and characteristics, as well as their contraries and complements. These have only conventional and nominal existence, and no existence at all from the standpoint of nirvāṇa. (See also the discussion of XXVII: 30 below.) In a sense this discussion can be seen as a useful commentary on chapter IX of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdesa-sutra* and, in particular, on the dramatic concluding remarks by Manjusri and nonremarks by Vimalakīrti on the subject of nonduality and insight into emptiness: Manjusri indicates that the distinction between the conventional and ultimate is itself dualistic and hence merely conventional. To realize it is hence to enter into nondual awareness of emptiness. He then asks Vimalakīrti to comment on nonduality. Vimalakīrti remains silent. (fn 126. His Holiness the Dalai Lama in oral remarks (Columbia University 1994) notes that "The ultimate nature of things - emptiness - is also unknowable, in that one cannot comprehend it as it is known in direct apprehension in meditation." Nayak (1979) writes: Being firmly entrenched in *sunyatā* and realizing that language has only a conventional use, an *ārya* or a philosopher regards silence or noncommitment as the highest good or *paramārtha.* And the attainment of *paramārtha* in this sense, not in the sense of a transcendent reality, constitutes an essential feature of *nirvāṇa* or liberation. (p. 478))

Kārikā XXV.5

भावश्च यदि निर्वाणं निर्वाणं संस्कृतं भवेत्।
नासंस्कृतो हि विद्यते भावः क्वचन कश्चन॥५॥

若涅槃是有 涅槃即有為
終無有一法 而是無為者

།གལ་ཏེ་མྱ་ངན་འདས་དངོས་ན། །མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་འདུས་བྱས་འགྱུར།
།དངོས་པོ་འདུས་བྱས་མ་ཡིན་པ། །འགའ་ཡང་གང་ན་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན། །

bhāvaś ca yadi nirvāṇaṃ nirvāṇaṃ saṃskṛtaṃ bhavet |
nāsaṃskṛto hi vidyate bhāvaḥ kva cana kaś cana ||5||

ruò niè pán shì yǒu niè pán jí yǒu wéi
zhōng wú yǒu yī fǎ ér shì wú wéi zhě

| gal te mya ṅan ’das (16b1)dṅos na | | mya ṅan ’das pa ’dus byas ’gyur |
| dṅos po ’dus byas ma yin pa | | ’ga’ yaṅ gaṅ na yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - If nirvana is strictly in the nature of ordinary existence, it will be of the created realm. For, no ordinary existence of the uncreated realm ever exists anywhere at all.

JONES (Skt):
[5] If nirvana were an entity, nirvana would be compounded, for an uncompounded entity is not seen anywhere.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Moreover, if freedom were to be existence, then freedom would be conditioned. Yet, an existence that is unconditioned is not evident anywhere.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *nirvāṇa* is an existent, *nirvāṇa* would be conditioned.
Not any unconditioned existent occurs anywhere.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. When the existences are just Nirvana,
The State of Quiet and Serene can exist as the Created World as it is.
And it is impossible for what is not the Created World to be recognized,
And so what is really existing is something, which are rear the word "Nirvana," which is something to exist somewhere, and which is something itself.

SPRUNG (Skt):
5 If *nirvāṇa* were an ontic existent it would be compound, because no ontic existence whatsoever exists anywhere which is not compound.

STRENG (Skt):
5. And if nirvana is an existing thing, nirvana would be a constructed product (samskrta), Since never ever has an existing thing been found to be a non-constructed-product (asamskrta).

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
V. If Nirvana, is Ens,
It is produced by causes,
Nowhere and none the entity exists
Which would not be produced by causes,

BOCKING (Ch):
25v5 If nirvana were existent
Then nirvana would be active
Not one dharma ever exists
Which is an inactive one.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If nirvana were a thing, nirvana would be a conditioned phenomenon. There does not exist any thing anywhere that is not a conditioned phenomenon.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the transcendence of suffering were an entity,
The transcendence of suffering would be conditioned.
An entity that is not conditioned
Does not exist anywhere at all. [XXV.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. If nirvana were existent,
Nirvana would be compounded.
A noncompounded existent
Does not exist anywhere.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. If nirvana were a thing,
Nirvana would be compounded.
A non-compounded thing
Does not exist anywhere.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If Nirvana were existence it would be conditioned since an unconditioned is not evident anywhere.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/5 Nirvana is not an existence, and why? All the myriad things arise from conditions; they are all active. There is not a single dharma which may be termed an inactive one. Although permanent dharmas are conventionally designated 'inactive', if we investigate their reality, we find that even impermanent dharmas do not exist; how much less permanent dharmas which are neither visible nor conceivable?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If *nirvāṇa* were an ontic existent it would be compound (*samskrta*) (fn 9 Literally 'co-effected'. All phenomena are co-effected or arise conjointly. It was agreed among all Buddhist schools that *nirvāṇa* was not *samskrta*.) like consciousness and the other factors of personal existence because these are ontically existent. Whatever is not compound cannot be an ontic existent as for example the horns of a donkey. Formulating this contrary proposition Nagarjuna says: 'No ontic existent whatsoever exists anywhere which is not compound.' The expression 'anywhere' refers to place, time, or philosophical argument. The expression 'no ontic existent whatsoever' refers both to the subject realm and the object realm. This is his meaning.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

In rendering the terms samskrta and asamskrta as "conditioned" and the "unconditioned" respectively, we have, in the present context, tried to retain the interpretation of the metaphysicians, for it is this particular interpretation that is being questioned by Nagarjuna. Undoubtedly, it is the Sarvastivada theory which equated samskrta and pratityasamutpanna that Nagarjuna has in mind (see comments on VII. 1). The implication of this equation is that "the unconditioned" (asamskrta) is also the "independent" or "uncaused" (apratityasamutpanna), an implication not acceptable to both Nagarjuna and the Buddha.

In fact, XXV.4-6 highlight the sharp distinction the metaphysicians assumed between freedom and bondage (see Chapter XVI, Examination of Bondage and Release). It is this sharp distinction, which is the foundation of the substantialist explanation of freedom and bondage, that is being analysed by Nagarjuna. Unless this metaphysical explanation is kept in view, speculatoins about Nagarjuna's own conception of freedom can turn out to be as weird as those of the metaphysicians.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. All empirical phenomena are compounded. But being compounded involves phenomena in the round of saṃsāra. For since the recognition of compounds as unitary phenomena demands conventions of aggregation, to be compounded is, ipso facto, to have a merely ·conventional existence. And it is the treatment of merely conventional, nominally existent phenomena as inherently existent entities that generates saṃsāra. That is because from the standpoint of Buddhist soteriological theory, the foundation of suffering - the basic condition of saṃsāra - is craving and the foundation of craving is the root delusion of taking to be inherently existent - and so worthy of being craved - that which is merely conventionally, or nominally existent. We are hence trapped in saṃsāra exactly to the extent that we mistake the conventionally existent as inherently existent. So given the contrast between nirvāṇa' and saṃsāra and the fact that everything in saṃsāra is compounded, nirvāṇa cannot be compounded. So it is not existent, even conventionally.

Kārikā XXV.6

भावश्च यदि निर्वाणमनुपादाय तत्कथम्।
निर्वाणं नानुपादाय कश्चिद् भावो हि विद्यते॥६॥

bhāvaś ca yadi nirvāṇam anupādāya tat katham |
nirvāṇaṃ nānupādāya kaścid bhāvo hi vidyate ||6||

若涅槃是有 云何名無受
無有不從受 而名為有法

ruò niè pán shì yǒu yún hé míng wú shòu
wú yǒu bù cóng shòu ér míng wéi yǒu fǎ

།གལ་ཏེ་མྱ་ངན་འདས་དངོས་ན།།ཇི་ལྟར་མྱང་འདས་དེ་བརྟེན་མིན།
།དངོས་པོ་བརྟེན་ནས་མ་ཡིན་པ།།འགའ་ཡང་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| gal te mya ṅan ’das dṅos na | | ji ltar myaṅ ’das de brten min |
| dṅos po brten nas ma yin pa | | ’ga’ yaṅ (2)yod pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - If nirvana is strictly in the nature of ordinary existence, why is it non-appropriating? For, no ordinary existence that is non-appropriating ever exists.

JONES (Skt):
[6] If nirvana were an entity, how could it be non-dependent? A non-dependent entity is not seen anywhere.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Furthermore, if freedom were to be existence, how can that freedom be independent, for an independent existence is certainly not evident?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *nirvāṇa* is existent, how is it nongrasping?
For not any nongrasping *nirvāṇa* occurs as existent.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. When the existence is just “Nirvana” to exist,
The concrete thing, which has not been received “Nirvana”, is what?
The word "Nirvana," which suggests the serenity of the Balanced Autonomic Nervous System, does not include the meaning to get something actually.
Because it is perfectly impossible for us to find a concrete fact "to be" at any place at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
6 If *nirvāṇa* is an ontic existent how then could it be beyond all dependence? No ontic existent whatsoever exists which is beyond all dependence.

STRENG (Skt):
6. But if nirvana is an existing thing, how could nirvana exist without dependence on something else? Certainly nirvana does not exist as something without dependence.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
VI. If Nirvana is Ens,
How can it lack substratum,
There whatsoever is no Ens
Without any substratum,

BOCKING (Ch):
25v6 If nirvana were existent
How could it be termed 'non-receiving'?
There is no dharma which is called existent
And yet has not arisen from reception.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If nirvana were a thing, how would nirvana not be dependent? There does not exists any thing at all that is not dependent.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the transcendence of suffering were an entity,
Why would it not be dependent?
An entity that is not dependent
Does not exist at all. [XXV.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. If nirvana were existent,
How could nirvana be nondependent?
A nondependent existent
Does not exist anywhere.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. If nirvana were a thing,
How could nirvana be nondependent?
A nondependent thing
Does not exist anywhere.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If Nirvana were existence, how could it be independent when independent existence is not evident anywhere?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/6 If, as you say, nirvana is an existent dharma, then the sutras ought not to state that nirvana is non-receiving, and why? There are no dharmas which are non-receiving and yet exist. Therefore, nirvana is not existent.

Question: If nirvana is not existent, then surely nirvana is nonexistent?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

(“*Beyond all dependence*”: fn 10 *Anupadaya* - literally ‘non-dependent’. *Upadaya* is a key term in the Madhyamika vocabulary. It covers all of the forms of relatedness, but emphasizes dependence. Often, as here, it means both causal dependence and logical dependence (a distinction Indian philosophers do not regard as essential); at times it probably means logical dependence only, in contrast to the term pratyaya which often means causal, or at least some form of real, temporal, dependence. The use of these two technical terms is not, however, in our sense, precisely consistent.)

If, as our opponent thinks, *nirvāṇa* is an ontic existent then it would be dependent, that is, it would be based on its own set of causes. But ninmia is not considered to be dependent in this way; rather it is considered to be beyond all dependence. If *nirvāṇa* is an ontic existent, how could it be beyond all dependence? Beyond all dependence is precisely what it would not be, because of its being an ontic existent as in the case of consciousness and the other factors of personal existence. Nagarjuna puts this into the form of the contrary proposition, saying: ‘No ontic existent whatsoever exists which is beyond all dependence.’

The second theory: nirvāṇa is ontically non-existent

In this matter one might argue: If indeed *nirvāṇa* cannot be an ontic existent because of the unacceptable consequence which has been urged, then *nirvāṇa* can only be non-existent because it is merely the end of personal existence (*janma*) which arises from the afflictions. We reply that this too is illogical:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here again we have a metaphysical interpretation of upaday (see IV.1-2) where existence (bhava), as the permanent and the eternal, becomes not only the "unconditioned" (XXV.5), but also the absolutely "independent" (anupadaya)(see also XXII. 5). Nagarjuna is not prepared to equate freedom with such nonempirical existence.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. Saṃsāra and dependent arising go hand in hand. For a phenomenon to be dependent is for it to be impermanent and for it to be subject to destruction. (See the discussion in Chapter XV.) Nirvāṇa is supposed to be beyond all this. It is, by definition, liberation from all that characterizes saṃsāra. So again, nirvāṇa cannot be a conventionally existent entity. (It is important to see that there is a sense in which nirvāṇa is dependent and a sense in which it is independent, and these are not contradictory: Nirvāṇa is achieved in dependence upon the practice of the path and the accumulation of wisdom and merit. But once attained, inasmuch as from the standpoint of . nirvāṇa there are no entities at all, there is nothing on which nirvāṇa can be said to depend. In this sense it is nondependent.) But all of this raises the obvious possibility that nirvāṇa is simply not real at all - that it is completely nonexistent. This possibility is considered and rejected in the next two verses:

Kārikā XXV.7

यदि भावो न निर्वाणमभावः किं भविष्यति।
निर्वाणं यत्र भावो न नाभावस्तत्र विद्यते॥७॥

yadi bhāvo na nirvāṇam abhāvaḥ kiṃ bhaviṣyati |
nirvāṇaṃ yatra bhāvo na nābhāvas tatra vidyate ||7||

有尚非涅槃 何況於無耶
涅槃無有有 何處當有無

yǒu shàng fēi niè pán hé kuàng yū;yú;wū wú yé;yē
niè pán wú yǒu yǒu hé chǔ dāng yǒu wú

།གལ་ཏེ་མྱ་ངན་འདས་དངོས་མིན།།དངོས་མེད་ཇི་ལྟར་རུང་བར་འགྱུར།
།གང་ལ་མྱ་ངན་འདས་དངོས་མིན།།དེ་ལ་དངོས་མེད་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| gal te mya ṅan ’das dṅos min | | dṅos med ji ltar ruṅ bar ’gyur |
| gaṅ la mya ṅan ’das dṅos min | | de la dṅos med yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - If nirvana is not strictly in the nature of ordinary existence, how could what is in the nature of non-existence be nirvana? Where there is no existence, equally so, there can be no non-existence.

JONES (Skt):
[7] If nirvana were not an entity, how could it become the absence of an entity (i.e., a “non-entity”)? Where nirvana is not an entity, there no nonentity is seen.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If freedom is not existent, will freedom be non-existence? Wherein there is no existence, therein non-existence is not evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *nirvāṇa* is not existent, will *nirvāṇa* be nonexistent?
Where there is no existent, there is no nonexistent.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. When the existence is not “Nirvana”,
How is it possible for something, which does not exist now, to exist in future?
When “Nirvana” does not exists anywhere,
Then it will become clear that non-existence is not recognized anywhere at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
7 If *nirvāṇa* is not an ontic existent will it be an ontic nonexistent? But if there is no ontic existent, there is no ontic non-existent either.

STRENG (Skt):
7. If nirvana is not an existing thing, will nirvana become a non-existing thing? Wherever there is no existing thing, neither is there a non-existing thing.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
VII. If Nirvana is not an Ens,
Will it he then a non-Ens?
Wherever there is found no Ens,
There neither is a (corresponding) non-Ens.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Where there is no entity, there is no non-entity.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v7 Nirvana is not even an existence
How much less could it be nonexistence?
If nirvana does not exist as an existence,
Where could it exist as a nonexistence?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If nirvana were not a thing, how could it possibly be nothing? The one for whom nirvana is not a thing, for him it is not nothing.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the transcendence of suffering is not an entity,
How could it be a nonentity?
When the transcendence of suffering is not an entity,
Neither is it a nonentity. [XXV.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. If nirvana were not existent,
How could it be appropriate for it to be nonexistent?
Where nirvana is not existent,
It cannot be a nonexistent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. If nirvana were a non-thing,
How could it make sense for it not to be a thing?
Where nirvana is not a thing,
It cannot be a non-thing.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If Nirvana is not existence, could it be non-existence? Where there is no existence, non-existence is not evident.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/7 If nirvana is not an existence, how could nonexistence be nirvana? Why is this? Nonexistence exists because of existence. Where there is no existence, how can there be nonexistence? As the sutras tell us, nonexistent means something formerly existent that is now nonexistent. Nirvana is not like this, and why? Because it is not an existent dharma changing and becoming nonexistent. Therefore, nonexistence does not constitute nirvana either. Moreover:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If *nirvāṇa* is not accepted as an ontic existent, that is, if '*Nirvāṇa* is an ontic existent' is repudiated, does *nirvāṇa* then become an ontic non-existent? The meaning is that *nirvāṇa* will not be an ontic non-existent. To say *nirvāṇa* is the nonexistence of the afflictions and personal existence would mean however that *nirvāṇa* was merely the perishability of personal existence and the afflictions. Therefore, to say, 'It is merely perishability and nothing else which is the non-existence of personal existence and the afflictions' would entail that *nirvāṇa* would be mere perishability. But this is not commonly accepted. To say, 'Liberation follows naturally without effort' does not make sense (fn 11 *Nirvāṇa* is not merely the natural termination of a natural process.).

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The metaphysical notions of existence and non-existence expressed in such terms as astitva and nastitva are here referred to as bhava and abhava. They bring back the problems of identity and differences (see I. 3). Nagarjuna's argument, as at I.3, is that these two are relative concepts.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. To say that nirvāṇa possesses the positive property of nonexistence is not coherent either. For then there would be nothing to which the predicate "nonexistent" could in· fact apply. Note the difference between saying, in the sense relevant here, "nirvāṇa is nonexistent" and "Santa Claus does not exist." The latter, Nāgārjuna would certainly agree, is not only coherent but true. But in explaining the semantics of the latter, we can posit a concept of Santa Claus and interpret the sentence as asserting that that concept is not instantiated. But when, in trying to characterize nirvāṇa, one is tempted to say that it is a nonexistent, this is in response to the difficulty we have just noted in asserting that nirvāṇa in fact exists. The temptation is to assert then that it is real, but has some kind of ghostly reality as a substratum of the property "nonexistent." But that is simply incoherent - an attempt to have it both ways. So the predicate "does not exist" cannot, in this case, even be applied. If there is no nirvāṇa at all, there is no such basis of predication. Even this apparently negative discourse about nirvāṇa is then blocked, to the degree that it is taken literally as positive attribution of a negative predicate.

Kārikā XXV.8

यद्यभावश्च निर्वाणमनुपादाय तत्कथम्।
निर्वाणं न ह्यभावोऽस्ति योऽनुपादाय विद्यते॥८॥

yady abhāvaś ca nirvāṇam anupādāya tat katham |
nirvāṇaṃ na hy abhāvo ’sti yo ’nupādāya vidyate ||8||

若無是涅槃 云何名不受
未曾有不受 而名為無法

ruò wú shì niè pán yún hé míng bù shòu
wèi céng yǒu bù shòu ér míng wéi wú fǎ

།གལ་ཏེ་མྱ་ངན་འདས་དངོས་མིན།།ཇི་ལྟར་མྱང་འདས་དེ་བརྟེན་མིན།
།གང་ཞིག་བརྟེན་ནས་མ་ཡིན་པའི།།དངོས་མེད་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།<br།།

| gal te mya ṅan ’das dṅos min | | ji ltar myaṅ ’das de brten min |
| (3)gaṅ źig brten nas ma yin pa’i | | dṅos med yod pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - If nirvana is in the nature of non-existence, why is it non-appropriating? For, indeed, a non-appropriating non-existence does not prevail.

JONES (Skt):
[8] And if nirvana were a non-entity, how can it be nondependent? No non -dependent non-entity that could be nirvana is seen.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If freedom is non-existence, how can freedom be independent? For there exists no non-existence which evidently is independent.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *nirvāṇa* is nonexistent, how is *nirvāṇa* not grasping it [existence]?
Indeed, no nongrasping nonexistent occurs.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. If it is true that something, which does not exist, is Nirvana,
What is the concrete fact, which has not been accepted, is what?
Because the “Nirvana" does not exist as non-existence,
And so such a something, which has been accepted, does never be recognized at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
8 If *nirvāṇa* is an ontic non-existent, how could *nirvāṇa* in that case be beyond all dependence? Because what is ontically non-existent is not beyond all dependence.

STRENG (Skt):
8. But if nirvana is a non-existing thing, how could nirvana exist without dependence on something else? Certainly nirvana is not a non-existing thing, which exists without dependence.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
VIII. Now, if Nirvana is a non-Ens,
How can It then he independent?
For sure, an independent non-Ens
Is nowhere to be found.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v8 If nirvana is nonexistence
Why is it called non-receiving?
There has never yet been a dharma
Which is non-receiving and is termed nonexistent.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If nirvana were nothing, how could nirvana possibly be not dependent? There does not exist any nothing which is not dependent.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the transcendence of suffering is not an entity,
Why would it not be dependent?
Indeed, there is no nonentity at all
That is not dependent. [XXV.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. If nirvana were not existent,
How could nirvana be nondependent?
Whatever is nondependent
Is not nonexistent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. If nirvana were a non-thing,
How could nirvana be nondependent?
Whatever is nondependent
Is not a non-thing.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If Nirvana is non-existence, how could it be independent? Independence is not non-existence.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/8 If you say that nirvana is nonexistence then the sutras ought not to teach that nirvana means non-receiving, and why? There is no nonexistent dharma which is termed non-receiving. Therefore we know that. nirvana is not nonexistence.

Question: If nirvana is neither existent nor nonexistent, - what kind of thing is nirvana?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Here 'ontic non-existence' or 'perishability' convey meaning (*prajnapyate*) only by their logical dependence (*upadaya*) on the ontically existent; because donkeys' horns and such things are not perceived to be perishable. A subject of predication (*laksya*) has meaning only in dependence on its predicates (*laksana*), and predicates have meaning only as based in a subject of predication. That is, predicates and the subject of predication are meaningful only in so far as they are reciprocally dependent. How could there be perishability without something ontically existent as the subject of predication? Therefore 'ontically non-existent' too conveys meaning only in logical dependence. And so, if *nirvāṇa* is ontically non-existent, how could it, in that case, be beyond all dependence? Dependent is exactly what *nirvāṇa* would be, if it is ontically nonexistent; it is like the argument concerning perishability. Elucidating this very point clearly, Nagarjuna said, 'Because what is ontically non-existent is not beyond all dependence.'

But if the ontically non-existent is not beyond all dependence, how can such ontically non-existent things as the son of a barren woman be dependent? Who said that such things as the son of a barren woman are ontically non-existent? It was said earlier: 'If something is not established as ontically existing, the ontically non-existent cannot be established. It is being predicatively other than an ontic existent which people call ontic non-existence.'(MMK XV.5) And so there is no ontic nonexistence of such things as the son of a barren woman.

There is a verse about this: 'Space, rabbits' horns and the son of a barren woman are spoken of as unreal, as phantasies concerning ontic existents.' Here too, it is to be understood that these are merely imagined contradictions (*kalpana prati-sedhamatra*) of ontic existence but are not conceptions of the ontically non-existent because nothing real corresponds to them. 'The son of a barren woman' is literally nothing but mere words (*sabdamatra*). The object of this expression is never perceived as something which could be either ontically existent or non-existent. How could it make sense to think in terms of ontic existence and non-existence for something which by its very nature cannot be experienced (*upalabhyate*) (fn 12 A self-evident principle in Madhyamika; from it the profoundest consequences follow.)? Therefore the son of a barren woman is not to be thought of as ontically non-existent. And so it has been established that there is no ontic non-existent which exists beyond all dependence.

The Madhyamika principle re-stated

Here one might interject: If *nirvāṇa* is neither an ontic existent nor an ontic non-existent what then is it? The reply of the revered, perfected ones runs:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

If there were to be no permanent existence, there could be no permanent nonexistence. If there were to be no absolute existence, there could be no nihilistic non-existence. Just as much as freedom is not absolute existence, it is also not nihilistic non-existence. Nagarjuna's attempt in the present chapter is directly aimed at getting rid of such a metaphysical explanation of freedom. The Buddhists, throughout history, were prone to make such distinctions, sometimes ignoring the empirical middle position advocated by the Buddha. This is what Nagarjuna intends to explain in the next verse.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. Moreover, Nāgārjuna reminds us, one of the reasons that we rejected the view that nirvāṇa is an entity in the first place is that it is nondependent. The latter assertion is, of course, intended in a merely negative sense...,... - a denial of the possibility of characterizing nirvāṇa as dependent, or of recognizing dependent phenomena or dependency from the standpoint of nirvāṇa. But to the extent that we can make sense of nonexistence as a positive attribute, it would have to be the attribute of something. And as we have seen especially in Chapters VII, XXII, and XXIV - entities can only be conceived as dependent. So if something is nondependent, it can't also be a real nonexistent! In the next two verses, Nāgārjuna reframes the problem about the ontological status of nirvāṇa in preparation for consideration of the final two tetralemma possibilities for nirvāṇa - that it is both existent and nonexistent and that it is neither existent nor nonexistent:

Kārikā XXV.9

य आजवंजवीभाव उपादाय प्रतीत्य व।
सोऽप्रतीत्यानुपादाय निर्वाणमुपदिश्यते॥९॥

ya ājavaṃjavībhāva upādāya pratītya vā |
so ’pratītyānupādāya nirvāṇam upadiśyate ||9||

受諸因緣故 輪轉生死中
不受諸因緣 是名為涅槃

shòu zhū yīn yuán gù lún zhuǎn shēng sǐ zhōng
bù shòu zhū yīn yuán shì míng wéi niè pán

།འོང་བ་དང་ནི་འགྲོ་བའི་དངོས།།བརྟེན་ཏམ་རྒྱུར་བྱས་གང་ཡིན་པ།
།དེ་ནི་བརྟེན་མིན་རྒྱུར་བྱས་མིན།།མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་ཡིན་པར་བསྟན།།

| ’oṅ ba daṅ ni ’gro ba’i dṅos | | brten tam rgyur byas gaṅ yin pa |
| de ni brten min rgyur byas min | | mya ṅan ’das pa yin par bstan |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - The status of the birth-death cycle is due to existential grasping (of the skandhas) and relational condition (of the being). That which is non-grasping and non-relational is taught as nirvana.

JONES (Skt):
[9] An entity that comes and goes is conditioned and dependent. What is without conditions and is non-dependent is taught to be nirvana.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever is of the nature of coming and going that occurs contingently or dependently. Freedom is, therefore, indicated as being non-contingent and independent.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
That state of moving restlessly to and fro [*saṃsāra*] is grasping and dependent.
But *nirvāṇa* is taught as without grasping and without dependence.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. When a speed of appearance is a little slower,
The appearance itself is also clear too.
And so the Real Appearances are accepted as a little vague,
But the balanced state of the autonomic nervous system, Nirvana, will appear.

SPRUNG (Skt):
9 That which, taken as causal or dependent, is the process of being born and passing on, is, taken non-causally and beyond all dependence, declared to be *nirvāṇa*.

STRENG (Skt):
9. That state which is the rushing in and out of existence when dependent or conditioned— This state, when not dependent or not conditioned, is seen to be nirvana.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
IX. Coordinated here or caused are (separate things),
We call this world Phenomenal;
But just the same is called Nirvana,
When from Causality abstracted.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v9 Because we receive causes and conditions
We revolve in samsara
Not receiving causes and conditions
Is what constitutes nirvana.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Whatever things come and go are dependent or caused. Not being dependent and not being caused is taught to be Nirvana.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Entities that come and go
Are dependent and caused.
Their being independent and not caused
Is taught to be the transcendence of suffering. [XXV.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. That which comes and goes
Is dependent and changing.
That, when it is not dependent and changing,
Is taught to be nirvana.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. A thing that comes and goes
Is dependent and produced by causes.
That which is not dependent and not produced by causes
Is taught to be nirvana.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Whatever comes or goes is contingent and dependent. What is not of this nature is Nirvana.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/9 Because we do not know our perverted views for what they really are, we wander in samsara, on account of the five receptive skandhas. When we recognize our perverted views for what they really are, then we no longer wander in samsara on account of the five receptive skandhas. When there is no longer any succession of the nature-less five skandhas, this is said to be nirvana.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

The expression 'process of being born and passing on' means either merely arising and passing away, or the succession of birth and death. This process of being born and passing on may be understood as based on a complex of causes and conditions (*hetupratyaya*) as the long and the short; or may be understood as things being dependent on what is outside themselves, like light from a lamp or a sprout from a seed. In any case it is certain that whether understood as dependent on something outside itself (*upadaya*) or as originating from causes (*pratitya*) it is the ceasing to function (*apravrtti*) of this continuous round of birth and death, due to its being taken as uncaused or as beyond dependence, that is said to be *nirvāṇa*. However, what is nothing more than a ceasing to function cannot be conceived of as either ontically existent or non-existent. Thus *nirvāṇa* is neither ontically existent nor ontically nonexistent (fn 13 As this definition fits all fictions - sky-flowers, and so on - equally well, how tell them from *nirvāṇa*? In Madhyamika thought fictions are 'mere words', inefficacious in striving for enlightenment, whereas *nirvāṇa* is efficacious, being the notion which conduces to enlightenment.).

Again there are those for whom character dispositions (*samskaras*) continue through successive lives. Their view is that origination and destruction are rigidly dependent on causes and that the absence of cause, that is, of these character dispositions, is said to be *nirvāṇa*.

Or there are those for whom it is the person (*pudgala*) which persists through successive lives. For these the person is indefinable either as perishable or imperishable. Being born and passing on is based on the person as substratum and it functions only as so dependent. This being born and passing or., which functions only in dependence as a substratum, in the moment it no longer so functions, being no longer dependent, is known as *nirvāṇa*.

As the mere ceasing to function of either the person or the character dispositions cannot be conceived as either existent or as non-existent, it follows that it makes sense that *nirvāṇa* is neither existent nor non-existent.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Even though the Buddha empahsized the avoidance of metaphysical extremes, there was indeed a tendency to distinguish samsara and nirvana. The cycle of births and deaths, "comings and goings" (ajavam-javim), was looked upon as having its own nature (bhava)which is dependence. This is contrasted with the nature (bhava) of freedom which is independent. The intrusion of the substantialist notions in the form of samvrti (convention) paramartha ("ultimate reality") into the Buddhist doctrine during the scholastic period has already been referred to (see comments on XXIV.8). Even though most Buddhist thinkers were able to avoid such ontological speculations in explaining the nature of the world and freedom, the Buddhist metaphysicians had difficulty in avoiding such a dichotomy. Therefore, in the next verse, Nagarjuna proceeds to remind the Buddhists of the Buddha's teaching on becoming and other-becoming (bhava-vibhava).

Kārikā XXV.10

प्रहाणं चाब्रवीच्छास्ता भवस्य विभवस्य च।
तस्मान्न भावो नाभावो निर्वाणमिति युज्यते॥१०॥

prahāṇaṃ cābravīc chāstā bhavasya vibhavasya ca |
tasmān na bhāvo nābhāvo nirvāṇam iti yujyate ||10||

如佛經中說 斷有斷非有
是故知涅槃 非有亦非無

rú fú;fó jīng zhōng shuì duàn yǒu duàn fēi yǒu
shì gù zhī niè pán fēi yǒu yì fēi wú

།འབྱུང་བ་དང་ནི་འཇིག་པ་དག །སྤང་བར་སྟོན་པས་བཀའ་སྩལ་ཏོ།
།དེ་ཕྱིར་མྱ་ངན་འདས་པར་ནི། །དངོས་མིན་དངོས་མེད་མིན་པར་རིགས།།

| ’byuṅ ba daṅ ni ’jig pa dag | (4)spaṅ bar ston pas bka’ stsal to |
| de phyir mya ṅan ’das par ni | | dṅos min dṅos med min par rigs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - The teacher (Buddha) has taught the abandonment of the concepts of being and non-being. Therefore, nirvana is properly neither (in the realm of) existence nor non-existence.

JONES (Skt):
[10] The Buddha has spoken of relinquishing both becoming and ceasing. Therefore, it is admissible to say that nirvana is neither an entity nor a non-entity.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The teacher has spoken of relinquishing both becoming and other-becoming. Therefore, it is proper to assume that freedom is neither existence nor non-existence.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The Teacher [Buddha] taught the abandonment of becoming and nonbecoming.
Therefore, the assertion *"nirvāṇa* is neither existent nor nonexistent" is reasonable.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. Our action to give up something, or a taboo to speak to others,
Exists really, and exists everywhere really.
Therefore, existence does not exist, and non-existence does not exist.
What is called the balanced state of the Autonomic Nervous System, Nirvana, is similar to shackles.

SPRUNG (Skt):
10 The teacher [Buddha] enjoined the abandonment of both existence and non-existence. Therefore it makes sense that *nirvāṇa* is neither existent nor non-existent.

STRENG (Skt):
10. The teacher Gautama has taught that a "becoming" and a "non-becoming" (vibhava) are destroyed; Therefore it obtains that: Nirvana is neither an existent thing nor a non-existent thing.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
X. The Buddha has declared
That Ens and non-Ens should be both rejected,
Neither as Ens nor as a non-Ens
Nirvana therefore is conceived.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v10 As the Buddha tells us in the sutras;
'Cut off from existence, cut off from nonexistence'.
Therefore we know that nirvana
Is neither existent nor nonexistent.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The teacher taught [it] to be the letting go of arising and perishing. Therefore, it is correct that nirvana is not a thing or nothing.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The Teacher has declared
The abandonment of arising and disintegration.
Thus, it makes sense that the transcendence of suffering
Is not an entity or a nonentity. [XXV.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. The teacher has spoken of relinquishing
Becoming and dissolution.
Therefore, it makes sense that
Nirvana is neither existent nor nonexistent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. The teacher has spoken of relinquishing
Becoming and passing away.
Therefore it makes sense that
Nirvana is neither a thing nor a non-thing.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The teacher has taught the relinquishing of both existence and non-existence. Therefore Nirvana cannot be thought of as either existence or non-existence.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/10 'Existence' means the three existences, and 'nonexistence' means the cutting off and cessation of the three existences. Because the Buddha teaches that both of these things should be cut off, we know that nirvana is neither existent nor nonexistent.

Question: If nirvana is neither existent nor nonexistent, is nirvana not a combination of existence and nonexistence?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Concerning this the sutra [possibly *Udana*, iii, 10] says: 'All those, o monks, who long for deliverance from what is real by means of something which is itself either real or unreal, they lack perfect insight. Both these are to be renounced: a longing for something real or existent and a longing for mere non-existence.' But it is not *nirvāṇa* that the illustrious one urged should be given up; it is rather not to be given up. 'Therefore, it makes sense that *nirvāṇa* is neither existent nor non-existent.'

The third theory: nirvāṇa is both an ontic existent and an ontic non-existent

Then there are those [The Vaibhasika school presumably, which provided the first theory also] for whom *nirvāṇa* is of the nature of the ontically non-existent because personal existence and the afflictions do not exist in *nirvāṇa*. Yet *nirvāṇa* itself has the formal character of an existent because of the nature of such. Therefore it is both existent and non-existent. For those for whom it is of the nature of both, *nirvāṇa* is not logically possible. Expounding this Nagarjuna said,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

In addition to the two concepts of sambhava and vibhava, discussed previously (Chapter XXI), Nagarjuna introduces another pair: bhava and vibhava. It is significant to note that when Nagarjuna rejected astitva and nastitva he was quoting the Buddha (XV. 7). He does the same when he refers to bhava and vibhava (XXV.10). Yet, when he rejects bhava and adhava, two concepts that do not appear in the early discourses, except as suffixes, Nagarjuna merely indicates that the Buddha realized their implications (bhavabhava-vibhavina, XV. 7) and does not present it as a statement of the Buddha. This supports our previous contention that bhava and abhava represent an attempt to reintroduce astitva and nastitva into philosophical discussions by the Brahmanical and Buddhist metaphysicians.

One significant difference between the concepts of bhava and abhava (astitva and nastitva), on the one hand, and bhava and vibhava, on the other, is that the former are metaphysical assumptions and the latter describe empirical events. As such, the reasons for their rejection would be different. Bhava and abhava are rejected because they are metaphysical and, as such, unverifiable in terms of the epistemological standpoint adopted by the Buddha. On the contrary, bhava and vibhava are experienced processes of life, namely, becoming and other-becoming, and the reason for their being rejected is that they lead to suffering (duhkha). Bhava is the process of becoming conditioned by dispositions. Hence the Buddha spoke of "craving for becoming" (bhava-tanha), a constant thirsting to become this or that. Vibhava could mean either "becoming something different" or annihilation of this process of becoming (namely, suicide). This was also referred to as a form of craving (vibhava-tanha). However, the process of becoming and becoming otherwise could be explained in terms of metaphysical and, therefore, wrong beliefs (mithya-drsti) in absolute existence (bhava) and nihilistic non-existence (abhava), respectively, instead of dependent arising (prati tyasamutpada). Neither of the metaphysical explanations, according to the Buddha, could serve as the basis for freedom.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. Nirvāṇa is here again explicitly characterized only by contrast with saṃsāra. While it therefore cannot be an entity of the kind with which saṃsāra is populated, it is, as the release from saṃsāra, not completely nonexistent. So it can neither be conceived of conventionally or ultimately as a thing, nor coherently asserted not to exist. In fact, as XXV: 9 emphasizes with eloquence, the very same world is saṃsāra or nirvāṇa, dependent upon one's perspective. When one perceives the constant arising and ceasing of phenomena, one perceives saṃsāra. When all reification is abandoned, that world and one's mode of living in it, becomes nirvāṇa. (fn 127. See Yuktatika 11 for another presentation of this view.) Nāgārjuna now considers the possibility that nirvāṇa is both existent and nonexistent:

Kārikā XXV.11

भवेदभावो भावश्च निर्वाणमुभयं यदि।
भवेदभावो भावश्च मोक्षस्तच्च न युज्यते॥११॥

bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayaṃ yadi |
bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca mokṣas tac ca na yujyate ||11||

若謂於有無 合為涅槃者
有無即解脫 是事則不然

ruò wèi yū;yú;wū yǒu wú hé;gé wéi niè pán zhě
yǒu wú jí jiě tuō shì shì zé bù rán

།གལ་ཏེ་མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་ནི།།དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་གཉིས་ཡིན་ན།
།དངོས་དང་དངོས་པོ་མེད་པ་དག།ཐར་པར་འགྱུར་ན་དེ་མི་རིགས།།

| gal te mya ṅan ’das pa ni | | dṅos daṅ dṅos med gñis yin na |
| dṅos daṅ dṅos po med pa dag | thal bar ’gyur na de mi rigs |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - If nirvana is (in the realm of) both existence and non-existence, then moksa (liberation) will also be both. But that is not proper.

JONES (Skt):
[11] If nirvana were both an entity and the absence of an entity (i.e., a "non-entity"), then liberation would be both an entity and a non-entity, and this is not admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If freedom were to be both existence and non-existence, then release would also be both existence and non-existence. This too is not proper.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *nirvāṇa* would be both existent and nonexistent,
liberation would be both existent and nonexistent. But that is not reasonable.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. When non-existence and existence both might exist in the co-existence form,
Then the balance of the autonomic nervous system, Nirvana, might exists in the doubled bindings.
When non-existence and existence both might exist in the co-existence form,
Concrete fact of emancipation can never be bound at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
11 If *nirvāṇa* were both existent and non-existent then final release would be both existent and non-existent, and that does not make sense.

STRENG (Skt):
11. If nirvana were both an existent and a non-existent thing, Final release (moksa) would be both an existent and a non-existent thing; but that is not possible.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XI. If Nirvana were both Ens and non-Ens,
Final Deliverance would be also both,
Reality and unreality together.
This never could be possible!

BOCKING (Ch):
25v11 If, as you say, nirvana
Is a combination of existence and nonexistence
Then liberation will be existence and nonexistence
And this is not correct.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If nirvana were both a thing and nothing, it would follow that it would be a thing and nothing. That is incorrect.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the transcendence of suffering
Were both entity and nonentity,
Entity and nonentity would be liberation,
Yet this does not make sense. [XXV.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. If nirvana were both
Existent and nonexistent,
Passing beyond would, impossibly,
Be both existent and nonexistent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. If nirvana were both
A thing and a non-thing,
Then things and non-things would both be nirvana.
But that makes no sense.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If Nirvana is both existence and non-existence, then release would also be both, which makes no sense.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/11 If you say that nirvana consists of a combination of existence and non existence, then these two elements of existence and nonexistence in combination will constitute liberation, but this is not correct, and why? Because the two elements, existence and nonexistence are opposite to each other. How can they exist in the same place?

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If *nirvāṇa* were of the nature of both the ontically existent and non-existent then final release (*moksa*) would be both ontically existent and non-existent. Hence both the reality of character dispositions in a personal existence and their disappearance would constitute final release. But it is not intelligible that character dispositions as such are the final release; and that is why Nagarjuna says, 'that does not make sense'.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

It is possible for someone to assume that "freedom" represents a special kind of existence which combines both existence and non-existence. If it is understood as some mysterious existence beyond existence and nonexistence, Nagarjuna reminds his opponents that it is no more than simple "release" (moksa), and this latter need not be described as both existence and non-existence. Release is no more than the release from suffering and there is nothing transcendental about it.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. This would entail that it is contradictory. And it is absurd to assign anything contradictory properties. Moreover, having seen that each of the conjuncts is individually impossible, their conjunction, even were it not a conjunction of contradictories, could certainly not be coherent. In particular, we don't want to say that one does and does not pass into nirvāṇa upon release from saṃsāra.

Kārikā XXV.12

भवेदभावो भावश्च निर्वाणमुभयं यदि।
नानुपादाय निर्वाणमुपादायोभयं हि तत्॥१२॥

bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayaṃ yadi |
nānupādāya nirvāṇam upādāyobhayaṃ hi tat ||12||

若謂於有無 合為涅槃者
涅槃非無受 是二從受生

ruò wèi yū;yú;wū yǒu wú hé;gé wéi niè pán zhě
niè pán fēi wú shòu shì èr cóng shòu shēng

|ཀལ་ཏེ་མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་ནི||དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་གཉིས་ཡིན་ན|
|མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་མ་བརྟེན་མིན||དེ་གཉིས་བརྟེན་ནས་ཡིན་ཕྱིར་རོ||

| (5)gal te mya ṅan 'das pa ni | | dṅos daṅ dṅos med gñis yin na |
| mya ṅan 'das pa ma brten min | | de gñis brten nas yin phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - If nirvana is (in the realm of) both existence and non-existence, it will not be non-appropriating. For, both realms are (always in the process of) appropriating.

JONES (Skt):
[12] If nirvana were both an entity and a non-entity, nirvana would not be non-dependent for it would dependent upon both of these.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If freedom were to be both existence and non-existence, freedom could not be independent, for existence and non-existence are, indeed, dependent upon one another.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *nirvāṇa* would be both existent and nonexistent,
nirvāṇa would not be nongrasping for both are grasping.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. Non-existence, and existence, both can exist actually,
But in the case of Nirvana, both to exist or not to exist, can exist at the same moment.
The one-sided appearance of Nirvana can never exist,
Because the appearance is doubled is the concrete fact of Nirvana.

SPRUNG (Skt):
12 If *nirvāṇa* were both existent and non-existent then it could not be beyond all dependence because both the existent and the non-existent are dependent.

STRENG (Skt):
12. If nirvana were both an existent and a non-existent thing, There would be no nirvana without conditions, for these both operate with conditions.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XII. If Nirvana were both Ens and non-Ens.
Nirvana could not be uncaused.
Indeed the Ens and the non-Ens
Are both dependent on causation.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v12 If you say that nirvana consists in
A combination of existence and nonexistence
Nirvana will not be non-reception
These two arise from reception.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If nirvana were both a thing and nothing, nirvana would not be not-dependent, because it would depend on those two.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the transcendence of suffering
Here both entity and nonentity,
The transcendence of suffering would not be independent,
Because these two are dependent. [XXV.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. If nirvana were both
Existent and nonexistent,
Nirvana would not be nondependent.
Since it would depend on both of these.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. If nirvana were both
A thing and a non-thing,
Nirvana would not be independent
Because those two are dependent.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If Nirvana were both existence and non-existence, it could not be non-dependent since both existence and non-existence are dependent.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/12 If, as you say, nirvana consists in a combination of existence and nonexistence, then the sutras ought not to teach that nirvana means 'non-receiving', and why? Because the two elements of existence and nonexistence arise from reception, and exist interdependently. Therefore, nirvana cannot be a combination of these two elements of existence and nonexistence.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If *nirvāṇa* were of the nature of both the ontically existent and non-existent then it would presuppose a dependence on a complex of causal conditions, that is, it would not be beyond all dependence. Why? Because both the ontically existent and non-existent are dependent. If it is agreed that the ontically non-existent is dependent on the ontically existent for its meaning and the ontically existent is dependent on the nonexistent for its meaning, then both of these, the existent and non-existent, are clearly dependent and not beyond all dependence. This is the result if *nirvāṇa* were of the nature both of the existent and non-existent But neither is this the case nor does it make sense.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As pointed out earlier, the substantialist definition of freedom implied independence, rather than non-grasping or non-clinging (see comments on XXII. 5). Thus, if the metaphysicians were to define freedom as both existence and non-existence, it could not be independent as they expect it to be. This is because existence and non-existence are dependent.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

12. But since both existent and nonexistent entities are dependent, as Nāgārjuna has argued in XXV: 6, 8, if nirvāṇa were both existent and nonexistent it would be doubly dependent. It would depend both on existent and nonexistent phenomena.

Kārikā XXV.13

भवेदभावो भावश्च निर्वाणमुभयं कथम्।
असंस्कृतं च निर्वाणं भावाभावौ च संस्कृतौ॥१३॥

bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayaṃ katham |
asaṃskṛtaṃ hi nirvāṇaṃ bhāvābhāvau ca saṃskṛtau ||13||

有無共合成 云何名涅槃
涅槃名無為 有無是有為

yǒu wú gòng hé chéng yún hé míng niè pán
niè pán míng wú wéi yǒu wú shì yǒu wéi

།ཇི་ལྟར་མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་ནི།།དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་གཉིས་ཡིན་ཏེ།
།མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་འདུས་མ་བྱས།།དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་འདུས་བྱས་ཡིན།།

| ji ltar mya ṅan ’das pa ni | | dṅos daṅ dṅos med gñis yin te |
| mya ṅan ’das pa ’dus ma byas | | (6)dṅos daṅ dṅos med ’dus byas yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - How could nirvana be (in the realm of) both existence and non-existence? Nirvana is of the uncreated realm while existence and non-existence are of the created realm.

JONES (Skt):
[13] How could nirvana be both an entity and a non-entity? Nirvana is uncompounded, but what is an entity and non-entity is compounded.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How could freedom be both existence and non-existence, for freedom is unconditioned while existence and non-existence are conditioned?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How could *nirvāṇa* be both existent and nonexistent?
nirvāṇa is unconditioned, and both existent and nonexistent are conditioned.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. It might be possible that non-existence, or existence, either can exist.
How is it possible for the Nirvana to appear as both non-existence and existence of the one moment.?
Because in the case of Nirvana, the word, which hasn't been translated into Sanskrit, might be also Nirvana,
And so the word "to exist" and the word "not to exists," might be both Sanskrit words in facts.

SPRUNG (Skt):
13 If *nirvāṇa* were both existent and non-existent how could it be uncompounded, as both the existent and non-existent are compounded?

STRENG (Skt):
13. How can nirvana exist as both an existent thing and a non-existent thing, For nirvana is a non-composite-product (asamskrta), while both an existent thing and a non-existent thing are composite products (samskrta).

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XIII. How can Nirvana represent
An Ens and a non-Ens together?
Nirvana is indeed uncaused,
Both Ens and non-Ens are productions.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v13 If established by a combination of existence and nonexistence
How can you call it nirvana?
Nirvana means inactive
Existence and nonexistence are active.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How could nirvana be both a thing and nothing? Nirvana is unconditioned; things and nothings are conditioned.

DOCTOR (Tb):
How could the transcendence of suffering
Be both entity and nonentity?
The transcendence of suffering is unconditioned,
Entity and nonentity are conditioned. [XXV.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. How could nirvana
Be both existent and nonexistent?
Nirvana is uncompounded.
Both existents and nonexistents are compounded.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. How could nirvana
Be both a thing and a non-thing?
Nirvana is uncompounded.
Both things and non-things are compounded.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How could Nirvana be both existence and non-existence? Nirvana is uncompounded while existence and non-existence are compounded.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/13 A combination of the two elements of existence and nonexistence cannot be termed nirvana. Nirvana means 'inactive', whereas existence and nonexistence are active. Therefore nirvana is not both-existent-and-nonexistent.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

That is, the ontically existent is compounded because it is in conjunction with the complex of its own causal conditions; the ontically non-existent is compound because it has its being in conjunction with dependence on the ontically existent and because of the doctrine that death and old age are dependent on birth. And so, if *nirvāṇa* were to be in its true nature both existent and non-existent then it would not be uncompounded, but would be rather compounded. And because it cannot be thought of as compounded it is not intelligible that *nirvāṇa* is, in its true nature (*svarupa*), both existent and non-existent.

Well, if *nirvāṇa* itself could not be, in its true nature, both existent and non-existent could the ontically existent and nonexistent both be in *nirvāṇa*?

But neither is this intelligible. Why? Because:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As in the previous verse, here too Nagarjuna is taking the definition proffered by the opponent and criticizing his conception of freedom. This is similar to the argument adduced by Nagarjuna at XXV.6, except that in the present case Nagarjuna is insisting that if something is both existence and non-existence, it could not appropriately be called an "unconditioned." The "unconditioned," by the metaphysician's definition, is the "independent" (aprati tyasamutpanna), and an element with two entities as parts of it will always be conditioned by those two parts.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

13. Moreover, not only are existents compounded - that is made up of parts or given rise to by causes - but genuine nonexistents are compounded as well - their nonexistence is determined by the nature of other things; if real, they would be composed of parts. A nonexistent elephant is composed of a nonexistent trunk, tusks, and so forth.

Kārikā XXV.14

भवेदभावो भावश्च निर्वाणे उभयं कथम्।
[तयोरेकत्र नास्तित्वमालोकतमसोर्यथा]॥१४॥

bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇa ubhayaṃ katham |
tayor abhāvo hy ekatra prakāśatamasor iva ||14||

有無二事共 云何是涅槃
是二不同處 如明暗不俱

yǒu wú èr shì gòng yún hé shì niè pán
shì èr bù tóng chǔ rú míng àn bù jù;jū

ཇི་ལྟར་མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་ལ།།དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་གཉིས་ཡོད་དེ།
།དེ་གཉིས་གཅིག་ལ་ཡོད་མིན་ཏེ།།སྣང་བ་དང་ནི་མུན་པ་བཞིན།།

| ji ltar mya ṅan ’das pa la | | dṅos daṅ dṅos med gñis yod de |
| de gñis gcig la yod min te | | snaṅ ba daṅ ni mun pa bźin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 14 - How could nirvana be (in the realm of) both existence and non-existence? Both cannot be together in one place just as the situation is with light and darkness.

JONES (Skt):
[14] How could nirvana be both an entity and a non-entity? There can be no existence of these in one place, just as in the case of light and darkness.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How could freedom be both existence and non-existence, for their simultaneous existence in one place is not possible, as in the case of light and darkness?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How could *nirvāṇa* be both existent and nonexistent?
There is no existence of both, as with light and darkness, in the same place.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
14. Both Non-Existence and Existence can exist together.
What is the situation that the Nirvana is the existence of doubled?
Therefore the non-existence of dual, suggests the existence of only one,
And so what can be seen with eyes, and the darkness of the Hell, are completely the Same.

SPRUNG (Skt):
14 How could *nirvāṇa* be both existent and non-existent? Both cannot exist in the identical place and respect simultaneously, as with vision and darkness.

STRENG (Skt):
14. How can nirvana exist as both an existent and a non-existent thing? There is no existence of both at one and the same place, as in the case of both darkness and light.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XIV. How can Nirvana represent
(The place) of Ens and of non-Ens together?
As light and darkness (in one spot)
They cannot simultaneously be present.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XXV.14 How could nirvāna exist and not exist? Like light and darkness these two [i.e., existence and non-existence] cannot be at the same place.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v14 How can existence and nonexistence
In combination, be nirvana
These two cannot exist in the same place
Just as light and darkness are never together.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How could nirvana exist as both a thing and nothing? Those two do not exist as one. They are like light and dark.

DOCTOR (Tb):
How could the transcendence of suffering
Possess both entity and nonentity?
These two cannot coexist,
Just like light and darkness. [XXV.14]

GARFIELD (Tb):
14. How could nirvana
Be both existent and nonexistent?
These two cannot be in the same place.
Like light and darkness.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
14. How could nirvana
Be both a thing and a non-thing?
These two cannot be in the same place,
Like light and darkness.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How could Nirvana be both existence and non-existence? As with vision and darkness, these two cannot be in the same place at once.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/14 The two elements of existence and nonexistence cannot be termed nirvana, and why? Existence and nonexistence are opposite to each other and cannot exist in the same place, just as light and dharmas are not found together. Therefore, here there is existence there is no nonexistence, and where there is nonexistence there is no existence. How could existence and nonexistence combined be termed nirvana?

Question: If nirvana is not a combination of existence and nonexistence, surely nirvana must be neither existence nor nonexistence?

Reply:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

There is no co-existence in one self-identical *nirvāṇa* of two mutually incompatibles as the existent and the non-existent. Hence the question: 'How could *nirvāṇa* be both existent and non-existent?' The thought is that it could most emphatically not be.

The fourth theory: nirvāṇa is neither an existent nor a nonexistent

How it could make sense to say that *nirvāṇa* is neither existent nor non-existent, Nagarjuna now proceeds to expound, saying,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This brings out another aspect of the metaphysicians' conception of freedom, namely, the monistic implication. Nirvana, looked upon as the "ultimate reality" (paramartha), could not accommodate variety and multiplicity. For them, it is the one ultimate truth, everything else being provisional. However, Nagarjuna is insisting that they could not maintain that nirvana is both existence and non-existence.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

14. This verse simply sums up the results of the previous three: There is simply no way to avoid manifest contradiction if one takes this horn of the tetralemma. Nāgārjuna now considers the final possibility - that nirvāṇa is neither existent nor nonexistent: (fn 128. See also Padhye (1988), pp. 109-14, for a concise discussion of Nāgārjuna's treatment of the tetralemma of existence/nonexistence with respect to nirvāṇa.)

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Kārikā XXV.15

नैवाभावो नैव भावो निर्वाणमिति याञ्जना।
अभावे चैव भावे च सा सिद्धे सति सिध्यति॥१५॥

naivābhāvo naiva bhāvo nirvāṇam iti yā ’ñjanā |
abhāve caiva bhāve ca sā siddhe sati sidhyati ||15||

若非有非無 名之為涅槃
此非有非無 以何而分別

ruò fēi yǒu fēi wú míng zhī wéi niè pán
cǐ fēi yǒu fēi wú yǐ hé ér fēn bié

།དངོས་མིན་དངོས་པོ་མེད་མིན་པ།།མྱ་ངན་འདས་པར་གང་སྟོན་པ།
།དངོས་པོ་མེད་དང་དངོས་པོ་དག།གྲུབ་ན་དེ་ནི་གྲུབ་པར་འགྱུར།།

| dṅos min dṅos po med min pa | | mya ṅan ’das par gaṅ ston pa |
| (7)dṅos po med daṅ dṅos po dag | grub na de ni grub par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 15 - The proposition that nirvana is neither existence nor non-existence could only be valid if and when the realms of existence and non-existence are established.

JONES (Skt):
[15] If the proposition “Nirvana is both an entity and a non-entity” were established, the proposition “Nirvana is neither an entity nor a non-entity” could be established.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The proposition that freedom is neither existence nor non-existence could be established if and when both existence and non-existence are established.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What is clear is the statement “*nirvāṇa* is not existent and not nonexistent.”
It is demonstrated where being and nonbeing are established as existing.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
15. It is never non-existent, and it is never existent,
What are called Nirvanas might be similar to a kind of cosmetics,
Even though they are not existent, or really existent,
They are belonging to the situations of accomplishments, and they have been just accomplished.

SPRUNG (Skt):
15 There is the dictum, ‘*Nirvāṇa* is neither existent nor non-existent.’ If the existent and the non-existent were established fact, this dictum would be proved.

STRENG (Skt):
15. The assertion: "Nirvana is neither an existent thing nor a non-existent thing" Is proved if the assertion: "It is an existent thing and a non-existent thing" were proved.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XV. If it were clear, indeed,
What an Ens means, and what a non-Ens,
We could then understand the doctrine
About Nirvana being neither Ens nor non-Ens.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v15 If nirvana is to be termed
Neither existence nor nonexistence
How can we distinguish
This 'neither existence nor nonexistence'?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The presentation of neither a thing nor nothing as nirvana will be established [only] if things and nothings are established.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The teaching that the transcendence of suffering
Is neither entity nor nonentity
Would be established
If entity and nonentity were established. [XXV.15]

GARFIELD (Tb):
15. Nirvana is said to be
Neither existent nor nonexistent.
If the existent and the nonexistent were established,
This would be established.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
15. Nirvana is said to be
Neither a thing nor a non-thing.
If things or non-things could exist,
It would exist.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The proposition that Nirvana is neither existence nor non-existence could only be valid if and when the realms of existence and non-existence are established.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/15 If nirvana is neither existent nor nonexistent, by what means would we distinguish this 'neither existent nor non-existent'` Therefore, it is not the case that nirvana is neither existent nor nonexistent.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If there were something called 'the existent' then, by distinguishing *nirvāṇa* negatively from it, one could make the claim (*kalpana*), '*Nirvāṇa* is not an existent.' If there were something which was 'the non-existent', then by distinguishing *nirvāṇa* negatively from it, *nirvāṇa* would be definitely not non-existent. Where however, there is neither 'an existent' nor 'a non-existent', there can be no negation of them. Therefore the claim that *nirvāṇa* is neither existent nor non-existent is clearly logically impossible and does not make sense.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Anjana from (anj, "to annoint") can mean a symbol. Here Nagarjuna is not speaking of logical proof to decide the validity of a symbolism, or a proposition. Rather, he is interested in the empirical justification. Thus, unless both existence and non-existence, as explained by the metaphysician, can be shown to have empirical validity, their negations too would mean nothing.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

15. But this can't be so either. For really to assert this as the nature of nirvāṇa would be to suppose that both of these possibilities made sense with respect to it, but that neither happened to be realized. But it makes no sense for nirvāṇa to exist. And it makes no sense for it not to exist. So of each, the negation can't be assigned any coherent meaning. And conjoining two pieces of nonsense only yields further nonsense.

Kārikā XXV.16

नैवाभावो नैव भावो निर्वाणं यदि विद्यते।
नैवाभावो नैव भाव इति केन तदज्यते॥१६॥

naivābhāvo naiva bhāvo nirvāṇaṃ yadi vidyate |
naivābhāvo naiva bhāva iti kena tad ajyate ||16||

分別非有無 如是名涅槃
若有無成者 非有非無成

fēn bié fēi yǒu wú rú shì míng niè pán
ruò yǒu wú chéng zhě fēi yǒu fēi wú chéng

།གལ་ཏེ་མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་ནི།།དངོས་མིན་དངོས་པོ་མེད་མིན་ན།
།དངོས་མིན་དངོས་པོ་མེད་མིན་ཞེས།།གང་ཞིག་གིས་ནི་དེ་མངོན་བྱེད།།

| gal te mya ṅan 'das pa ni | | dṅos min dṅos po med min na |
| dṅos min dṅos po med min źes | | gaṅ źig gis ni de mṅon byed |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 16 - If indeed nirvana is asserted to be neither existence nor non-existence, then by what means are the assertion to be known?

JONES (Skt):
[16] If nirvana is neither an entity nor a non-entity, by what means is it asserted that it is "neither an entity nor a non-entity"?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If freedom as neither existence nor nonexistence is evident, by means of what is it made known as neither existence nor non-existence?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If *nirvāṇa* is known by neither existent nor nonexistent,
it can be made clear by whom as "neither existent nor nonexistent"?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
16. Never Non-existence, or never existence,
When Nirvanas are completely recognized,
Never Non-existence, or never existence,
Such situations are recognized a little as a concrete fact.

SPRUNG (Skt):
16 If *nirvāṇa* is emphatically neither existent nor nonexistent, by whom is it claimed, 'it is neither existent nor non-existent'?

STRENG (Skt):
16. If nirvana is neither an existent thing nor a non-existent thing, Who can really arrive at the assertion: "neither an existent thing nor a non-existent thing"?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XVI. If Nirvana is neither Ens nor non-Ens.
No one can really understand
This doctrine which proclaims at once
Negation of them both together.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v16 As for distinguishing neither existence nor nonexistence
And. calling this nirvana;
If existence or nonexistence is established
Neither existence nor nonexistence is established.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If nirvana is neither a thing nor nothing, by who could "neither a thing nor nothing" be perceived?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the transcendence of suffering
Were neither entity nor nonentity,
Who would perceive that
"It is neither entity nor nonentity"?[XXV.16]

GARFIELD (Tb):
16. If nirvana is
Neither existent nor nonexistent,
Then by whom is it expounded
"Neither existent nor nonexistent"?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
16. If nirvana is
Neither a thing nor a non-thing,
Then by whom is it expounded as
"Neither a thing nor a non-thing?"

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If Nirvana is neither existence nor non-existence, by what means can this be made known?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/16 If you distinguish 'neither existence nor nonexistence' as Being nirvana, this is not correct, and why? If existence and non-existence are established, then it naturally follows that neither existence nor non-existence is established, but non-existence means the opposite of existence, and existence means the opposite of non-existence and 'both existence and non-existence' has already been refuted in the third proposition. Since there is no 'existence and nonexistence' how can there be 'neither existence nor nonexistence'? Therefore nirvana is not 'neither existence nor nonexistence'.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

If it is argued that *nirvāṇa* is neither of the nature of the existent nor of the nature of the non-existent, by whom, in such ease, is it claimed that *nirvāṇa* is such as to have the nature of neither of these? By whom is it grasped, by whom revealed? Is there someone then in *nirvāṇa* so constituted that lie can succeed in this? Or is there not? If there is, then one would hold that there is a personal self (*atman*) even in *nirvāṇa*. But this one does not accept, because there is no self detached from the factors of personal existence. But if there is not, by whom is it determined that *nirvāṇa* is of such a nature? And if one says that the one who so determines it is still based in the everyday world (*saṃsāra*), such a one must determine this either by conceptual or by intuitive knowledge. If it is supposed that lie docs it by conceptual knowledge (*vijnana*), that is illogical. Why? Because conceptual knowledge is the grasping (*alambana*) of objects as signs (*nimitta*), and in *nirvāṇa* there are no objects as signs whatsoever. So *nirvāṇa* is not grasped through conceptual knowledge as such.

Nor is it known by intuitive knowledge (*jnana*). Why? Because *nirvāṇa* supervenes in virtue of an intuition which becomes aware of the absence of being in things. And it is precisely the nature of such an intuition that it does not arise ontically (*anutpadarupa*). How can the statement, '*Nirvāṇa* is neither existent nor non-existent' be comprehended by what does not, in its essential nature, exist? For intuition of the absence of being, by its very nature, is beyond the world of named things. Therefore that '*Nirvāṇa* is neither existent or non-existent' cannot be claimed by anyone at all. This statement is unintelligible as it cannot be comprehended, nor clarified, nor made.

Rejection of the four theories in principle: the Madhyamika conclusion

Nagarjuna, explaining that, as the four theories do not obtain in any way with respect to *nirvāṇa*, so they do not obtain with respect to the perfected one who has attained *nirvāṇa*, said,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This seems to be a rather devastating criticism of the more popular view that freedom cannot be expressed either as existence or as non-existence. That is, it is linguistically transcendent or is ineffable. If the statement, "Freedom is neither existence nor non-existence," is intended to express the ineffability of nirvana , Nagarjuna is questioning the meaningfulness of that very statement. This means that absolute negation is as metaphysical as absolute assertion, "absolute nothingness" is as meaningless as "absolute thingness," and these are the absolutes that are expressed by terms like bhava and abhava.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

16. If this could be coherently asserted, it would have to be asserted either by one in nirvāṇa or one not. But, as is emphasized in the next verse, this has never been asserted by anyone certifiably in nirvāṇa. And if it is asserted by someone in saṃsāra, we have no particular reason to believe it.

Kārikā XXV.17

परं निरोधाद्भगवान् भवतीत्येव नोह्यते।
न भवत्युभयं चेति नोभयं चेति नोह्यते॥१७॥

paraṃ nirodhād bhagavān bhavatīty eva nājyate |
na bhavaty ubhayaṃ ceti nobhayaṃ ceti nājyate ||17||

如來滅度後 不言有與無
亦不言有無 非有及非無

rú lái miè dù hòu bù yán yǒu yǔ wú
yì bù yán yǒu wú fēi yǒu jí fēi wú

།བཅོམ་ལྡན་མྱ་ངན་འདས་གྱུར་ནས།།ཡོད་པར་མི་མངོན་དེ་བཞིན་དུ།
།མེད་དོ་ཞེའམ་གཉིས་ཀ་དང་།།གཉིས་མིན་ཞེས་ཀྱང་མི་མངོན་ནོ།།

| bcom ldan mya ṅan ’das gyur nas | | yod par mi mṅon (17a1)de bźin du |
| med do źe’am gñis ka daṅ | | gñis min źes kyaṅ mi mṅon no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 17 - It cannot be said that the Blessed One exists after nirodha (i.e. release from worldly desires). Nor can it be said that He does not exist after nirodha, or both, or neither.

JONES (Skt):
[17] It is not to be inferred that the blessed one exists after ceasing (i.e., after the Buddha's death after he attained enlightenment), nor that he does not exist, nor both, nor neither.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
It is not assumed that the Blessed One exists after death. Neither is it assumed that he does not exist, or both, or neither.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
It is not maintained that "the Venerable One exists after death"
nor is it maintained "he does not exist" or "both or neither."

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
17. When the Result has been leaving from the self-regulation, there might be Happiness Actually.
What is called Existence, is never be born at all. In the case that co-existences do not exist actually,
The denial of co-existence might never be born as the fact at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
17 One does not conjecture if the illustrious one still exists subsequent to his decease, or does not exist, or both exists and does not exist.

STRENG (Skt):
17. It is not expressed if the Glorious One the Buddha exists (1) after his death, Or does not exist (2), or both (3) or neither (4).

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XVII. What is the Buddha after his Nirvana?
Does he exist or does he not exist,
Or both, or neither?
We never will conceive it!

ROBINSON (Skt):
It is not asserted that after his final cessation the Blessed One exists, does not exist, or both, or neither.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v17 The Thus-Come, after his decease
Is neither said to exist, nor not exist
Nor said to be both existent and nonexistent
Nor nonexistent and not nonexistent.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
After the Bhagavan has entered nirvana, one cannot perceive [him? it?] as "existing," likewise as "not existing," nor can one percieve [him? it?] as "both" or "neither".

DOCTOR (Tb):
When the Transcendent Conqueror has gone beyond,
He is not perceived as "existent,"
Nor as "nonexistent,"
As "both," or as "neither." [XXV.17]

GARFIELD (Tb):
17. Having passed into nirvana, the Victorious Conqueror
Is neither said to be existent
Nor said to be nonexistent.
Neither both nor neither are said.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
17. Having passed into nirvana, the Transcendent Lord
Is neither perceived to be existent
Nor perceived to be nonexistent.
He is neither perceived to be both nor to be neither.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
It cannot be said that the Buddha either exists or does not exist—or both, or neither—upon release.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

As was said earlier: 'One who holds the crude notion that the perfectly realized one "exists" must speculate "he does not exist" after his enlightenment.' (MMK XXII.13) In this sense one cannot conjecture whether the perfected one exists or does not exist subsequent to his decease; then, because neither of these alternatives obtains one cannot conjecture that both do; and because both do not obtain, one cannot conceive or conjecture that neither obtains.

It is not only concerning the illustrious one after his decease that one does not conjecture in the fourfold way, but as well,

Kārikā XXV.18

तिष्ठमानोऽपि भगवान् भवतीत्येव नोह्यते।
न भवत्युभयं चेति नोभयं चेति नोह्यते॥१८॥

tiṣṭhamāno ’pi bhagavān bhavatīty eva nājyate |
na bhavaty ubhayaṃ ceti nobhayaṃ ceti nājyate ||18||

如來現在時 不言有與無
亦不言有無 非有及非無

rú lái xiàn zài shí bù yán yǒu yǔ wú
yì bù yán yǒu wú fēi yǒu jí fēi wú

།བཅོམ་ལྡན་བཞུགས་པར་གྱུར་ན་ཡང་། །ཡོད་པར་མི་མངོན་དེ་བཞིན་དུ།
།མེད་དོ་ཞེའམ་གཉིས་ཀ་དང་། །གཉིས་མིན་ཞེས་ཀྱང་མི་མངོན་ནོ།།

| bcom ldan bźugs par gyur na yaṅ | | yod par mi mṅon de bźin du |
| med do źe’am gñis ka daṅ | | gñis min źes kyaṅ mi mṅon no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 18 - It cannot be said that the Blessed One even exists in the present living process. Nor can it be said that He does not exist in the present living process, or both, or neither.

JONES (Skt):
[18] It is not to be inferred even that a currently living blessed one exists, nor that he does not exist, nor both, nor neither.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
It is not assumed that even a living Blessed One exists. Neither is it assumed that he does not exist, or both or neither.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
It is not maintained that “the Venerable One exists while remaining in
the world” nor is it maintained that “he does not exist or both or neither.”

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
18. Even though our own self-conceit of having established our own stable basis,
The idea of a simple fact that we are just existing in the world, does not bear anything at all.
If the co-existence would not exist at all really,
No existence of the co-existence actually is never be born at all,

SPRUNG (Skt):
18 One does not conjecture if the illustrious one is existent during his lifetime or is non-existent, is both or neither.

STRENG (Skt):
18. Also, it is not expressed if the Glorious One exists (1) while remaining in the world, Or does not exist (2), or both (3) or neither (4).

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XVIII. What is the Buddha then at lifetime?
Does he exist, or does he not exist,
Or both, or neither?
We never will conceive it!

ROBINSON (Skt):
It is not asserted that during his lifetime the Blessed One exists, does not exist, or both, or neither.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v18 The Thus-Come in the present
Is neither said to exist, nor not exist
Nor said to be both existent and nonexistent
Nor nonexistent and not nonexistent.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Even when the Bhagavan is alive, one cannot perceive [him? it?] as “existing,” likewise as “not existing,” nor can one percieve [him? it?] as “both” or “neither”.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Even as the Transcendent Conqueror remains,
He is not perceived as “existent,”
Nor as “nonexistent,”
As “both” or as “neither.”[XXV.18]

GARFIELD (Tb):
18. So, when the victorious one abides, he
Is neither said to be existent
Nor said to be nonexistent.
Neither both nor neither are said.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
18. So, when the Transcendent Lord was alive, he
Was neither perceived to be existent
Nor perceived to be nonexistent.
He was neither perceived to be both nor to be neither.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
It cannot be said that the Buddha either exists or does not exist—or both, or neither—even while in the world.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/18 Whether after the death of the Thus-Come, or while he is present, an existent Thus-Come does not receive, and a nonexistent Thus- Come does not receive either. A both existent and nonexistent Thus-Come does not receive, nor does a neither existent nor nonexistent Thus-Come receive. Since he does not receive, he does not discriminate nirvana as existent, nonexistent and so forth.

Apart from a Thus-Come, who could possibly attain nirvana? In what time, in what place and by means of what dharma would we speak of nirvana? Therefore, though you may seek for the characteristics of nirvana everywhere and in all kinds of ways, you will not be able to find them.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

Why this is neither to be argued for nor conjectured was expounded in 'The Perfectly Realized One'.

Precisely for this reason:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

These, indeed, are the metaphysical assertions made regarding the tathagata (XXII) which both Nagarjuna and the Buddha rejected. The foundations of these metaphysical views were the theories of identity and difference. This very important problem is next taken up for examination by Nagarjuna.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

18. None of the four tetralemma possibilities can be asserted. Just as in Chapter XXII, we see that when things are plausibly posited by an interlocutor as ultimates, Nāgārjuna resorts to a negative tetralemma. This emphasizes that all discourse is only possible from the conventional point of view. When we try to say something coherent about the nature of things from an ultimate standpoint, we end up talking nonsense. (fn 129. See Nagao (1991), pp. 42-43, for a similar account.) But recall the discussion of emptiness and convention in chapter XXIV: We can develop an understanding of emptiness in relation to conventional reality, of emptiness as empty: Emptiness seen that way simply is the lack of essence of the conventional. Its own emptiness is the fact that it itself is no more than that. Seeing the conventional as conventional, we argued, is to see it as it is ultimately. At this point, Nāgārjuna makes a similar move with regard to nirvāṇa and draws one of the most startling conclusions of the *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā:* Just as there is no difference in entity between the conventional and the ultimate, there is no difference in entity between nirvāṇa and saṃsāra; nirvāṇa is simply saṃsāra seen without reification, without attachment, without delusion. The reason that we cannot say anything about nirvāṇa as an independent, nonsamsaric entity, then, is not that it *is* such an entity, but that it is ineffable and unknowable. (fn 130. This reading contrasts with that of Inada (1970), who asserts that nirvāṇa, in fact, is transcendent, belonging to a wholly different ontological realm. I find his reading very difficult to reconcile with XXV: 19,20 or indeed, with any of Chapters XXIl, XXIV, or XXV.) Rather it is because it is only saṃsāra seen as it is, just as emptiness is just the conventional seen as it is:

Kārikā XXV.19

न संसारस्य निर्वाणात्किंचिदस्ति विशेषणम्।
न निर्वाणस्य संसारात्किंचिदस्ति विशेषणम्॥१९॥

na saṃsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣaṇam |
na nirvāṇasya saṃsārāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣaṇam ||19||

涅槃與世間 無有少分別
世間與涅槃 亦無少分別

niè pán yǔ shì jiān wú yǒu shǎo;shào fēn bié
shì jiān yǔ niè pán yì wú shǎo;shào fēn bié

།འཁོར་བ་མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་ལས།།ཁྱད་པར་ཅུང་ཟད་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
།མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་འཁོར་བ་ལས།།ཁྱད་པར་ཅུང་ཟད་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

| ’khor ba (2)mya ṅan ’das pa las | | khyad par cuṅ zad yod ma yin |
| mya ṅan ’das pa ’khor ba las | | khyad par cuṅ zad yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 19 - Samsara (i.e., the empirical life-death cycle) is nothing essentially different from nirvana. Nirvana is nothing essentially different from samsara.

JONES (Skt):
[19] There is not the slightest difference of cyclical existence from nirvana. There is not the slightest difference of nirvana from cyclical existence.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The life-process has no thing that distinguishes it from freedom. Freedom has no thing that distinguishes it from the life-process.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
There is no distinction whatever between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.
There is no distinction whatever between *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
19. Without leaving the process of wandering, it will become leaving Nirvana.
It does never suggest that we have been given up by Nirvana,
Not belonging to Nirvana, is leaving from the wandering.
It does never suggest that we have been given up by Nirvana,

SPRUNG (Skt):
19 There is no specifiable difference whatever between *nirvāṇa* and the everyday world; there is no specifiable difference whatever between the everyday world and *nirvāṇa*.

STRENG (Skt):
19. There is nothing whatever which differentiates the existence-in-flux (samsara) from nirvana; And there is nothing whatever which differentiates nirvana from existence-in-flux.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XIX. There is no difference at all
Between Nirvana and Samsara.
There is no difference at all
Between Samsara and Nirvana.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Samsara has nothing that distinguishes it from nirvana; nirvana has nothing that distinguishes it from samsara.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v19 Between nirvana and the world
There is not the slightest distinction
Between the world and nirvana
There is not the slightest distinction.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Samsara does not have the slightest distinction from Nirvana. Nirvana does not have the slightest distinction from Samsara.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Cyclic existence is not the slightest bit
Different from the transcendence of suffering
Transcendence of suffering is not the slightest bit
Different from cyclic existence. [XXV.19]

GARFIELD (Tb):
19. There is not the slightest difference
Between cyclic existence and nirvana.
There is not the slightest difference
Between nirvana and cyclic existence.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
19. Cyclic existence is not the slightest bit
Different from nirvana.
Nirvana is not the slightest bit
Different from cyclic existence.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Nothing whatever distinguishes samsara from Nirvana. Nothing whatever distinguishes Nirvana from samsara.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Samsara is not the slightest bit different from nirvana.
Nirvana is not the slightest bit different from samsara. (19)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/19 On account of the succession of the five skandhas, and the causes and conditions of coming and going we refer to 'the 'world', but the nature of the five skandhas is utterly emptiness, non-reception and calm quiescence. This idea has already been expounded earlier. Since all dharmas are non-arising and non-ceasing, there is no distinction between the world and nirvana, and there is no distinction between-nirvana and the world.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

This is why one does not conjecture of the illustrious one that he exists or does not exist, neither while living nor even after achieving ultimate freedom (*parinirvrta*). And so there is no specifiable difference at all between the everyday world (*saṃsāra*) and *nirvāṇa* with respect to one another, because, on being thoroughly investigated, they are basically of the same nature. And the illustrious one has said the same thing. 'The everyday world, o monks, which consists of birth, decay and death, is the highest existence.' That is comprehensible just because there is no specifiable difference between the everyday world and *nirvāṇa*.

Thus,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This statement of Nagarjuna has contributed to a major and wide-spread assertion regarding the uniqueness of Mahayana philosophy, namely, the ultimate identity of samsara and nirvana. This assertion may appear to be correct, if we are to ignore all that has been said by Nagarjuna regarding the metaphysical doctrines of identity (ekatva) and difference (nanatva), especially in the chapters dealing with the tathagata (XXII) and the four truths (XXIV).

Those who upheld the view that this statement is an assertion of the identity of samsara and nirvana do not seem to have paused for one moment to reflect on the question regarding the nature of the identity they were implying; nor have they attempted to place that conception of identity (if there is one) in the historical context. The fact that there was a great urge on the part of the Buddhists, especially after the Buddha's death, to raise him to the level of a supreme being, having no real connections with the ordinary human world, can easily be seen from the more popular Mahayana texts like the Lalitavistara and the Saddharmapun dari ka as well as the Theravada treatises like the Jataka-nidanakatha. Through that popular perspective, substantialist views regarding the nature of the Buddha began to emerge among philosophers. These philosophical views were prominent with the early metaphysicians like the Sarvastivadins and the Sautrantikas.

Nirvana, understood as the "ultimate reality" (paramartha), came to be distinguished from samsara, the unreal, the convention, the impermanent. The Buddha's own view that nirvana is the "ultimate fruit" (paramattha), a culmination of the fruit (attha) of everyday life, the highest moral perfection involving the eschewing of all immoral conduct (sabba-papassa akaranam) and the promotion of good (kusalassa upasampada), was gradually being forgotten. Dharma was gradually being distinguished from the dharma in the dharma-adharma context. The inappropriate equation of the punya-papa distinction with the dharmaadharma distinction (see comments on XVII.24) led to the belief in a Dharma that transcends the dharmaadharma distinction.

However, this was not Nagarjuna's understanding. Vyavahara, the contextual or the conventional, is not provisional in a cheap pragmatic sense and, therefore, unreal. It is the concrete without which the ideal (paramartha) makes no sense at all (XXIV. 10). It is the absolute distinction between vyavahara and paramartha that is denied in the present verse.

The fact that the Buddhist metaphysicians were involved in long-drawn philosophical disputes with the Brahmanical schools of thought and, therefore, the possibility of mutual influences should not be discounted. For example, the Sautrantika philosophical standpoint resembles in many ways the standpoint of the Vaisesikas. This latter philosophy is founded on the basic methodology of making "distinctions" (visesana). Nagarjuna's present statement can be properly evaluated in the background of such a methodology.

Indeed, the most significant part of the statement is: na kimcit asti visesanam, i.e., "there is no thing that can be taken as a distinction," or "there is no distinct thing." (see XXV. 20 and 24). The reference to some metaphysical entity as "some thing" (kimcit) is a popular feature in the early discourses as well as in the Prajnaparamita-sutras.

Kārikā XXV.20

निर्वाणस्य च या कोटिः कोटिः संसरणस्य च।
न तयोरन्तरं किंचित्सुमूक्ष्ममपि विद्यते॥२०॥

涅槃之實際 及與世間際
如是二際者 無毫氂差別

|མྱ་ངན་འདས་མཐའ་གང་ཡིན་པ||དེ་ནི་འཁོར་བའི་མཐའ་ཡིན་ཏེ|
|དེ་གཉིས་ཁྱད་པར་ཅུང་ཟད་ནི||ཤིན་ཏུ་ཕྲ་བའང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན||

nirvāṇasya ca yā koṭiḥ koṭiḥ saṃsaraṇasya ca |
na tayor antaraṃ kiṃcit susūkṣmam api vidyate ||20||

niè pán zhī shí jì jí yǔ shì jiān jì
rú shì èr jì zhě wú háo lí chā;chà;chāi bié

| mya ṅan ’das mtha’ gaṅ yin pa | | de ni ’khor ba’i mtha’ yin te |
| de gñis khyad par cuṅ zad ni | | śin tu phra ba’aṅ yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 20 - The limits (i.e., realm) of nirvana are the limits of samsara. Between the two, also, there is not the slightest difference whatsoever.

JONES (Skt):
[20] The full extent of nirvana is the full extent of cyclical existence. There is not slightest interval between them.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever is the extremity of freedom and the extremity of the life-process, between them not even a subtle something is evident.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The limit of *nirvāṇa* is that of *saṃsāra.*
The subtlest difference is not found between the two.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
20. What is included by Nirvana is just Time,
And the Time is also belonging to the wandering life of ups and downs.
The two kinds of substances, that is, Time and the wandering life of ups and downs, Seems to be as if they were nothing.
Then something excellently delicate is recognized very clearly..

SPRUNG (Skt):
20 The ontic range of *nirvāṇa* is the ontic range of the everyday world. There is not even the subtlest difference between the two.

STRENG (Skt):
20. The extreme limit (koti) of nirvana is also the extreme limit of existence-in-flux; There is not the slightest bit of difference between these two.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XX. What makes the limit of Nirvana
Is also then the limit of Samsara.
Between the two we cannot find
The slightest shade of difference.

ROBINSON (Skt):
The limit of nirvana is the limit of samsara; there is not even the subtlest something separating the two.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v20 The real limit of nirvana
And the limits of this world
Between these two limits
There is not the least distinction

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Whatever is the end of Nirvana, that is the end of Samsara. There is not even a very subtle slight distinction between the two.

DOCTOR (Tb):
That which is the condition of transcendence
Is the condition of cyclic existence as well.
Between these two there is not
The slightest bit of difference. [XXV.20]

GARFIELD (Tb):
20. Whatever is the limit of nirvana,
That is the limit of cyclic existenence.
There is not even the slightest difference between them,
Or even the subtlest thing.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
20. Whatever is the limit of nirvana,
That is the limit of cyclic existence.
There is not even the slightest difference between them,
Or even the subtlest thing.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Whatever is the limit of Nirvana is also the limit of samsara. There is not even the subtlest difference between them.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
The true nature of nirvana
Is the true nature of samsara,
And between these two
There is not even the tiniest, subtlest difference. (20)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/20 If one exhaustively investigates the real limit of this world and nirvana and the limit of non-arising of this world and nirvana, you will not find the least difference between them because they are equal and inconceivable. Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

(*"ontic range"*: fn 14 *koti*. Frequently translated 'limit'. The argument concerns the beginning and end of personal existence (*loka*) but this is not merely an argument concerning limits in time; it concerns the nature of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* which is such that theories using the concepts of beginning and end are simply inapposite.)

But it is not only the indistinguishability of the everyday world from *nirvāṇa* that makes it impossible to ontologize the notions of termination and beginning (fn 15 I.e. termination of *saṃsāra* and beginning of *nirvāṇa*.), but also,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Having rejected a sharp dichotomy between samsara and nirvana, Nagarjuna is not willing to let the metaphysician discover something extremely subtle (kimcit susuksmam), comparable to the extremely subtle and incorruptible seed of release (moksa-bija)(see comments on XXIV. 32), between samsara and nirvana. The identity theories of both Sarvastivada and Sankhya school posited such subtle entities to explain continuity. Nagarjuna's present statement should be understood in the background of the ideas expressed by these schools.

Therefore, the translation of the first line as "The limits of nirvana are the limits of samsara" (Inada,), is not very appropriate. Furthermore, the first line does not make a complete sentence. The emphasis in the complete sentence is on the phrase kimcit susiksmam (see XXV. 19), which is Nagarjuna's major concern here.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

20. To distinguish between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa would be to suppose that each had a nature and that they were different natures. But each is empty, and so there can be no inherent difference. Moreover, since nirvāṇa is by definition the cessation of delusion and of grasping and, hence, of the reification of self and other and of confusing imputed phenomena for inherently real phenomena, it is by definition the recognition of the ultimate nature of things. But if, as Nāgārjuna argued in Chapter XXIV, this is simply to see conventional things as empty, not to see some separate emptiness behind them, then nirvāṇa must be ontologically grounded in the conventional. To be in saṃsāra is to see things as they appear to deluded consciousness and to interact with them accordingly. To be in nirvāṇa, then, is to see those things as they are - as merely empty, dependent, impermanent, and nonsubstantial, but not to be somewhere else, seeing something else. (fn 131. Compare Streng (1973): "...[A] problem occurs when we act inappropriately to the empty (non-svabhāva) set of conditions that allow saṃsāra to arise. This inappropriateness is our acting as if we could discern a self-existent thing either in the conditioned 'thing' or in some identifiable 'element' of our experience.... Contrariwise, the insight that leads to the cessation of these inappropriate acts is an awareness that the conditions and relations by which we define our experience are empty." (p. 30) Nayak (1979) puts it this way: *"Nirvāṇa* is thus nondifferent from critical insight par excellence which is free from all essentialist picture-thinking" (p. 489).)

Another way of distinguishing between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is to think of them somehow as different places, as Earth and Heaven are often conceived in Western religious traditions and then to think that upon attaining nirvāṇa one leaves this place - disappears - and goes there. Of course, if one thinks at all about the career of the historical Buddha Sakyamuni, that would entail that upon attaining enlightenment, he would have disappeared. This would make something of a hash of the Buddhist canon. But Nāgārjuna is emphasizing that nirvāṇa is not someplace else. It is a way of being here. Here is another way to put the somewhat paradoxical point: Nāgārjuna surely thinks that in nirvāṇa, unlike saṃsāra, one perceives emptiness and not entities; one perceives the ultimate truth and not the conventional truth. (fn 132. Though it is standard doctrine that a buddha, in virtue of being omniscient (setting aside the vexed and controversial question of the nature of this omniscience - a matter of considerable debate within Buddhist philosophy), perceives all conventional phenomena and knows all conventional truths, as well as all ultimate truths. But a buddha does not know conventional truths and perceive conventional phenomena in the same way that a nonenlightened being does. A buddha knows them and perceives them as conventional and sees them at the same time as empty, through an immediate knowledge of the unity of the two truths. A non-buddha, by contrast, even if she knows that conventional phenomena are empty, through studying Mādhyamika philosophy, perceives them as inherently existent and only reasons her/himself into the knowledge that these phenomena are really empty and that these truths are merely conventional.) But emptiness is only the emptiness of all entities, and the ultimate truth is merely the essenceless essence of those conventional things. So nirvāṇa is only saṃsāra experienced as a buddha experiences it. It is the person who enters nirvāṇa, but as a state of being, not as a place to be. (fn 133. Kalupahana (1986) reads this verse differently. He translates it as follows: "Whatever is the extremity of freedom and the extremity of the life-process, between them not even a subtle something is evident." He then takes the purport to be the denial of any entity such as a "seed of release" mediating between the states of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* (p. 367))

Kārikā XXV.21

परं निरोधादन्ताद्याः शाश्वताद्याश्च दृष्टयः।
निर्वाणमपरान्तं च पूर्वान्तं च समाश्रिताः॥२१॥

paraṃ nirodhād antādyāḥ śāśvatādyāś ca dṛṣṭayaḥ |
nirvāṇam aparāntaṃ ca pūrvāntaṃ ca samāśritāḥ ||21||

滅後有無等 有邊等常等
諸見依涅槃 未來過去世

miè hòu yǒu wú děng yǒu biān děng cháng děng
zhū jiàn yī niè pán wèi lái guò qù shì

།གང་འདས་ཕན་ཆད་མཐའ་སོགས་དང་།།རྟག་ལ་སོགས་པར་ལྟ་བ་དག།
།མྱ་ངན་འདས་དང་ཕྱི་མཐའ་དང་།།སྔོན་གྱི་མཐའ་ལ་བརྟེན་་པ་ཡིན།།

| gaṅ (3)'das phan chad mtha' sogs daṅ | | rtag la sogs par lta ba dag |
mya ṅan 'das daṅ phyi mtha' daṅ | | sṅon gyi mtha' la brten pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 21 - The various views concerning the status of life after nirodha, the limits of the world, the concept of permanence, etc., are all based on (the concepts of) nirvana, posterior and anterior states (of existence).

JONES (Skt):
[21] The views "After cessation, there is an end" and the other three options, and "It is eternal" and the other three options, all depend on the ideas of "nirvana," a "past limit," and a "future limit."

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Metaphysical views relating to the finite, etc., to the eternal, etc., after death are associated with [the problems of] freedom as well as the posterior and prior extremities.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Views, such as pennanence, etc., finitude, etc., after death, are associated with a past and future *nirvāṇa*.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
21. Result is, leaving from the self-regulation, the first step of ultimate phase.
It is just the Eternity and so forth, and the Real Life, which can be experienced directly.
The Nirvana might be just our ultimate scene of human life,
And so it might be the supposition of the former line, and it might be taking a rest in the perfect darkness.

SPRUNG (Skt):
21 The theories concerning *nirvāṇa* as existence after decease have to do with the termination and beginninglessness of existence, and all presuppose the notions of termination and beginning.

STRENG (Skt):
21. The views regarding whether that which is beyond death is limited by a beginning or an end or some other alternative Depend on a nirvana limited by a beginning (purvanta) and an end (aparanta),

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XXI. (Insoluble are antinomic) views
Regarding what exists beyond Nirvana,
Regarding what the end of this world is,
Regarding its beginning.

BOCKING (Ch):
25v21 Whether there is existence or nonexistence after death, etc.,
The boundaries of existence, etc. and permanence etc.,
All such views depend on 'nirvana'
On 'future' and on 'past'.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Views about who passes beyond, ends etc. and permanence etc. are contingent upon nirvana and later ends and former ends.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Views of what follows the passing, of the finite and so on,
Along with those on permanence and so forth,
Are based on the transcendence of suffering,
The limit of the future, and the limit of the past. [XXV.21]

GARFIELD (Tb):
21. Views that after cessation there is a limit, etc.,
And that it is permanent, etc.,
Depend upon nirvana, the final limit,
And the prior limit.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
21. Views regarding his status after his passing; extremes, etc.,
And views regarding the permanent, etc.,
Are grounded upon nirvana, the final limit,
And the prior limit.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Metaphysical views concerning the status of life after release, the limits of the world, the concept of permanence, etc., are all based on the notion that Nirvana is limited by a beginning and an end.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/21 That after the death of the Thus-Come the Thus-Come exists, or the Thus-Come does not exist, or the Thus-Come both exists and does not exist, or the Thus-Come neither exists nor does not exist; that the world is bounded, the world is unbounded, the world is both bounded and unbounded, and the world is neither bounded nor unbounded; that the world is permanent, the world is impermanent, the world is both permanent and impermanent and that the world is neither permanent nor impermanent - these are twelve views of three kinds.

(36a20) The four views about whether or not the Thus-Come exists or does not exist etc, after his death arise as a consequence of (the concept of) nirvana. The four views about whether the world is bounded or unbounded etc. arise as a consequence of (the concept of) the future. The four views about whether the world is permanent or not permanent arise as a consequence of (the concept of) the past.

The existence or nonexistence of the Thus-Come after death is inconceivable, and it is the same with nirvana. Just as in the case of the original and ultimate limits of the world; it is inconceivable whether it is bounded or unbounded, permanent or impermanent, and the same goes for nirvana. This is why it is said that there is no difference in status between nirvana and the world.

Further:

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

These theories are impossible because the everyday world and *nirvāṇa* are in essence one (*ekarasatva*), namely, to be, by nature (*prakrti*), at peace (*santatva*). These fourfold views proceed on the analogy of the notion 'after his decease' in this way: 'the perfected one exists after his decease', 'the perfected one does not exist after his decease', 'the perfected one both exists and does not exist after his decease', 'the perfected one neither exists nor does not exist after his decease'. These four views presuppose an analogy between decease and *nirvāṇa*.

And then there are these views concerning the end of personal existence (*loka*) (fn 16 Not 'the' world, but 'world' in the sense of personal existence, i.e. existence interiorized by the assumption of a self.): 'existence has an end', 'existence is without end', 'existence is both with and without end','existence neither has nor has not an end'. These views are based on the supposition that there is such a thing as 'end'. In the first case the theory supports the view that personal existence has an end, supposing existence has an end because of not believing in the future birth of world and of the self. Similarly, believing in future birth, the argument is that existence is without end. Both believing and not believing the argument proceeds in its both-and mode. By double negation the argument then runs 'existence is not either with or without an end'.

The four arguments which presuppose the notion of a beginning are: 'existence is without a beginning' (*sasvata*), 'existence has a beginning', 'existence both has and has not a beginning', 'existence neither has nor has not a beginning'. In this case, believing in a previous birth of personal existence or the self, the argument is that existence is without a beginning; but not believing in this, that existence has a beginning; both believing and not believing, the argument is that it both has and has not a beginning; neither believing nor not believing, that it neither has nor has not a beginning. These arguments are based on the notion of 'beginning'.

How could these theories be made intelligible? If anything whatsoever were real in itself then, by ontologizing the categories 'existent' and 'not existent', these theories would apply. As, however, it has been made clear that there is no specifiable difference between *nirvāṇa* and the everyday world, so:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Herein, reference is made to eight of the ten "undecided" (avyakrta) issues. Nagarjuna perceives them to be associated with the question of freedom, a freedom looked at from two of the major concerto of the human being, namely, the first beginning and the ultimate end, the tint cause and the final cause. Human concerto like "Where did I come from?" or "Where would I go after this?" (as will be exlained in the final Chapter on "Examination of Views") have influenced human thinking and often led to metaphysical views about freedom and bondage.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

21. The kind of metaphysical speculations that the Buddha discouraged in the famous discussion of the unanswerable questions regarding the origins and limits of the world and what lies beyond the universe in space and time, are grounded, Nāgārjuna asserts, in the view that cyclic existence - the entire phenomenal world - can be conceived as an entity against which stand other entities or other regions. This is the same kind of picture that motivates the view that nirvāṇa is someplace or something beyond cyclic existence or that nirvāṇa is bounded or eternal. But there is no vantage point from which the universe is one place among many. That is why talking about what lies beyond it is nonsense and why reifying or characterizing nirvāṇa temporally is one example of that nonsense.

Kārikā XXV.22

शून्येषु सर्वधर्मेषु किमनन्तं किमन्तवत्।
किमनन्तमन्तवच्च नानन्तं नान्तवच्च किम्॥२२॥

śūnyeṣu sarvadharmeṣu kim anantaṃ kim antavat |
kim anantam antavac ca nānantaṃ nāntavac ca kim ||22||

一切法空故 何有邊無邊
亦邊亦無邊 非有非無邊

yī qiè fǎ kōng gù hé yǒu biān wú biān
yì biān yì wú biān fēi yǒu fēi wú biān

།དངོས་པོ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྟོང་པ་ལ།།མཐའ་ཡོད་ཅི་ཞིག་མཐའ་མེད་ཅི།
།མཐའ་དང་མཐའ་མེད་ཅི་ཞིག་ཡིན།།མཐའ་དང་མཐའ་མེད་མིན་པ་ཅི།།

| dṅos po thams cad stoṅ pa la | | mtha' yod ci źig mtha' med ci |
| mtha' daṅ mtha' med (4)ci źig yin | | mtha' daṅ mtha' med min pa ci |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 22 - Since all factors of existence are in the nature of sunya, why (assert) the finite, the infinite, both finite and infinite, and neither finite nor infinite?

JONES (Skt):
[22] If all basic phenomena are empty, what is without a limit and what has a limit? What has both no limit and a limit? What has neither?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When all things are empty, why [speculate on] the finite, the infinite, both the finite and the infinite and neither finite nor the infinite? Why [speculate on] the identical, the different, the eternal, the non-eternal, both or neither?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Since all events are open, what is infinite? What is finite?
What is infinite and finite and what is neither infinite nor finite?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
22. What is the totally relying upon the balanced autonomic nervous system, and what is the totally relying upon Nirvana?
What is the Eternity, and what is the having the End?
What is the Eternity, and what is the Destroyable?
What is not the Eternity, and what is not having the End?

SPRUNG (Skt):
22 As elements of existence are, as such, devoid of being, what is there which can be without an end, or have an end? What can both have and not have an end, neither have an end nor not have an end?

STRENG (Skt):
22. Since all dharmas are empty, what is finite ? What is infinite ? What is both finite and infinite ? What is neither finite nor infinite ?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XXII. Since everything is relative (we do not know),
What is finite and what is infinite,
What means finite and infinite at once,
What means negation of both issues?

BOCKING (Ch):
25v22 Since all dharmas are empty
What is bounded, and what unbounded,
Both bounded and not bounded,
Or neither bounded nor not bounded?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
In the emptiness of all things what ends are there? What non-ends are there? What ends and non-ends are there? What of neither are there?

DOCTOR (Tb):
When all things are empty,
What is finite and what is infinite?
What is both finite and infinite?
What is neither finite nor infinite? [XXV.22]

GARFIELD (Tb):
22. Since all existents are empty,
What is finite or infinite?
What is finite and infinite?
What is neither finite nor infinite?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
22. Since all existents are empty,
What is finite or infinite?
What is finite and infinite?
What is neither finite nor infinite?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
When all things are Empty, what is there that is finite, or infinite, or both, or neither?

[No Commentary on this verse.]

Kārikā XXV.23

किं तदेव किमन्यत्किं शाश्वतं किमशाश्वतम्।
अशाश्वतं शाश्वतं च किं वा नोभयमप्यतः॥२३॥

kiṃ tad eva kim anyat kiṃ śāśvataṃ kim aśāśvatam |
aśāśvataṃ śāśvataṃ ca kiṃ vā nobhayam apy atha ||23||

何者為一異 何有常無常
亦常亦無常 非常非無常

hé zhě wéi yī yì hé yǒu cháng wú cháng
yì cháng yì wú cháng fēi cháng fēi wú cháng

།དེ་ཉིད་ཅི་ཞིག་གཞན་ཅི་ཡིན།།རྟག་པ་ཅི་ཞིག་མི་རྟག་ཅི།
།རྟག་དང་མི་རྟག་གཉིས་ཀ་ཅི།།གཉིས་ཀ་མིན་པ་ཅི་ཞིག་ཡིན།།

| de ñid ci źig gźan ci yin | | rtag pa ci źig mi rtag ci |
| rtag daṅ mi rtag gñis ka ci | | gñis ka min pa ci źig yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 23 - Why (assert) the identity, difference, permanence, impermanence, both permanence and impermanence, or neither permanence nor impermanence?

JONES (Skt):
[23] Indeed, what is the same or different? What is eternal and what is not? What is both eternal and not? What is neither?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
(included above)

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
What has gone away? What identity? What difference?
What is permanent and impermanent or neither and so forth?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
23. What is the Same, and what is not the Same?
What is Eternal, and what is not Eternal?
Being not Eternal, and being Eternal are what altogether both?
In this case also there is no co-existences of the two cases of existence and non- existence together at all.

SPRUNG (Skt):
23 What is self-identical, what is other? What is without beginning, what has beginning? What both has and has not beginning? What has neither beginning nor no beginning?

STRENG (Skt):
23. Is there anything which is this or something else, which is permanent or impermanent, Which is both permanent and impermanent, or which is neither ?

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XXIII. What is identity, and what is difference?
What is eternity, what non-eternity,
What means eternity and nan-eternity together,
What means negation of both issues?

BOCKING (Ch):
25v23 Why regard things as one or different?
What is permanent, impermanent,
Both permanent and impermanent,
Or neither permanent nor impermanent?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Is there this? Is there the other? Is there permanence? Is there impermanence? Is there both permanence and impermanence? Is there neither?

DOCTOR (Tb):
What is identical and what is different
What is permanent, what is impermanent?
What is both permanent and impermanent?
What is neither permanent nor impermanent? [XXV.23]

GARFIELD (Tb):
23. What is identical and what is different?
What is permanent and what is impermanent?
What is both permanent and impermanent?
What is neither?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
23. What is identical and what is different?
What is permanent and what is impermanent?
What is both permanent and impermanent?
What is neither?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Why speculate on identity, difference, permanence, impermanence, both or neither?

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

These fourteen insoluble problems (*vyakrtavastuni*) are not intelligible if you suppose that things have self-existent natures. It should not be forgotten that, one who, having foisted (*adhyaropya*) on things this notion that they have self-existent natures, affirms or denies it and, having fabricated these theories, insists upon them stubbornly, will be hindered, by this stubborn insistence, on the narrow path which leads to the city of *nirvāṇa* and will be fettered in the cycle of unregenerate existence.

At this point one might object: If *nirvāṇa* is as you negatively define it, then the Truth propounded by the illustrious one for the purpose of achieving the liberation of all existence will have, been created to no purpose. This Truth, which is suited as the answer in any walk of life, was created by the illustrious one who, in virtue of his infinite compassion, attends with love all beings of the three worlds as one attends a beloved only son, who incontrovertibly knows the inner disposition of the entire creation as it really is and who follows the mass of creatures in their wanderings.

We rejoin: If there were anything at all called 'Truth' (*dharma*) which in its own nature was absolute (*svabhavarupatah*), there would be those who were the bearers of this Truth and there would be some ultimate being called the illustrious Buddha, its teacher. This is the way it would be.

As however,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Empiricist Nagarjuna's final final question, after presenting such a detailed analysis of all the metaphysical views to which he has devoted twenty-five chapters, is "Why raise all these metaphysical issues, when all experienced things are erupt?" (sunyesu sarva-dharmesu kim ...). As reiterated before in the commentary he is speaking about things that are empty (sunya), which are the empirically given and which are seen to be dependently arisen (prati tyasamutpanna). He is not emphasizing the abstract concept, "emptiness" (sunyata).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

23. Again Nāgārjuna uses negative tetralemmas to emphasize that while of conventional entities a good deal can be said, so long as we take the predications to be asserted in a conventional, relative sense, the moment we try to conceive of things as they are ultimately, as empty, such assertion has to stop. That is not, again, to say that things are nonempty. Far from it. But it is to say that literal description applies only within the bounds of conception and that attempts to develop a metaphysics of the ultimate are doomed. (fn 134. Padhye (1988) points out (pp. 68-70) that Nāgārjuna should also be read here and in this chapter as a whole as emphasizing that, in virtue of the emptiness of all phenomena in *saṃsāra* and of the self that experiences them, *nirvāṇa*, which is defined simply as that self's liberation from positing those phenomena, must be equally empty. For it, too, can only be understood as a characteristic of that empty self and of its relation to empty phenomena.)

Kārikā XXV.24

सर्वोपलम्भोपशमः प्रपञ्चोपशमः शिवः।
न क्वचित्कस्यचित्कश्चिद्धर्मो बुद्धेन देशितः॥२४॥

sarvopalambhopaśamaḥ prapañcopaśamaḥ śivaḥ |
na kva cit kasyacit kaścid dharmo buddhena deśitaḥ ||24||

諸法不可得 滅一切戲論
無人亦無處 佛亦無所說

zhū fǎ bù kě dé;děi;de miè yī qiè xì lùn
wú rén yì wú chǔ fú;fó yì wú suǒ shuì

།དམིགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཉེར་ཞི་ཞིང༌།།སྤྲོས་པ་ཉེར་ཞི་ཞི་བ་སྟེ།
།སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱིས་ནི་གང་དུ་ཡང༌།།སུ་ལའང་ཆོས་འགའ་མ་བསྟན་ཏོ།།

| dmigs pa thams cad ñer źi źiṅ | | spros pa ñer źi (5)źi ba ste |
| saṅs rgyas kyis ni gaṅ du yaṅ | | su la'aṅ chos 'ga' ma bstan to |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 24 - All acquisitions (i.e., grasping) as well as play of concepts (i.e., symbolic representation) are basically in the nature of cessation and quiescence. Any factor of experience with regards to anyone at any place was never taught by the Buddha.

JONES (Skt):
[24] The stilling of all conceptual support and the stilling of the projection of concepts onto reality is peace - no doctrine was taught by the Buddha in any place to anyone.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The Buddha did not teach the appeasement of all objects, the appeasement of obsession, and the auspicious as some thing to some one at some place.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Liberation is the cessation of all thought, the quieting of phenomena.
Not any doctrine anywhere has been taught to anyone by the Buddha.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
24. All kinds of our sense perceptions and the mental serenities,
Are prone to expand and to make the mind happier.
Without having any kinds of distinction between the places, kinds, or the contents of teachings,
The Principles of the Universe, which Gautama Buddha has taught us, are the contents of his guidance.

SPRUNG (Skt):
24 Ultimate beatitude is the coming to rest of all ways of taking things, the repose of named things; no Truth has been taught by a Buddha for anyone, anywhere.

STRENG (Skt):
24. The cessation of accepting everything as real is a salutary (siva) cessation of phenomenal development (prapanca); No dharma anywhere has been taught by the Buddha of anything.

STCHERBATSKY (Skt):
XXIV. The bliss consists in the cessation of all thought,
In the quiescence of Plurality.
No (separate) Reality was preached at all,
Nowhere and none by Buddha!

BOCKING (Ch):
25v24 All dharmas are inconceivable.
Extinguish all futile thoughts.
There is no person, and no place
And there is nothing taught by the Buddha.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Totally pacifying all referents and totally pacifying fixations is peace. The Buddha nowhere taught any dharma to anyone.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Complete pacification of all observations,
The complete pacification of constructs, peace—
Nowhere did the Buddha
Teach any Dharma to anyone at all. [XXV.24]

GARFIELD (Tb):
24. The pacification of all objectification
And the pacification of illusion:
No Dharma was taught by the Buddha
At any time, in any place, to any person.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
24. The pacification of all objectification
And the pacification of all fabrication is peace.
No Dharma was taught by the Buddha
At any time, in any place, to any person.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
The Buddha did not teach the appeasement of all objects, the appeasement of obsessions, and the auspicious as some thing to some one at some place.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

25/24 Since all dharmas at all times and of all kinds are produced from conditions, and since they are utterly empty, they have no own-nature. Within such dharmas, what is there to be bounded, and who is there to regard boundaries as existing? What could be unbounded, or both bounded and unbounded, or neither bounded nor unbounded? Who is there to regard things as neither bounded nor unbounded? What would be permanent, and who is there to regard things as permanent? What would be impermanent, both permanent and impermanent, or neither permanent nor impermanent and who is there to regard things as being neither permanent nor impermanent?

(36b9) What body is there to be the same as soul, and what body to be different from soul? It is the same with all of the sixty-two wrong views ; within utter emptiness they are all untenable. When every existence which is conceived is at rest, futile thoughts entirely cease, and when futile thoughts cease one penetrates into the true character of dharmas and attains the Way of calm serenity.

(36b12) As already seen from the chapter on causality if we discriminatingly investigate dharmas we find that they are neither existent, nor nonexistent, nor both existent and non- existent, nor neither existent nor nonexistent. This is what is meant by 'the true character of all dharmas' and it is also termed thusness, dharma-nature, real-limit and nirvana.

This is why the Buddha, at no time and in no place, ever taught anyone any fixed characteristics of nirvana, and this is why we say that when every existence which is conceived is at rest, all futile thoughts are extinguished.

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

(“*taking things*” fn 17 *Sarvopalambhopasama*. It is not merely that ways of thinking about things change in *nirvāṇa*, but that the everyday way of perceiving, or ‘taking’, things ceases to function.)

How can the above objection affect us? Because here the meaning is that the very coming to rest, the non-functioning, of perceptions as signs of all named things, is itself *nirvāṇa*. And this coming to rest being, by its very nature, in repose, is the ultimate beatitude (*siva*). When verbal assertions (*vacas*) cease, named things are in repose; and the ceasing to function of discursive thought is ultimate beatitude. Again, the coming to rest of named things by the non-functioning of the basic afflictions, so that personal existence ceases, is ultimate beatitude. The coming to rest of named things as a result of abandoning the basic afflictions and hence of totally extirpating innate modes of thought (vasana) is ultimate beatitude. Again the coming to rest of named things through not seizing on objects of knowledge or on knowledge itself, is ultimate beatitude (fn 18 This paragraph, Candrakīrti’s pithiest account of *nirvāṇa*, turns on the notion of ‘the coming to rest of named things’ (*prapancopasama*), as though the turmoil of a world in time were a distortion arising from human passions.).

When the illustrious Buddhas are in *nirvāṇa*, the ultimate beatitude, which is the coming to rest of named things as such, they are like kingly swans in the sky, self-soaring in space or in the nothingness of space on the twin wings of accumulated merit and insight; then, it should be known, that, because they do not perceive objects as signs, no rigid ‘Truth’ whatsoever either concerning bondage or purification has been taught either among or for any gods or men whatsoever.

As it is said in the *Tathagataguhya Sutra*, ‘During that night, o Santamati, in which the perfected one became perfectly enlightened with the unsurpassed, perfect enlightenment, during the night in which he passed totally into *nirvāṇa*, not one syllable was uttered nor used by the perfected one, neither did he address anyone, nor will he. Yet all creatures, according to their propensities, perceive the voice of the perfected one as it issues forth in the various dialects of their homelands; for them it takes special forms, “this revered one is teaching this doctrine for our benefit”, or, “we are hearing the doctrine of the perfected one”. But, in truth, the perfected one indulges neither in ontologizing thought nor in phantasies because, o Santamati, a perfected one is freed from all ontologizing thought, all flights of phantasy, all innate thought patterns, and from everything with name.’ To quote, ‘Inexpressible, beyond language are the elements of existence, tranquil, pure and devoid of being; one who knows them so is called a Bodhisattva, a Buddha.’

But, one might object, if the Buddha has taught no truth at all to anyone whatsoever at any time, how is it that the various scriptural admonitions have been taken as meaningful?

We rejoin: This arises only from the imagination of people who are dreaming and who are deep in the slumber of ignorance. 'This revered one, lord of gods, demons and men in all the three worlds, has taught this doctrine for our sakes', they think. The illustrious one said, 'The perfected one has his being as a reflection of the pure, passionless truth; he is not ultimately real in himself nor is he perfected; he is beheld as a reflection in all worlds.' This is explained in detail in the treatise on The Secret of the Sayings of the Perfected One.

And so, as there is no true doctrine concerning *nirvāṇa*, how can the existence of *nirvāṇa* depend on the existence of such a doctrine? Therefore it is established that even *nirvāṇa* does not exist (*nasti*). It was said by the illustrious one: '*Nirvāṇa* is no-*nirvāṇa* the lord of existence taught; a knot tied by infinitude itself and loosed even by the same.'

And again, 'O illustrious one, an enlightened one cannot arise for those who believe that elements of existence come to be and cease to be. O illustrious one, there is no final triumph over everyday existence for those who search persistently for *nirvāṇa* as something existent. Why? O illustrious one, *nirvāṇa* is the cessation of all perceptions as signs, the coming to rest of all activity overt and covert.

'Therefore they are deluded people who, having taken up the spiritual life in some popular religious order, have fallen into a heretical view and persistently seek for *nirvāṇa* as existent — as oil of sesame is pressed from sesame seeds or butter churned from milk. Those who strain for a *nirvāṇa* as the everlasting extinction of all elements of existence, these I say are self-deluded heretics. The saintly wise man, one truly realized, does not bring about either the coming to be or the ceasing to be of any element of existence whatever; nor does he claim to possess or to indubitably cognize any element of existence whatever --' and so on.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Inada has broken up the above into two distinct statements and thereby lost its significance. The first line contains qualifications of dharma occurring in the second. Nagarjuna's emphasis is on the phrase: kascit dharmah, as it was in the case of the two important statements made previously in the present chapter (XXV.19-20). When the Buddha spoke of freedom (nirvana), which he qualified as the appeasement of all objects (upalambha = alambana = drastavya, cf. drastavyopasama at v.8) or the appeasement of obsessions (prapancopasama) or auspicious (siva, see Dedicatory Verses), he was not referring to them as "some thing," that is, some entity having a specific distinction (visesana) or subtlety (susuksmatva). He was not speaking of freedom in the way the substantialist conceived of it.

All these twenty-five chapters are, therefore, negative in character and tone. They were devoted to a refutation of the two metaphysical but related views of existence and non-existence (astitva-nastitva). Having cleared up the dust that had gathered around all the doctrines preached by the Buddha, Nagarjuna is now ready to go on to the positive description of bondage and freedom as enunciated by the Buddha in the discourse to Katyayana. Nagarjuna's treatment of the metaphysical issues that emerged in relation to all these doctrinesdoctrines pertaining to causation, change, the human personality, survival, karma, moral responsibility, and freedomis so exhaustive and complete that he can proceed to explain the Buddha's conception of bondage and freedom without any fear of any one raising any question. For he has already answered them all. Herein lies the greatness of Nagarjuna as a philosopher.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

24. In many Buddhist teachings many conventional phenomena are described and are subjected to analysis, including the mind, mental phenomena, and a wide range of external phenomena. But this is always a conventional analysis intended to demonstrate the emptiness of these phenomena, their impermanent character, and so forth, for soteriological purposes. The goal is to dispel illusion and to end deluded ontological fabrication and the various epistemological, psychological, and moral ills Nāgārjuna has argued are grounded therein. But it is important, Nāgārjuna concludes, not to reify that doctrine, or any of the entities that appear as prima facie referents of the words used to expound it (the Buddha, the spiritual community, etc.). In fact, it is important to see that nirvāṇa does not, on this account, amount to an entity; it is not achieved or described by entities. Rather it is a way of engagement with nonentities by nonentities.

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Chapter XXVI

द्वादशाङ्गपरीक्षा षड्विंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀十二因緣品第二十六(九偈)

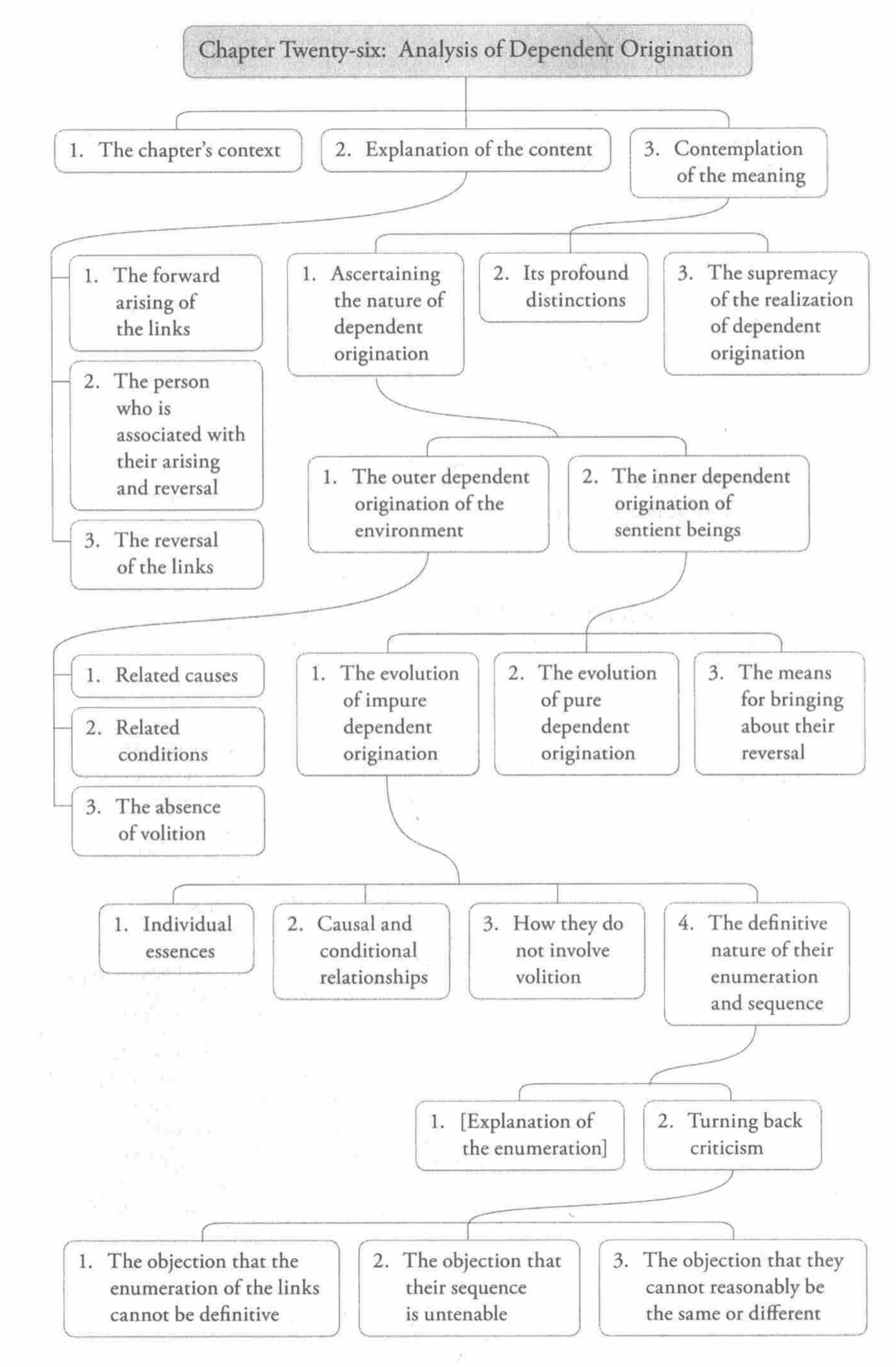
།སྲིད་པའི་ཡན་ལག་བཅུ་གཉིས་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་དྲུག་པའོ།།

dvādasāṅgabhāvaparīkṣā nāma ṣaḍviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

Chapter XXVI: Examination of the Twelve Links

Chapter XXVI

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

We have now completed the first major part of the section on engaging with the meaning of the text—the demonstration that the dependently originated is empty by nature. This chapter constitutes the second part of that section—the presentation of the fact that whether one remains engaged in cyclic existence or frees oneself from it depends on whether or not one realizes that.

EXPLANATION:

Here one might ask: What is that dependent origination to which he refers in these lines?

Whatever is dependently arisen. That is explained to be emptiness. [XXIV: 18ab]

And what is that dependent origination by seeing which he says in these lines that the reality of the Four Noble Truths is seen?

Whoever sees dependent arising Also sees suffering. [XXIV: 40ab]

The explanation of this has two parts: the order of dependent origination and the reverse order of dependent origination.

SUMMARY:

One should ascertain the mode of grasping of the two selves through innate ignorance—that is, the way that they are grasped through two kinds of ignorance, which grasp them as selves when perceiving the dependent origination of the person and phenomena. Thereafter, one should understand that all of these arguments are presented in order to refute the two selves as grasped by the two kinds of ignorance, and in order to develop the view through which one can realize the two kinds of selflessness as their respective antidotes. Having developed a complete understanding of the perfect view through which one can realize the two selflessnesses, through hearing, contemplation, and meditation, one should strive by all means to practice in accordance with the reverse order of dependent origination.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XXVI - **Examination of the Twelvefold Causal Analysis of Being**

With the discussion of Nirvana in the last chapter the treatment from the standpoint of the Mahayana had basically come to a close. In this chapter and the final one to follow, Nagarjuna goes into the analysis of Hinayanistic doctrines. The present chapter discusses the twelvefold causal analysis which is the basis of the endless process of suffering incurred by all living beings. The discussion is Hinayanistic and it reveals that the source of trouble lies in ignorance which in turn initiates all kinds of mental conformations (samskara). The extinction of ignorance, fundamental to the whole of Buddhism, is to be realized by the practice of wisdom of seeing the truth (tattva).

The discussion of the doctrine of causal analysis indicates the strong influence of Hinayanistic or Abhidharmic teachings during this period. But the doctrine must be seen under a new light when Nagarjuna discusses it, i.e., within the backdrop of his doctrine of sunyata and pratityasamutpada as hinted at in the last two verses.

KALUPAHANA (CHAPTER OVERVIEWS)

26. *Human personality and its survival* (*dvadasanga*). Any reader who has ploughed his way through the preceding chapters of Nagarjuna will certainly be baffled by the contents of Chapter XXVI on the "Examination of the Twelve Factors" (*Dvadasanga-parrksa*). By the time he completed reading the first twenty-five chapters, wherein the conception of "emptiness" (*sunyata*) occurs in almost every other verse, he would be imbued with that concept to such an extent that it would become a dogma, a *drsti*, rather than a mere method of analysis. Therefore, Chapter XXVI would make no sense at all. Thus he would get the impression that it merely deals with the Hinayana doctrine, having no relevance to the basic teachings of Nagarjuna and, therefore, of Mahayana. This is confirmed by the fact that there is no negative comment made anywhere in the chapter and no mention of the famous doctrine of emptiness. Another person can come to a more drastic conclusion. He may assume that this chapter is like an "illegitimate child'' and could not be the work of Nagarjuna.

Contrary to all these widely held opinions, we tend to look upon this and following chapter as the actual conclusion of this most valuable treatise. They are integral parts of the work, and without them one gets only a distorted view of Nagarjuna's thoughts. It was mentioned earlier that the only discourse that Nagarjuna mentions by name is the *Katyayanavavada*, and the significance of this fact cannot be over-emphasized. Here the Buddha was responding to the question raised by Kaccayana as to what "right view" (*samma-ditthi*) is, compared with "wrong view" (*micchaditthi*). Nagarjuna has devoted most of his energy trying to clarify what "wrong views" are and occasionally spoke of "right views'' (see analysis of chapter XVII). If he had concluded his treatise with Chapter XXV, he would have read only a section of the Buddha's discourse to

Kaccayana and ignored the Buddha's own conclusion in that discourse. The two extreme views of existence and non-existence were rejected by the Buddha, not because he had no views to propound, but because he had a better or more appropriate one to offer. And this appropriate view is explained in the conclusion to that discourse.

The appropriate view is the middle position specified as dependent arising, which is intended as an explanation of how a human being, conditioned by various factors, attempts to become this or that and wanders along in a ceaseless process of births and deaths. The theory of personality consisting of the twelve factors explaining such becoming thus turns out to be the philosophical middle position, and the noble eightfold path (*magga*), avoiding the two extremes of behavior, represents the practical middle path intended to achieve the cessation of that process of becoming (*bhava*) and suffering (*dukkha*).

If the *Katyayanavavada* served as the foundation of Nagarjuna's philosophy, and there does not seem to be any doubt about it, it would have been impossible for him to overlook the conclusion of that discourse. This indeed is the rationale for a whole chapter on the concept of a person explained in terms of the twelvefold formula of causation.

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Contingency

Blocked by confusion,
I forge a destiny through impulsive acts.
Consciously I enter situations
Where personality unfolds
And world impacts on a sensitive soul.

Personality creates consciousness
Just as attention,
The eye and a colorful shape
Trigger vision.

Impact is the meeting
Of consciousness, senses and world.
It leads to experience
I crave to have and avoid.
Craving makes me cling
At senses, opinions, rules and selves.

Clinging is to insist on being someone –
Not to cling is to be free to be no one.

To be someone is to be a conscious,
Impulsive, thinking, feeling body,
Which is born, ages, dies,
Suffers torment, grief, pain,
Depression and anxiety.
Anguish emerges when someone is born.

Impulsive acts are the root of life.
Fools are impulsive;
The wise see things as they are.
When confusion stops through insight,
Impulsive acts cease.
Stop this and that will not happen:
Anguish will end.

JONES (COMMENTARY)

26. The Twelve Steps of the Cycle of Rebirth

This chapter is out of character with the rest of the *Karikas:* it is a straight exposition of the twelve-step dependent-arising of rebirth *(pratityasamutpada)* that is standard to all of Buddhism (see Dalai Lama 2009: 2963), with no analysis of it in terms of emptiness. This leads some scholars to doubt that this chapter (and the next) were originally part of the *Karikas* and were written by someone else. (Some scholars also doubt that the Buddha ever taught the full twelve-step cycle – rather, they argue that he taught various steps and later Buddhists assembled them into one series.) Also, in Chapter 23.23, Nagarjuna does give an analysis of the fundamental role of "root-ignorance" *(avidya)* in this process. If this hypothesis is true, then the original ending of the *Karikas* is the dramatic declaration of 25.24: no doctrine was taught by the Buddha in any place to anyone.

But perhaps this chapter is genuine and the reason Nagarjuna did not supply an analysis of emptiness is because he equates emptiness with dependent-arising. There is no denial of this type of "arising" here or in any of his works. There are two possible explanations for this. First, he does not affirm a real (self-existent) entity called "arising" - it is a matter of dependency and a process of becoming. Second, calling the process "dependent-arising" may only be a "conventional truth" - seeing the situation from the ultimate point of view would not involve seeing the process in terms of any categories or entities. (See the discussion of 24.40.)

Dependent-arising starts with "root-ignorance *(avidya)."* Such ignorance is not merely not knowing some fact, but believing the world is populated with discrete, independently real things. In addition, it is not merely not knowing the truth of impermanence and dependency, but *seeing* the world in

terms of discrete things. Thus, it is not merely the absence of the truth, but *an active error* shrouding the truth and affecting our experiences, thereby producing a delusion distorting what is real.

The distinction in Chapter I, verse 2 between causes *(hetu)* and conditions *(pratyayas)* is important for the concept of "dependent-arising." Dependent-arising is about the necessary *conditions* for a process and how to remove a condition so that the cycle does not continue. The difference is not merely semantic: causes can be seen as all the necessary conditions coming together, but dependent-arising only delineates *one necessary condition* in each step. Thus, if the root-ignorance *(avidya)* were the cause of desires rather than a condition, then once it arose desires would have to arise _ a deterministic chain would begin with no way to break it. Thus, once we are unenlightened, we would remain unenlightened forever. But under dependent-arising, once *avidya* arises, desires are not automatically caused. That is, our root-ignorance does not *cause* desires, but it is a *condition* for desires; thus, by removing this ignorance, desires cannot arise. This is not an instance of efficient causes as in science, and to approach the interconnectedness and conditionality of all phenomena with a prior mindset in terms of scientific causation is to set off on the wrong track. The focus should remain on our inner life and how to end suffering through removing our active misapprehension of reality (*avidya*), not on anything like the efficient causal course of inanimate objects in science.

Verses 6 and 7 concern the "clinging" or "grasping" that leads to the "acquiring" of a new rebirth. The same word - *"upadana"* - refers to both the grasping and the new becoming of rebirth.

GYAMTSO (COMMENTARY)

26

An Examination of the Twelve Links of Existence

In the sutras, the Buddha taught:

That which is dependently arisen does not arise, and therefore it is dependently arisen.

IN THIS WAY, THE BUDDHA EXPLAINED that whatever arises due to the coming together of causes and conditions does not truly arise. Therefore, it is dependently arisen, meaning that its arising is just a mere appearance. This characteristic of dependent arising is important to remember: When something is dependently arisen, it is not truly arisen. It is like a water-moon. Due to the coming together of causes and conditions, the moon appears on the surface of the water, but in fact no moon has arisen there at all.

There are several different explanations for why this chapter was written. The commentary entitled *Completely Fearless* (fn It is not certain who authored this particular commentary. Some say that it was composed by Nagarjuna himself, but others deny this.) and the master Buddhapalita (fn Buddhapalita wrote one of the first commentaries on *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, from the perspective of the Middle Way Consequence school's view.) both assert that the followers of the Shravakayana asked Nagarjuna, "You have explained how to realize genuine reality according to the Mahayana tradition. Now, please teach us how to enter genuine reality according to the Shravaka tradition." In other words, in the first twenty-five chapters, Nagarjuna explained how to follow the Mahayana path, and now, followers of the Shravakayana asked him for teachings on the path they had chosen to follow.

Bhavaviveka (fn Bhavaviveka followed Buddhapalita and composed a commentary on *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* from the perspective of the Middle Way Autonomy school's view.) writes that there were those who argued, "Nagarjuna, earlier in the text you wrote, 'The Buddha did not teach any Dharma to anyone." (fn Chapter 25, verse 24 (not included here).) Did not the Buddha, though, teach about the twelve dependently arisen links of existence?" In response, Nagarjuna composed this chapter to explain that the Buddha did not give any truly existent teachings, and thus he did not teach that the twelve links exist in essence, but rather that they are mere appearances.

Finally, Chandrakirti explains that there were those who said, "Samsara exists because its cause, the twelve links of existence, exists, and nirvana exists because its cause, the reversal of those twelve links, exists. Furthermore, if samsara and nirvana were not two different things, why would they appear to be so? If existence and peace were not two different things, why would the terms existence and peace exist?" Thus, in order to explain how it is that phenomena do not exist at the same time they appear, how it is that phenomena are only dependently arisen, Nagarjuna composed this chapter.

Indian scholars composed a great number of commentaries on The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way, but from among them all, the four quoted above are the most important. In Tibet, scholars from the four main lineages of Sakya, Gelug, Kagyu, and Nyingma composed their own commentaries to the text. Of all of these, the most extensive is probably Je Tsong-khapa's Great Commentary on the Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way, Called "An Ocean of Reasoning," which Tsong-khapa composed while residing in a cave in the hills above Sera Monastery (fn Tsong-khapa (1357-1419) was the founder of the Gelugpa lineage of Tibetan Buddhism.).

The twelve links of existence are the stages sentient beings continually pass through, life after life, as they wander without respite through the three higher and three lower realms of samsara. The first nine verses in this chapter

describe the twelve links in their "forward progression": how one link in this samsaric chain gives rise to the next. The last three verses describe the "reverse progression": how those who have realized selflessness are able to root out the cause of the twelve links and gain liberation from samsara.

To summarize the forward progression of the twelve links, the first link in the chain and the source of all the others is ignorance of the basic nature of reality. This ignorance obscures the mind and as a result one believes that the self of the individual truly exists. This causes one to perform karmic action (2), either virtuous, unvirtuous, or neutral; and after one's present life has ended, it causes rebirth in one of the higher or lower realms of samsara.

This samsaric rebirth begins as one's consciousness (3) finds its way to the place where it will begin its next life; in the case of humans, for example, in the womb of the mother. Immediately upon entering the mother's womb at the moment of conception, consciousness joins with the very first stages of the material body, and thus begins the stage of name and form (4). "Name" refers to the four mental aggregates that cannot be physically perceived, namely feelings, discriminations, formations, and consciousnesses, and "form" refers to the aggregate of the same name, the sentient being's new physical body.

Shortly thereafter, the five sense faculties and the mental faculty develop, and this constitutes the stage of the six inner sources of consciousness (5). This enables the stage of contact (6) with the six objects—sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tactile sensations, and phenomena. Contact with different objects gives rise to feelings (7), either pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, depending on what the particular object is. These feelings give rise to craving (8), which is the desire for pleasant contact to occur and unpleasant contact to remain absent. When this craving intensifies, it becomes grasping (9), which has four specific types: grasping at sense pleasures, at wrong views, at one's own conduct as supreme, and at the belief in a self, at constant thoughts of "I," "me," and "mine."

Grasping's intensity causes one to perform defiled karmic actions with body, speech, and mind—this is existence (10). This leads once again to birth (11) in samsara, followed by aging and death (12), and then the process begins all over again, in an uninterrupted cycle of suffering that Nagarjuna describes in the eighth and ninth verses:

"Existence" is karmic action performed with the five aggregates.
From existence comes birth,
And from birth,
Aging, death, agony, bewailing, pain, unhappiness, and agitation come without fail.
Thus, the only thing born
Is a massive heap of suffering.

When one performs karmic actions with body, speech, and mind, that is the cause of future birth. All who are born must experience aging and the agony of being separated from what pleases them, an agony that becomes most intense when they are dying. Wretchedly they cry out, bewailing their torment. "Pain" refers to physical harm experienced by the five sense faculties and "unhappiness" to exclusively mental suffering, both of which continuously agitate the mind. Thus, the only thing that takes birth in samsara is a massive heap of suffering.

Thus is the pathetic state in which sentient beings find themselves. However, when Nagarjuna states, "The only thing born is a massive heap of suffering," he means that no truly existent self is born along with the suffering. The suffering that is born is therefore only a mere appearance, arisen due to the coming together of causes and conditions. It is not real because no self to experience it actually exists. If the suffering were real, we could never gain liberation from it; it would be our permanent nature. Since it is only a mere appearance, however, it comes to an end when the causes and conditions responsible for it are no longer produced. As the tenth verse explains:

The root of samsara is karmic action.
Therefore, the wise do not perform it.
Therefore, the ones who commit karmic acts are the unwise,
Not the wise, because they see the precise nature.

Those who are endowed with the wisdom that realizes selflessness, the precise nature of reality, do not perform defiled karmic actions, the causes of samsaric rebirth. They are able to refrain from committing karmic actions not simply because they choose to do so, however, but rather because they have completely eradicated the ignorance that is karmic actions' cause. As the eleventh verse explains:

When ignorance ceases,
Karmic actions cease.
The cessation of ignorance
Is the result of meditating with knowledge of reality's precise nature.

When ignorance of selflessness ceases, the reverse progression of the twelve links takes effect. As ignorance is the root cause of the next eleven links, when it ceases, so does samsara, never to arise again. This wonderful process is summarized in the twelfth and final verse:

When the earlier links cease,
The later links do not occur,
And that which is only a heap of suffering
Perfectly comes to an end

So the story has a happy ending after all!

By the end of the first twenty-five chapters of the text, Nagarjuna had successfully refuted all the claims of the

followers of the Shravakayana who asserted that things truly exist. At that point, with all of their arguments discredited, some of these followers of the Shravakayana gained enthusiasm for the teachings on emptiness and entered the Mahayana path. Others did not, however, and remained where they were, crestfallen. Seeing the state they were in, Nagarjuna explained the forward and reverse progressions of the twelve links of existence in a manner that was in harmony with their own tradition. This made them happy, and it also better prepared them to understand how extraordinary the Mahayana's presentation of emptiness actually is.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XXVI

द्वादशाङ्गपरीक्षा षड्विंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

dvādasāṅgabhāvaparīkṣā nāma ṣaḍviṃśatitamaṃ prakaraṇaṃ ||

中論觀十二因緣品第二十六(九偈)

zhōng lùn guān shí èr yīn yuán pǐn dì èr shí liù(jiǔ jié;jì)

སྲིད་པའི་ཡན་ལག་བཅུ་གཉིས་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་དྲུག་པའོ།།

| srid pa'i yan lag bcu gñis brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa ñi śu drug pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XXVI - **Examination of the Twelvefold Causal Analysis of Being**

JONES (Skt):
26. The Twelve Steps of the Cycle of Rebirth

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of the Twelve Causal Factors

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
26. Analysis of the Twelvefold Chain of Interdependent Origination

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[26] Examination of the Twelve-fold Chain of Cause and Effect (12 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
[omitted]

STRENG (Skt):
Section 26 - An Analysis of the Twelve Components (the twelve spokes) In 12 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
26. the twelve nidanas (dependent co-arising).

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 26 Contemplation of the Twelve Causes and Conditions 9 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Analysis of the Twelve Links of Becoming

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XXVI - Analysis of Dependent Origination

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XXVI: Examination of the Twelve Links

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XXVI - Examination of the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 26: AN EXAMINATION OF THE TWELVE LINKS OF EXISTENCE

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Chapter 26 - Examination of the Twelve Causal Factors

PINGALA COMMENTARY

26/0 Question: You have expounded the Way of the ultimate meaning according to the Mahayana. Now we want to hear you discuss how the Sravaka-dharma enters into this Way of the ultimate meaning. Reply;

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter omitted by Sprung]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Twenty Six Examination of the Twelve Causal Factors (Dvadasanga-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XXVI Examination of the Twelve Links

Given an analysis of the nature of nirvāṇa, one might well ask how to achieve it. In this chapter, Nāgārjuna provides a straightforward answer. The twelve links of dependent origination are regarded by all Buddhist schools as providing an analysis of the nature of interdependence in the context of human existence. The tone of this chapter is decidedly positive, marking the turning of a dialectical comer in the preceding two chapters. Having elucidated the Madhyamika account of the nature of conventional and ultimate reality, Nāgārjuna does not need at this point so much to emphasize the emptiness of the twelve links. Rather he can assume that to provide an account of them as dependently arisen is, ipso facto, to demonstrate that fact. Their emptiness is therefore simply presupposed. This chapter is thus a straightforward exposition of how, in light of the interdependence of the twelve links, to enter into and to exploit the cycle in the service of liberation.

Kārikā XXVI.1

पुनर्भवाय संस्कारानविद्यानिवृतस्त्रिधा।
अभिसंस्कुरुते यांस्तैर्गतिं गच्छति कर्मभिः॥१॥

眾生癡所覆 為後起三行
以起是行故 隨行墮六趣

།མ་རིག་བསྒྲིབས་པས་ཡང་སྲིད་ཕྱིར། །འདུ་བྱེད་རྣམ་པ་གསུམ་པོ་དག །
།མངོན་པར་འདུ་བྱེད་གང་ཡིན་པའི། །ལས་དེ་དག་གིས་འགྲོ་བར་འགྲོ། །

LVP 542,10-11 - LVP 570,3-4
punarbhavāya saṃskārān avidyānivṛtas tridhā |
abhisaṃskurute yāṃs tair gatiṃ gacchati karmabhiḥ ||1||

T1564: vol 30, pg 36b17
zhòng shēng chī suǒ fù wéi hòu qǐ sān xíng;háng;xìng
yǐ qǐ shì xíng;háng;xìng gù suí xíng;háng;xìng duò liù qù

Tg tsa 17a5-6 - Tg tsa 17b5-6
|| ma rig bsgribs pas yaṅ srid phyir | | ’du byed rnam pa gsum po dag |
|(6)mṅon par ’du byed gaṅ yin pa’i | | las de dag gis ’gro bar ’gro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - Those who are deluded by ignorance create their own threefold mental conformations in order to cause rebirth and by their deeds go through the various forms of life. - Note: The threefold mental conformations refer to those related to the body, speech and mind. The various forms of life refer to the following: hellish beings, hungry spirits, beasts, evil spirits, human beings and heavenly beings.

JONES (Skt):
[1] Shrouded in the root-ignorance, a person forms the dispositions through thought, word, and deed. By the actions based on these dispositions, one goes on to a new state for repeated rebirths.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A person enveloped by ignorance forms such dispositions in the threefold ways leading to re-becoming, and through such actions he moves on to his destiny.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Three dispositions leading to rebirth are formed by unexplained ignorance which moves by means of those actions.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. Relying upon new births, many numbers of accomplishments have been produced.
The three factors of original ignorance, the natural energy, and the mental function,
Relying upon those three kinds of processes,
The practice of Action is done concretely relying upon the practice of Action itself.

STRENG (Skt):
1. "What is hidden by ignorance (1)" (avidyanivrta) has caused the three kinds of conditioned things (2) (samskara) to be made for rebirth — By those actions it i.e., " what is hidden by ignorance" goes forward.

BOCKING (Ch):
26v1 Living beings, obscured in delusion
Subsequently give rise to the three actions
And through producing these three actions
According to their predispositions they fall into the six destinies.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
In order to become again, those obscured by ignorance are moved into destinies by actions which are impelled [by] the three kinds of formative impulses.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Due to the obscuration of ignorance, there occurs, directed at rebirth
The conditioning of the action
Of the three types of formation.
Thus, there is migration between the realms. [XXVI.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. Wrapped in the darkness of ignorance,
One performs the three kinds of actions
Which as dispositions impel one
To continue to future existences.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. The three kinds of actions that lead to rebirth,
Performed by one obscured by ignorance,
Are the karma that impel one
To further transmigration.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.1 People enveloped by ignorance form dispositions in the threefold ways that lead to re-becoming, and through such action they continue.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This chapter is of little significance to most Nagarjunian scholars. Inada argues: With the discussion of Nirvana in the last chapter the treatment from the standpoint of the Mahayana had basically come to a close. In this chapter and the final one to follow, Nagarjuna goes into the analysis of the Hinayanistic doctrines.... The discussion is Hinayanistic and it reveals that the source of trouble lies in ignorance which in turn initiates all kinds of mental conformations (samskara) (Nagarjuna,).

While disagreeing totally with this interpretation, I propose to show that this chapter represents the most positive explanation by Nagarjuna of the Buddha's teachings on bondage and freedom as enunciated in the vast collection of discourses, with the discourse to Katyayana as the pivotal text. Indeed, without the positive teachings presented here coming after the negative analysis in the last twenty-five chapters, it is rather difficult to see how Nagarjuna could claim to be restating the Buddha-word, as he openly expressed it in several places earlier (see XV.6; XVII.6, 8, 11; XXIV.8-9). It is indeed surprising to see how most interpreters of Nagarjuna are looking for positive statements of the doc- trine primarily through negations (XXV.3 and Dedicatory Verses), while ignoring all the positive statements of Nagarjuna . XXVI. 1 is a further explanation of the Buddha's statement: "Depending upon ignorance are dispositions" (avijjapaccaya sankhara). Its elaboration is also the Buddha's and is presented in the Kukkuravatika-sutta (M1.390).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. One is caught in cyclic existence for a reason, Nāgārjuna asserts, because one acts. There are three general kinds of actions distinguished in Buddhist action theory - physical, verbal, and mental.

These actions in turn have immediate psychological consequences for the agent. That is, they give rise to new psychological dispositions. In the framework of Buddhist action theory, these dispositions are themselves conceived of as actions existing in a potential form, and of course when actualized, they emerge as new actions of body, speech, or mind. These in turn lead to a variety of new such consequences and to the continuation of cyclic existence. (fn 135. The term *"las"* (Skt: *karma)* hence refers both to action and to the consequences of action for the individual.) Transmigration - the continuation of saṃsāra - for Nāgārjuna is then simply a dependent consequence of one's actions.

Kārikā XXVI.2

विज्ञानं संनिविशते संस्कारप्रत्ययं गतौ।
संनिविष्टेऽथ विज्ञाने नामरूपं निषिच्यते॥२॥

vijñānaṃ saṃniviśate saṃskārapratyayaṃ gatau |
saṃniviṣṭe ’tha vijñāne nāmarūpaṃ niṣicyate ||2||

以諸行因緣 識受六道身
以有識著故 增長於名色

yǐ zhū xíng;háng;xìng yīn yuán shí shòu liù dào shēn
yǐ yǒu shí zhù;zhuó;zhāo gù zēng cháng yū;yú;wū míng sè

།འདུ་བྱེད་རྐྱེན་ཅན་རྣམ་པར་ཤེས།།འགྲོ་བ་རྣམས་སུ་འཇུག་པར་འགྱུར།
།རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ་ཞུགས་གྱུར་ན།།མིང་དང་གཟུགས་ནི་ཆགས་པར་འགྱུར།།

| ’du byed rkyen can rnam par śes | | ’gro ba rnams su ’jug par ’gyur |
| rnam par śes pa źugs gyur na | | miṅ daṅ gzugs ni chags par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - The consciousness (vijnana), conditioned by the mental conformations, establishes itself with respect to the various forms of life. When consciousness is established, name (nama) and form (rupa) are infused or become apparent.

JONES (Skt):
[2] With the dispositions as its condition, consciousness enters a new state of rebirth. With consciousness having entered the new state, a psycho-physical body (“name and form”) arises infused with that consciousness.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Consciousness, with disposition as its condition, enters [the new] life. When consciousness has entered, the psychophysical personality is infused.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Consciousness is connected with past disposition and conditioning.
Wherein consciousness deeply enters, name and form [mind/body] is infused.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. Relying upon the development of scientific knowledge,
The clarification of the Real Truth has begun.
Relying upon the state that both a mother and a baby have become stable,
The Oneness of Name and Substance, which is the combination between name and substance, have been educated gradually.

STRENG (Skt):
2. Consciousness (3), presupposing that which is conditioned (samskara), enters on its course. When consciousness is begun, the "name-and-form'- (namarupa) (4) is instilled.

BOCKING (Ch):
26v2 Conditioned by the predispositions
Consciousness receives a body of the six ways
When consciousness becomes attached
Name and form develop.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Consciousness conditioned by formative impulses enters into destinies. When consciousness has entered, name and form develop.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Consciousness, conditioned by formation,
Enters the realms.
Once consciousness has entered,
Name and form will manifest. [XXVI.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. Having dispositions as its conditions,
Consciousness enters transmigration.
Once consciousness has entered transmigration,
Name and form come to be.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. Having action as its conditions,
Consciousness enters transmigration.
Once consciousness has entered transmigration,
Name and form come to be.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.2 Consciousness, conditioned by dispositions, takes its own course. When consciousness is established, mind and body become apparent.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This represents the explanation of the relationships described in the statement, "Depending upon dispositions is consciousness" (sankharapaccaya vinnanam) and "Depending upon consciousness is the psychophysical personality" (vinnanapaccaya namarupam). The explication of the first of these is found at S 3.87 (Tsa 2.14 [Taisho 2.11c]) where it is said: "Disposition is so called because it processes ... consciousness that has already been dispositionally conditioned, into its present state." The dispositions are thus responsible for providing an individuality to consciousness, and it is this individuated consciousness that comes to be established in a psychophysical personality. This latter event is explained at D 2.63 (Chang 10.2 [Taisho1.61b]), where it is stated that the psychophysical personality formed in the mother's womb will not grow into maturity (na vuddhim virulhim apajjati) if consciousness were not to enter it and get established therein. In fact, the Chinese translation of Kumarajiva refers to such attainment of maturity of the psychophysical personality.

Those who are unwilling to attribute a doctrine of survival to Nagarjuna may interpret the relation between consciousness and the psychophysical personality as no more than the explanation of the act of being conscious during ordinary day to day experiences. If so, it would have been possible for Nagarjuna to say so at this point. Instead, he prefers to speak of a life (gati), generally understood as a future life or destiny, and proceeds to explain the process of perception only after outlining the emergence of the six sensory faculties associated with the psychophysical personality.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. Continuing through the traditional presentation of the twelve links, Nāgārjuna notes that consciousness is a consequence of dispositions and depends upon them and that "name and form" follow as a consequence of consciousness. These, therefore, are obviously also dependent phenomena.

There are two ways to think of the twelve links, generating two parallel circles of explanation: One can approach them from the standpoint of transmigration, which provides a standard Buddhist explanation of the cycle of life. Or one can think of them as providing a phenomenological analysis of the nature of experience. In the former sense, we could say at this point in the story that actions performed in the past and dispositions inherited from one's previous history lead to new actions whose consequences are cyclic existence. In particular, the actions and dispositions from one's prior life, on this view, lead to the generation of a new consciousness, which upon entering the womb, gives rise to a body that will get a particular name.

Or, from a phenomenological perspective, we can see dispositions to attend to or to interpret particular phenomena in certain ways (perceptual or conceptual "sets") and actions upon them leading to our becoming aware of external or internal phenomena (consciousness), which leads to our representing them as having determinate locations and denominations (name and form). These two levels of analysis are obviously quite compatible, and while the former plays a central role in Buddhist cosmological and soteriological theory, the latter is important in Buddhist psychology and practice.

Kārikā XXVI.3

निषिक्ते नामरूपे तु षडायतनसंभवः।
षडायतनमागम्य संस्पर्शः संप्रवर्तते॥३॥

nişikte nāmarūpe tu şaḍāyatanasaṃbhavaḥ |
şaḍāyatanam āgamya saṃsparśaḥ saṃpravartate ||3||

名色增長故 因而生六入
情塵識和合 而生於六觸

míng sè zēng cháng gù yīn ér shēng liù rù
qíng chén shí hé hé;gé ér shēng yū;yú;wū liù chù

|མིང་དང་གཟུགས་ནི་ཆགས་གྱུར་ན།།སྐྱེ་མཆེད་དྲུག་ནི་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར།
|སྐྱེ་མཆེད་དྲུག་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་ནི།།རེག་པ་ཡང་དག་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར།།

| miṅ daṅ gzugs (7)ni chags gyur na | | skye mched drug ni ’byuṅ bar ’gyur |
| skye mched drug la brten nas ni | | reg pa yaṅ dag ’byuṅ bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - When name and form are infused or become apparent the six ayatanas (i.e., seats of perception) arise. With the rise of the six ayatanas, touch evolves.

JONES (Skt):
[3] With the body llıfused, the domains of the six senses (the five senses and the mind) arise. The six domains having appeared, contact comes into being.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When the psychophysical personality has been infused, the occurrence of the six spheres (of sense) takes place. Depending upon the six spheres proceeds contact.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where name and form is infused, six sense-spheres arise.
The six senses having arrived, contact comes forth.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. When whatever has been supplied sufficiently to what is called the Oneness of Name and Substance,
In which name and substance are they combined into one,
Then the six kinds of sense organs, will work together cooperatively.
And the mutual contacts begin with each other.

STRENG (Skt):
3. When the "name-and-form" is instilled, the six domains of sense perceptions (5) (ayatana) are produced. Having arrived at the six domains of sense perceptions, the process of perception begins to function.

BOCKING (Ch):
26v3 Name and form developing
Cause the six avenues to arise
When senses, objects and consciousness combine
There arises six-fold contact.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When name and form develop, the six senses emerge. In dependence upon the six senses, impact actually occurs.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When name and form have manifested,
The six sense sources will develop.
Dependent on the six sense sources,
Contact comes into being. [XXVI.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. Once name and form come to be,
The six sense spheres come into being.
Depending on the six sense spheres,
Contact comes into being.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. Once name and form come to be,
The six senses come into being.
Depending on the six senses,
Contact comes into being.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.3 Once mind and body become apparent, the six sense spheres become apparent. Depending upon the six sense spheres, contact becomes apparent.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Buddha's statement, "Depending upon the psychophysical personality are the six spheres of sense" (namarupapaccaya salayatanam), explains an important pre-requisite for the emergence of human knowledge. If the psychophysical personality is not properly formed or if the sensory faculties were to be defective, the sensory spheres such as material form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and concepts would not provide a foundation for contact. Thus, the visual organ, which is part of the psychophysical personality should be unimpeded (aparibhinna) and should function properly. The external object should come into focus (bahira ca rupa apatham agacchati) and attention (samannahara), which is a function of consciousness, should be available (M 1.190; Chung 7.2 [Taisho 1.467a]). Then only there will emerge consciousness which is a necessary condition for contact. This idea is then elaborated by Nagarjuna in the next verse.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. From the ontogenetic side, the development of the body gives rise to the development of the sense faculties, which make sensation - contact between sense objects and functioning sense organs - possible. From the phenomenological point of view, we can say that the domain of perceptibles and the structure of perceptual experience and knowledge depends upon our ability to represent and individuate objects, and that sensory contact is sensory contact in the first place only in virtue of its role in experience, which is in turn dependent upon the entire perceptual process. To put the matter crudely, an amputated sense organ in contact with an object is hardly in contact in the appropriate way.

Kārikā XXVI.4

चक्षुः प्रतीत्य रूपं च समन्वाहारमेव च।
नामरूपं प्रतीत्यैवं विज्ञानं संप्रवर्तते॥४॥

cakṣuḥ pratītya rūpaṃ ca samanvāhāram eva ca |
nāmarūpaṃ pratītyaivaṃ vijñānaṃ saṃpravartate ||4||

[n/a]

[n/a]

།མིང་དང་གཟུགས་དང་དྲན་བྱེད་ལ། །བརྟེན་ནས་སྐྱེ་བ་ཁོ་ན་སྟེ།
།དེ་ལྟར་མིང་དང་གཟུགས་བརྟེན་ནས། །རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར། །

| miṅ daṅ gzugs daṅ dran byed la | | brten nas skye ba kho na ste |
| de ltar miṅ daṅ gzugs brten nas | | rnam par (17b1)śes pa skye bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - As in the composite relational nature of the eye and its material form, consciousness arises in a similar relational nature of name and form.

JONES (Skt):
[4] Thus, consciousness develops dependent upon sensing, form, sensing and form coming together, and the body.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Thus, depending upon the eye and material form, and attention too, and depending upon the psychophysical personality proceeds consciousness. Whatever is the harmonious concurrence of the three factors: material form, consciousness, and eye, is contact. Feeling proceeds from such contact.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Form and attention are dependent on the eye.
Name and form is dependent on consciousness coming forth.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. When the Eyes can look at forms,
All kinds of phenomena are also can be seen similarly.
The Name and the Substance are completely the same as one.
The intellectual ability is the very inclusive production.

STRENG (Skt):
4. Consciousness begins to function presupposing the eye, the visual forms, and ability of mental association— Presupposing "name-and-form."

BOCKING (Ch):
[n/a]

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Just as [it] only arises in dependence on the eye, [visual] form and attention, so consciousness arises in dependence on name and form.

DOCTOR (Tb):
It arises exclusively in dependence
On eye, form, and consciousness.
Thus, dependent on eye and form,
Consciousness will occur. [XXVI.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. That is only dependent
On eye and form and apprehension.
Thus, depending on name and form,
And which produces consciousness -

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. That is only dependent
On eye and form and retention.
Thus depending on name and form,
Consciousness arises.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.4 Thus, depending upon eye and form, and attention, consciousness appears dependent upon mind and body.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. The first two lines emphasize that contact - that is, the initial relation between the sense organ and its object - has three necessary and sufficient conditions: sense organ, the object, and the cognitive state to which the sense organ gives rise (apprehension/ *dran byed).* The last two lines are continuous with the next verse:

Kārikā XXVI.5

संनिपातस्त्रयाणां यो रूपविज्ञानचक्षुषाम्।
स्पर्शः सः तस्मात्स्पर्शाच्च वेदना संप्रवर्तते॥५॥

saṃnipātas trayāṇāṃ yo rūpavijñānacakṣuṣām |
sparśaḥ sa tasmāt sparśāc ca vedanā saṃpravartate ||5||

因於六觸故 即生於三受
以因三受故 而生於渴愛

yīn yū;yú;wū liù chù gù jí shēng yū;yú;wū sān shòu
yǐ yīn sān shòu gù ér shēng yū;yú;wū kě ài

|མིག་དང་གཟུགས་དང་རྣམ་པར་ཤེས།།གསུམ་པོ་འདུས་པ་གང་ཡིན་པ།
|དེ་ནི་རེག་པའོ་རེག་དེ་ལས།།ཚོར་བ་ཀུན་ཏུ་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར།།

| mig daṅ gzugs daṅ rnam par śes | | gsum po ’dus pa gaṅ yin pa |
| de ni reg pa’o reg de las | | tshor ba kun tu ’byuṅ bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - The harmonious triadic nature of form, consciousness and eye issues forth touch. And from touch arises feeling.

JONES (Skt):
[5] Contact is the conjunction of three things - sensing, form, and consciousness. From such contact, sensation arises.

KALUPAHANA (Skt): [included in XXVI.4 above]

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The conjunction of the three, which are eye, consciousness, and form,
is contact. And from contact, feeling comes forth.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. What is called the accumulations of the three factors are indicating,
Matter, recognition, and the Eyes..
Therefore the real perception has transcended the perception as concept already,
And so the Real Contact has finished in the first step already.

STRENG (Skt):
5. That which is the coincidence (6) (samnipata) of visual form, consciousness, and the eye: That is sensual perception; and from perception, sensation (7) begins to function.

BOCKING (Ch):
26v4 On account of the six contacts
The threefold reception arises
On account of the threefold receiving
Craving is produced.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The gathering of the three: eye and [visual] form and consciousness, that is “impact.” From impact feeling totally arises.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Contact is the meeting
Of eye, form, and consciousness.
Out of this meeting
Arises sensation. [XXVI.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. That which is assembled from the three -
Eye and form and consciousness, is contact.
From contact
Feeling comes to be.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. That which is assembled from the three—
Eye and form and consciousness—
Is contact. From contact
Feeling comes to be.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.5 Whatever is assembled from eye and form and consciousness, is contact. From contact arises feeling,

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The twelvefold formula presents feeling as being conditioned by contact (phassapaccaya vedana). However, Nagarjuna feels the need to explain what contact is all about. He, therefore, inserts the explanation of contact prodded by the Buddha in the Madhupindka-sutta (M 1.111-112; Chung 28.3 [Taisho 1.604b]). Contact is the harmonious concurrence (sangati) of three factors: material form, (visual) consciousness, and eye. It is this harmonious concurrence that provides a foundation for feeling (vedana).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. It is important to note that this occurrence of “consciousness” *(rnam-par shes-pa)* in fact refers to the apprehension of the previous verse, which is in Buddhist psychology a form of consciousness. But it should *not* be confused with the consciousness whose condition is contact, on pain of a hopeless explanatory tangle. Contact, as we have seen, is dependent upon the existence of the organ, the object, and the functioning of the sense faculty. Dependent upon that contact is sensation. The exposition here is perfectly traditional. It only derives its punch from the context: In light of the connection that has been developed between the dependence that is central to this model and emptiness, the entire Theravada model of the nature of the phenomenal world comes to look like an analysis in terms of emptiness.

Kārikā XXVI.6

वेदनाप्रत्यया तृष्णा वेदनार्थं हि तृष्यते।
तृष्यमाण उपादानमुपादत्ते चतुर्विधम्॥६॥
[n/a]

vedanāpratyayā tṛṣṇā vedanārthaṃ hi tṛṣyate |
tṛṣyamāṇa upādānam upādatte caturvidham ||6||
[n/a]

|ཚོར་བའི་རྐྱེན་གྱིས་སྲེད་པ་སྟེ||ཚོར་བའི་དོན་དུ་སྲེད་པར་འགྱུར|
|སྲེད་པར་གྱུར་ན་ཉེ་བར་ལེན||རྣམ་པ་བཞི་པོ་ཉེར་ལེན་འགྱུར||

| tshor ba'i rkyen gyis sred pa ste | | tshor ba'i don du sred par 'gyur |
| sred (2)par gyur na ñe bar len | | rnam pa bźi po ñer len 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - Relationally conditioned by feeling, craving arises because it "thirsts after" the object of feeling. In the process of craving, the fourfold clingings are seized. - Note: Reference to clingings of passions, dogmatic views, rigid rules of conduct, and selfhood (kama, drsti, sila, atman).

JONES (Skt):
[6] Craving has sensation as its condition since the object of sensation is craved for. When there is craving, clinging to the four domains of clinging (desires, views, rules, and a sense of self) arise.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Conditioned by feeling is craving. Indeed, craving is feeling-directed. The one who craves, grasps on to the fourfold spheres of grasping.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Craving. is conditioned by feeling, indeed, craves because of feeling.
He is laid hold of by graspmg a fourfold craving.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. Proclaiming what is different from the Real Truth, is called Desire.
Because the seriously painful efforts are usually esteemed by ordinary people to be so especially exaggerated.
The strong Desire is usually seemed to be common efforts for their own profits.
Because of the result, they have got the four kinds of so-called human virtues.

STRENG (Skt):
6. "Craving (8)" (trsna) for existing things is conditioned by sensation. Certainly a person craves for the sake of sensation. The one who craves acquires the four-fold acquisition (9) (upadana) namely sexual pleasure, false views, ascetic morality and vows, and the doctrine of self-existence.

BOCKING (Ch):
[n/a]

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Due to the condition of feeling, there is craving; one craves for what is felt. When one craves, one clings to the four aspects of clinging [sense objects, views, morals and rules, and views of self].

DOCTOR (Tb):
Conditioned by sensation, there is craving,
Craving with respect to sensation.
When there is craving, there will be grasping,
Grasping in the fourfold way. [XXVI.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. Conditioned by feeling is craving.
Craving arises because of feeling.
When it appears, there is grasping,
The four spheres of grasping.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. Conditioned by feeling is craving.
Craving arises for feeling.
When one craves,
The four objects of appropriation will be appropriated.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.6 Conditioned by feeling is craving. Craving arises with feeling. In one who craves there is grasping of the fourfold spheres.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here Nagarjuna has an interesting explanation of craving (trsna) when he says: vedanartham bi trsyate, i.e, "it is for feeling that one craves." It is a reference to the pleasant feelings (subha, manapa, or sukha). The fourfold spheres of grasping are: grasping for desires (kama), for views (ditthi), for rules and rights (silabbata), and for theories of self (attavada)(M 1.51).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. Pleasurable sensations lead to craving; painful ones lead to craving for their end. That craving leads to grasping - an attempt to appropriate and make one's own the source of pleasure or the means for the alleviation of pain, and to excessive valuation of the grasped object. The four spheres probably denote the four realms - the desire, the form, the formless, and the pure, entities in each of which could be the objects of grasping.

Kārikā XXVI.7

उपादाने सति भव उपादातुः प्रवर्तते।
स्याद्धि यद्यनुपादानो मुच्येत न भवेद्भवः॥७॥

upādāne sati bhava upādātuḥ pravartate |
syād dhi yady anupādāno mucyeta na bhaved bhavaḥ ||7||

因愛有四取 因取故有有
若取者不取 則解脫無有

yīn ài yǒu sì qǔ yīn qǔ gù yǒu yǒu
ruò qǔ zhě bù qǔ zé jiě tuō wú yǒu

།ཉེར་ལེན་ཡོད་ན་ལེན་པ་པོའི། །སྲིད་པ་རབ་ཏུ་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར།
།གལ་ཏེ་ཉེ་བར་ལེན་མེད་ན། །གྲོལ་བར་འགྱུར་ཏེ་སྲིད་མི་འགྱུར།།

| ñer len yod na len pa po'i | | srid pa rab tu 'byuṅ bar 'gyur |
| gal te ñe bar len med na | | grol bar 'gyur te srid mi 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - When there is clinging perception, the perceiver generates being (bhava). When there is no clinging perception, he will be freed and there will be no being.

JONES (Skt):
[7] When clinging exists, the rebirth (i.e., "becoming") of the one who clings develops. For if one were without clinging, one would be released and there would be no more becoming.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When grasping exist, becoming on the part of the grasper proceeds. If he were to be a non-grasper, he would he released, and there would be no further becoming.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Where grasping exists, the being who grasps is set in motion.
Indeed, If there would be no grasping, he would be released and there would be no being [who grasps].

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. Living for our own Action is just our existence.
Actions of ourselves are going on ahead.
In that case the receptacle might not be working for its own purpose.
And so Giving Up should never be permissible to exist, might be the existence itself.

STRENG (Skt):
7. When the acquisition exists, the acquirer begins to function (10) (i.e. existence, becoming). If he were someone without acquisition, that being would be released, and would not exist.

BOCKING (Ch):
26v5 On account of craving there are the four graspings
And because of grasping there is existence.
If the grasper would not grasp
There would be liberation, and no existence.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When there is clinging, the becoming of the clinger fully arises. When there is no clinging, one is freed; there is no [more] becoming.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Grasping will initiate
The becoming of the grasper.
Absence of grasping will result
In liberation free from becoming. [XXVI.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. When there is grasping, the grasper
Comes into existence.
If he did not grasp,
Then being freed, he would not come into existence.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. When there is appropriation,
The existence of the appropriator arises.
If he did not appropriate,
Then being freed, he would not come into existence.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.7 When there is grasping there is a grasper. When there is no grasping, there is release without further becoming.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

It is interesting to note that at this point in the explanation of the twelvefold formula Nagarjuna speaks of freedom or release (moksa). It is a point at which the process of bondage can be interrupted. Nagarjuna is problably emphasizing this because he witnessed how his fellow Buddhists, in spite of their enormous intellectual capacities, constantly adhered to metaphysical views and were caught in "Brahma's Net" (brahma-jala). Some of these intellectual giants, who were able to write commentary after commentary, even though they had abandoned household lives were enamored with their views and involved in ceaseless diatribes. Realizing the emphasis placed by the Buddha upon "nongrasping" (anupadana), Nagarjuna interrupts his exposition of the process of bondage to explain freedom.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. The identity of the individual as a grasper - and hence as a deluded actor in the world and an agent of the continuation of saṃsāra - depends upon this grasping. As Nāgārjuna argued in Chapters VI and XVI, without grasping, there is no grasper.

Kārikā XXVI.8

पञ्च स्कन्धाः स च भवः भवाज्जातिः प्रवर्तते।
जरामरणदुःखादि शोकाः सपरिदेवनाः॥८॥

pañca skandhāḥ sa ca bhavo bhavāj jātiḥ pravartate |
jarāmaraṇaduḥkhādi śokāḥ saparidevanāḥ ||8||

從有而有生 從生有老死
從老死故有 憂悲諸苦惱

cóng yǒu ér yǒu shēng cóng shēng yǒu lǎo sǐ
cóng lǎo sǐ gù yǒu yōu bēi zhū kǔ nǎo

|སྲིད་པ་དེ་ཡང་ཕུང་པོ་ལྔ||སྲིད་པ་ལས་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར|
|རྒ་ཤི་དང་ནི་མྱ་ངན་དང||སྨྲེ་སྔགས་འདོན་བཅས་སྡུག་བསྔལ་དང||

| srid pa de yaṅ phuṅ po lṅa | | srid pa las ni skye (3)bar 'gyur |
| rga śi daṅ ni mya ṅan daṅ | | smre sṅags 'don bcas sdug bsṅal daṅ |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - Being is (always in reference to) the five skandhas and from being birth arises. Old age-death, suffering, etc., misery, grief... (continues on to the next verse.)

JONES (Skt):
[8-9] The five bodily aggregates are the new becoming. From this becoming, birth develops. From birth, aging, death, suffering, and so forth develop, as well as grief, lamentations, dejection, and despair. Such is the arising of the complete aggregate of suffering.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The five aggregates constitute this becoming. From becoming proceeds birth. Suffering relating to decay and death, etc., grief, lamentation, dejection, and dispairall these proceed from birth. Such is the occurrence of this entire mass of suffering.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
He, the being, is five *skandOOs* and from being, rebirth is set in motion,
together with lamentations, afflictions, suffering, etc., old age and death.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. When the five kinds of Aggregates really exist,
Leaving from the existence, the Births are going on to be continued endlessly.
Birth, death, many kinds of pains, and so forth,
Are, miscellaneous accumulation of grief, which are mixture of complains.

STRENG (Skt):
8. That being is the five "groups of universal elements" (skandha). Because of a being, birth (11) begins to function. Growing old, dying, sorrow (dukkha) (12), etc., grief and regrets,

BOCKING (Ch):
26v6 From existence there is birth
From birth comes old age and death
Because of old age and death there are
All the afflictions of sorrow and ill.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Becoming is the five aggregates; from becoming one is born. Aging, death, torment, lamentation, pain,

DOCTOR (Tb):
Becoming is the five aggregates.
From becoming follows birth.
Aging and death, grief,
Lamentation, pain, [XXVI.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. This existence is also the five aggregates.
From existence comes birth,
Old age and death and misery and
Suffering and grief and...

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. This existence is also the five aggregates.
From existence comes birth,
Old age, and death and misery and
Suffering and lamentation and. . . .

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
"Existence" is karmic action performed with the five aggregates.
From existence comes birth,
And from birth,
Aging, death, agony, bewailing, pain, (8)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.8 & 26.9 Grasping at the five aggregates is being, With being comes birth. Old age and death, grief, lamentation, dejection, and despair all follow. Such is the occurrence of this entire mass of dukkha.

[No commentary on this verse]

Kārikā XXVI.9

दौर्मनस्यमुपायासा जातेरेतत्प्रवर्तते।
केवलस्यैवमेतस्य दुःखस्कन्धस्य संभवः॥९॥

daurmanasyam upāyāsā jāter etat pravartate |
kevalasyaivam etasya duḥkhaskandhasya saṃbhavaḥ ||9||

如是等諸事 皆從生而有
但以是因緣 而集大苦陰

rú shì děng zhū shì jiē cóng shēng ér yǒu
dàn yǐ shì yīn yuán ér jí dà kǔ yīn

|ཡིད་མི་བདེ་དང་འཁྲུག་པ་རྣམས།|དེ་དག་སྐྱེ་ལས་རབ་ཏུ་འབྱུང་།
|དེ་ལྟར་སྡུག་བསྔལ་ཕུང་པོ་ནི།|འབའ་ཞིག་པ་འདི་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར།|

| yid mi bde daṅ ’khrug pa rnams | de dag skye las rab tu ’byuṅ |
| de ltar sdug bsṅal phuṅ po ni | | ’ba’ źig pa ’di ’byuṅ bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - ....despair and mental disturbance arise from birth. In this manner the simple suffering attached to the skandhas comes into being.

JONES (Skt):
[9] [see above]

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
[included in XXVI.8 above]

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Together with despair, all this is set in motion from birth.
Thus is the origin of this entire mass of suffering.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. Discouraged situations usually approach by themselves,
Relying upon Birth, the Real Situations of this place are going on.
The isolated situations are like those.
And Pain, which belongs to miscellaneous things and phenomena, are the Total Existence

STRENG (Skt):
9. Despair and agitation: all this results from birth; That "produced being" is a single mass of sorrows (dukkha).

BOCKING (Ch):
26v7 All such things as these
Arise from birth
Only through these causes and conditions
Does the great suffering of the skandhas accumulate.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
mental unhappiness, anxiety: these vividly emerge from birth. Likewise, the entire mass of anguish emerges.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Mental unrest, disturbance—
All of this occurs due to birth.
Thus arises this mass
Of nothing but suffering. [XXVI.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. Confusion and agitation.
All these arise as a consequence of birth.
Thus this entire mass of suffering
Comes into being.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. Unhappiness and agitation.
All these arise as a consequence of birth.
Thus what comes into being
Is only a mass of suffering.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
unhappiness, and agitation come without fail.
Thus, the only thing born
Is a massive heap of suffering. (9)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.9 [see XXVI.8]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The elimination of craving for becoming (bhava-tanha), as mentioned earlier (see XXV. 10), was encouraged by the Buddha. The reason for this is not merely because craving causes suffering in this life, but also because it could lead to birth in another life (jati), which would also involve the repetition of all the unfortunate experiences of the present life. The phrase duhkha-skandha is used in the sense of heap or mass of suffering rather than "suffering attached to the skandhas," (Inada,).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

9. But moreover, the account that emerges so far of the nature of human existence - one involving a body, sensations, perception, dispositions, and consciousness - is just the account of personal existence in terms of the five aggregates into which standard Buddhist psychology analyzes the person. So this account so far is an account of the conditions that give rise to human existence. But human existence gives rise to human births, and these eventually give rise to aging, to pain and suffering, and eventually to death and the consequent grief of one’s loved ones. This part of the story, of course, is central to making the case for the first two noble truths.

We are born with dispositions to reify, to crave, and to grasp, all of which, on this analysis, lead directly to suffering - to the pain of wanting what we cannot have, of not wanting what we do have, of grasping onto permanence in an impermanent world, of cherishing our own existence and interests in a world where they are minor affairs, and of grasping for independence and freedom in a conditioned universe.

Kārikā XXVI.10

संसारमूलान्संस्कारानविद्वान् संस्करोत्यतः।
अविद्वान् कारकस्तस्मान्न विद्वांस्तत्त्वदर्शनात्॥१०॥

saṃsāramūlaṃ saṃskārān avidvān saṃskaroty ataḥ |
avidvān kārakas tasmān na vidvāṃs tattvadarśanāt ||10||

是謂為生死 諸行之根本
無明者所造 智者所不為

shì wèi wéi shēng sǐ zhū xíng;háng;xìng zhī gēn běn
wú míng zhě suǒ zào zhì zhě suǒ bù wéi

།འཁོར་བའི་རྩ་བ་འདུ་བྱེད་དེ།།དེ་ཕྱིར་མཁས་རྣམས་འདུ་མི་བྱེད།
།དེ་ཕྱིར་མི་མཁས་བྱེད་པོ་ཡིན།།མཁས་མིན་དེ་ཉིད་མཐོང་ཕྱིར་རོ།།

| ’khor ba’i (4)rtsa ba ’du byed de | | de phyir mkhas rnams ’du mi byed |
| de phyir mi mkhas byed po yin | | mkhas min de ñid mthoṅ phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - Consequently, the ignorant creates the mental conformations which form the basis of samsaric life. Thus the ignorant is the doer while the wise, seeing the truth (tattva), does not create.

JONES (Skt):
[10] Thus, the one who is subject to the root-ignorance forms the dispositions that are the basis of the cycle of rebirths. Therefore, the one who is ignorant is the one who forms a new rebirth, not the one who knows by seeing reality.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Thus, the ignorant forms dispositions that constitute the source of the life process. Therefore, it is the ignorant who is the agent, not the wise one, because of his [the latter's] perception of truth.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Hence the ignorant compose dispositions, the roots of *saṃsāra.*
Therefore, the ignorant create while the wise, seeing reality, do not.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. Some kinds of Basis, that is the Basic Wandering, create combinations.
And there the artificially produced ignorance is constructed.
Therefore even any kind of ignorance is not created anymore.
So the clever people will leave the Truth looking at it by Eyes.

STRENG (Skt):
10. Thus the ignorant people construct the conditioned things (samskara); that is the source for existence-in-flux. The one who constructs is ignorant; the wise person is not one who constructs because he perceives true reality.

BOCKING (Ch):
26v8 The basis of birth and death
And predispositions just described
Is created by the unenlightened man
The man of insight does not create it.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The root of life is formative impulses. Therefore, the wise do not form impulses. Therefore, the unwise are formers, but not the wise since they see reality.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Formation is the root of cyclic existence,
Therefore, the wise do not form.
The agents of that are the unwise;
Not the wise, for they see reality. [XXVI.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. The root of cyclic existence is action.
Therefore, the wise one does not act.
Therefore, the unwise is the agent.
The wise one is not because of his insight.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. The root of cyclic existence is action.
Therefore, the wise one does not act.
Therefore the unwise is the agent.
The wise one is not, because he sees reality.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
The root of samsara is karmic action.
Therefore, the wise do not perform it.
Therefore, the ones who commit karmic acts are the unwise,
Not the wise, because they see the precise nature. (10)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.10 Thus the ignorant construct conditioned things that are the source of samsara while the wise, who see Truth, do not construct existence.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The enlightened one who had attained the appeasement of dispositions (samskaropasama) does not contribute to the perpetuation of the life-process (samsara). Hence, he is not an agent (karakah) responsible for such perpetuation. This seems to indicate Nagarjuna's awareness of the Buddha's famous statement that upon attaining enlightenment he perceived the builder of the home (gaha-karaka,Dh 154). Reading too much metaphysics into the phrase tattva-darsana can destroy all that Nagarjuna attempted to do in the preceding twenty-five chapters. Instead of explaining it as "the perception of an absolute reality," it could be more appropriately understood as the perception of the empirical truth that "all this is empty" (sarvam idam sunyam) of a substance (svabhavatah).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. ("Therefore, the wise one does not act" fn 136. *"'du byed"* (Skt.: *samskara).* This term is often translated in this text as "disposition." It can also mean "to compound" or "compounded phenomenon." Here it must function as a verb. Both Streng (1967) and Inada (1970) prefer the reading "to compound" or "to construct." But given Nāgārjuna's theory of action, as we have seen, dispositions and actions are of a kind. And what generates the karma that creates and maintains cyclic existence is action. Hence, I read the term here as denoting action and disposition together, via its primary meaning, "disposition." This receives further support from the use of the nominal *"byed-po,* "which is cognate with the compound " *'du byed"* and is most naturally translated as "agent." It is important, however, to bear in mind that Nāgārjuna is discussing actions and dispositions together as a unitary phenomenon and thinking of them - as the translations of Inada and Sprung bring to the fore - as that which constructs or creates our future existence. dGe 'dun-grub agrees with this reading, as does Je Tsong Khapa. I am indebted to the Yen. Sherab Gyatso for convincing me of this.)

The place to pick up the tangle in order to unravel it, from the standpoint of practice, Nāgārjuna suggests, is with action and disposition, here comprised together under the single term "action" *('du byed)*, which in this context conveys not only the unity of action and disposition as seen from the soteriological point of view, but also their role in creating or bringing about future existence. These are most easily controlled through philosophical reflection, through meditation, and through assiduous practices of various virtues. By changing the way that we act physically, verbally, and mentally, we thereby change the way that we perceive, think, and act and thereby change what we see and the consequences of our actions.

Kārikā XXVI.11

[Robinson states that this verse in the Sanskrit has no correlate in the Chinese (but also, verses 4 & 6).]

अविद्यायां निरुद्धायां संस्काराणामसंभवः।
अविद्याया निरोधस्तु ज्ञानेनास्यैव भावनात्॥११॥

avidyāyāṃ niruddhāyāṃ saṃskārāṇām asaṃbhavaḥ |
avidyāyā nirodhas tu jñānasyāsyaiva bhāvanāt ||11||

[n/a]

[n/a]

།མ་རིག་འགགས་པར་གྱུར་ན་ནི།།འདུ་བྱེད་རྣམས་ཀྱང་འབྱུང་མི་འགྱུར།
།མ་རིག་འགག་པར་འགྱུར་བ་ནི།།ཤེས་པས་དེ་ཉིད་བསྒོམས་པས་སོ།།

| ma rig ’gags par gyur na ni | | ’du byed rnams kyaṅ ’byuṅ mi ’gyur |
| ma rig ’gag par ’gyur ba ni | | śes (5)pas de ñid bsgoms pas so |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - When ignorance is banished mental conformations do not arise. But the extinction of ignorance is dependent upon the wisdom of practicing (the cessation of the twelvefold causal analysis of being).

JONES (Skt):
[11] With the root-ignorance ceasing, the dispositions do not come together. However, the cessation of the root-ignorance comes through meditative development and through knowledge.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When ignorance has ceased, there is no occurrence of dispositions. However, the cessation of that ignorance taken place as a result of the practice of that [non-occurrence of dispositions] through widsom.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Since the destruction of dispositions is the cessation of ignorance,
cessation of ignorance is from practice based on knowledge.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. Following ignorance might be the same as following suppression.
Belonging to the aimless wandering might be the refusal of living together.
Following ignorance might be the same as confinement.
Belonging to the whole knowledge, and following it, is just the leaving from existence.

STRENG (Skt):
11. When ignorance ceases, the constructed phenomena do not come into existence. A person's cessation of ignorance proceeds on the basis of "becoming" enlightened through knowledge.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XXVI.11 [W]ith the cessation of ignorance, formations will not arise. Moreover, the cessation of ignorance occurs through right understanding (*jnāna*).

ROBINSON (Skt):
When ignorance is extinguished, the dispositions do not arise. The extinction of ignorance by knowledge [takes place] through meditation on [dependent co-arising].

BOCKING (Ch):
[n/a]

BATCHELOR (Tb):
When ignorance stops, formative impulses too do not occur. The stopping of ignorance [comes] through practising that with understanding.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When ignorance has ceased,
Formation does not arise either.
The cessation of ignorance is accomplished
By meditating on reality through insight. [XXVI.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. With the cessation of ignorance
Action will not arise.
The cessation of ignorance occurs through
Meditation and wisdom.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. With the cessation of ignorance,
Action will not arise.
The cessation of ignorance occurs through
Exercising wisdom in meditating on this.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
When ignorance ceases,
Karmic actions cease.
The cessation of ignorance
Is the result of meditating with knowledge of reality’s precise nature. (11)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.11 When ignorance has ceased, there is no occurrence of constructed phenomena. The cessation of ignorance occurs through the cultivation of Mind and through wisdom

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The mutual relationship between cessation of ignorance and the non-arising of dispositions is emphasized by Nagarjuna, keeping in mind the distinction between the appeasement of dispositions (samskaropasama) in the present life and their waning (samskara-ksays) at the time of death, thereby not providing another opportunity for rebirth.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. But in order really to modify our actions and dispositions to act, we need wisdom - in this context an understanding of the real nature of things, which for Nāgārjuna means the view of all things as empty. This view, Nāgārjuna asserts, must be internalized through meditation, so that it becomes not merely a philosophical theory that we can reason our way into, but the basic way in which we take up with the world. Accomplishing that, he asserts, leads to the cessation of that activity responsible for the perpetuation of the suffering of saṃsāra. .

Kārikā XXVI.12

तस्य तस्य निरोधेन तत्तन्नाभिप्रवर्तते।
दुःखस्कन्धः केवलोऽयमेवं सम्यङ् निरुध्यते॥१२॥

tasya tasya nirodhena tat tan nābhipravartate |
duḥkhaskandhaḥ kevalo ’yam evaṃ samyag nirudhyate ||12||

以是事滅故 是事則不生
但是苦陰聚 如是而正滅

yǐ shì shì miè gù shì shì zé bù shēng
dàn shì kǔ yīn jù rú shì ér zhèng;zhēng miè

།དེ་དང་དེ་ནི་འགགས་གྱུར་པས།།དེ་དང་དེ་ནི་མངོན་མི་འབྱུང་།
།སྡུག་བསྔལ་ཕུང་པོ་འབའ་ཞིག་པ།།དེ་ནི་དེ་ལྟར་ཡང་དག་འགག།

| de daṅ de ni ’gags gyur pas | | de daṅ de ni mṅon mi ’byuṅ |
| sdug bsṅal phuṅ po ’ba’ źig pa | | de ni de ltar yaṅ dag ’gag |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - By the cessation of the various links of the causal analysis, each and every subsequent link will not arise (i.e., become a hindrance). And thus this simple suffering attached to the skandhas is rightfully extinguished.

JONES (Skt):
[12] Through the cessation of each step, the following step does not arise. Thereby, the entire aggregate of suffering is completely ended.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
With the cessation of these, these othere factors [of the twelvefold formula] would not proceed. In this way, this entire mass of suffering ceases completely.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
With the cessation of [ignorance], which [link on the causal chain] advances to what [next link]?
Thus this entire mass of suffering is rightly ceased.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. Relying upon self-regulation of each thing,
Each concrete thing does never go ahead by itself.
An aggregate called Pain is isolated from this World,
Similarly the Totality is regulated by itself.

STRENG (Skt):
12. Through cessation of every component none functions; That single mass of sorrow (dukkha) is thus completely destroyed.

WESTERHOFF (Skt):
XXVI.12 Through the cessation of this and that [link of dependent origination] this and that [other link] will not come about. The entire mass of suffering thereby completely ceases.

BOCKING (Ch):
26v9 When these things cease
They do not arise
This suffering assemblage of the skandhas
Thus simply ceases.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
By the stopping of the former, the latter will clearly not occur. The entire mass of anguish will likewise completely stop.

DOCTOR (Tb):
As each of them ceases,
None of them will occur.
Thus, this mass of nothing but suffering
Will actually come to an end. [XXVI.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. Through the cessation of this and that
This and that will not be manifest.
The entire mass of suffering
Indeed thereby completely ceases.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. Through the cessation of this and that,
This and that will not be manifest.
That which is only a mass of suffering
Will thus completely cease.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
When the earlier links cease,
The later links do not occur,
And that which is only a heap of suffering
Perfectly comes to an end. (12)

HAGEN (paraphrase):
26.12 With the cessation of these, the other factors of the twelvefold chain will not appear. In this way, the entire mass of dukkha completely ceases.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

26/9 Because the ordinary man is deluded by ignorance, he creates by his actions of body, speech and mind409 his subsequent body, and gives rise to predispositions towards the six destinies. According to the predispositions which he has generated he becomes higher, the same (middle), or lower. His consciousness, entering into the six destinies according to its predispositions receives a body. With the attachment of consciousness as their basis name and form accumulate, and because of the accumulation of name and form there are the six avenues. With the six avenues as their cause, the six contacts ensue, and on account of the six contacts there is threefold reception. With the three receptions as its cause craving arises, and because of craving there are the four graspings. When the four graspings grasp, sin and merit are generated by the actions of body, mind and speech, and these cause the subsequent succession of the three existences.

(36c15) From existence comes birth, from birth come old age and death, and from old age and death come sorrow, grief, suffering and all the various evils, and there simply exists the great accumulation of suffering of the skandhas.

Hence we know it is that the ignorance of the ordinary man generates the foundation of the predispositions to birth and death here. They are not generated by one who has insight, who by seeing things as they really are, puts an end to ignorance.

(36c19) When ignorance ceases, all the predispositions also cease, and because the causes have ceased, the effects also cease. Thus by assiduously cultivating insight which views the arising and ceasing of the twelve causal conditions, these things cease, and because they cease, all of them including birth, old age and death, sorrow, grief, and the great suffering of the skandhas really and completely cease.

'Completely ceased' means utterly ceased. The meaning of the arising and ceasing of these twelve causal conditions is just as explained in detail in the Abhidharma-sutra.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The emphasis is probably on the cessation of ignorance and the non-arising of dispositions. These two factors are taken to predominate the entire life-process. The attainment of enlightenment and the appeasement of dispositions through non-grasping (anupadana) account for "freedom with substrate" (saupadisesanirvana), while the elimination of dispositions provides for non-re-becoming (a-punar-bhava)(cf. XXVI. 1) and the waning of birth (jati-ksaya), which is freedom "without substrate" (nirupadisesa-nirvana).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

12. And this is not only the analysis Nāgārjuna offers of the world and of our experience of it, but his final soteriological recommendation given the doctrine of the emptiness of all phenomena. Human existence and experience are indeed governed by the twelve links of dependent origination. But since they are essentially dependent, they are essentially empty and, hence, are impermanent and subject to change. The twelve links provide an anatomy and an etiology of suffering. But by understanding their impermanence and dependency, we also see the cure for that condition. For by cultivating a clear and accurate philosophical view of the nature of things - the view so explicitly articulated in Chapter XXIV, by internalizing that view, and by taking up with the world in accordance with it, we can cease the reification of the "this" and the "that," grasping for which binds us to suffering. Nāgārjuna argues that if we can achieve that, we can achieve the nirvāṇa characterized in Chapter XXV - a nirvāṇa hot found in an escape from the world but in an enlightened and awakened engagement with it.

Chapter XXVII

दृष्टिपरीक्षा सप्तविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀邪見品第二十七(三十一偈)

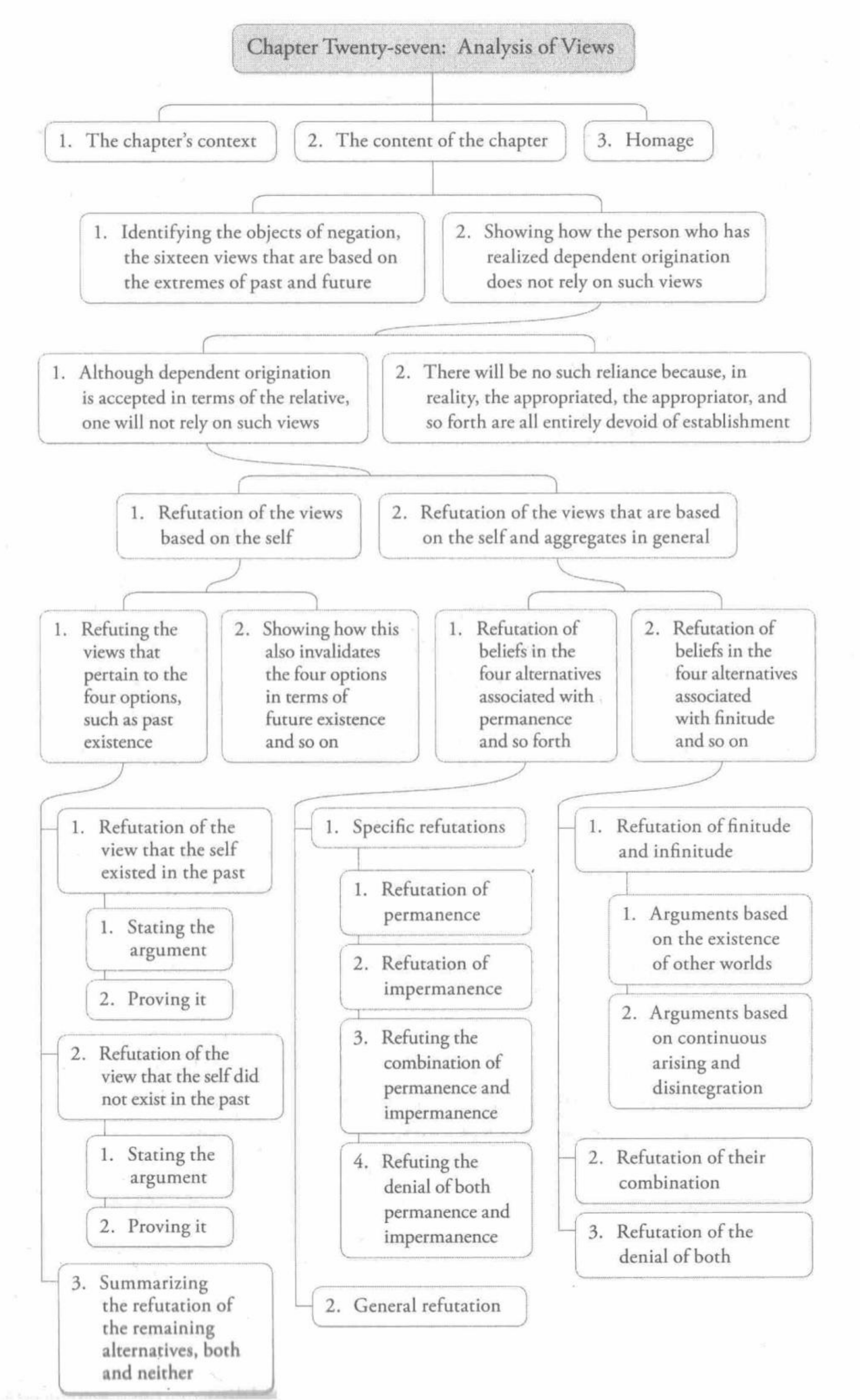
།ལྟ་བ་བརྟག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་སྟེ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་བདུན་པའོ།།

dṛṣṭiparīkṣā saptaviṁśatitamaṁ prakaraṇam ||

Chapter XXVII: Examination of Views

Chapter XXVII

MAJBA (TOPICAL OUTLINE)



TSONG-KHA-PA (Outline, Explanation, Summary)

OUTLINE:

This chapter constitutes the third and final part of the section explaining the meanings of the individual chapters: the demonstration of how, once one understands dependent origination, the erroneous views are abandoned.

EXPLANATION:

Suppose one asked, "Since the *Salistambha-sutra* says that whoever has seen dependent origination perfectly does not rely on the extreme view that there is a beginning or the extreme view that there is an end [*mDo sde* tsha 123a], what are the extreme views that there is a beginning and that there is an end, and how is it that one should not rely on these?"

This answer to this has two parts: identifying the sixteen false views and how to show that one who understands dependent origination does not rely on them.

SUMMARY:

All of those who belong to the family of the supreme vehicle, urgently driven by great compassion they have cultivated, are steadfast in this attitude: "I will relieve all suffering sentient beings, who are suffering from any of the three kinds of suffering, and will lead them to complete enlightenment." **[479]** For this purpose, they cultivate aspirational bodhicitta—that is, the aspiration to attain unparalleled enlightenment—with firm resolution at the beginning.

Seeing that without the practice of the six perfections of the bodhisattva this resolution cannot be fulfilled, they undertake engaging bodhicitta through the perfect rites, and thus take up the great burden of training in the practices of the sons of the Victor. Seeing that the principal practice for those for whom the training in the six perfections is the heart of their practice is the middle path that abandons the two extremes, they seek the perfect view of the final reality of things—the definitive meaning—just as it has been established by the arguments presented in master's text, which we have explained above.

Having obtained that, and having seen that without mental quiescence, even though one has developed the view of the way things really are, the afflictions cannot be subdued, they strive to achieve the practice of mental quiescence, and they exert effort in meditation on the perfect view. Therefore, the view that is established in this text should be cultivated through this kind of practice. All of these stages are presented extensively in *The Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment.*

The manner of seeking the view in order to find the definitive meaning, referring to the final reality of phenomena, is to be applied not only in the vehicle of the perfection of wisdom, but should also be applied to the tantric vehicle, because with respect to the meaning of reality, there is no difference between the two Mahayana vehicles.

INADA (Chapter Introductions)

CHAPTER XXVII - Examination of (Dogmatic) Views

This final chapter of the Karika again, as in the preceding chapter, treats Hinayanistic doctrines prevalent at the time. As the title indicates, it is an examination of false or dogmatic views which the Hinayana leveled against non-Buddhists but once again we must not lose sight of the principal doctrine of sunyata that Nagarjuna always has in the background. The doctrine of course does finally appear in Verse 29.

He begins the chapter by investigating such pet dogmatic or futile questions as whether or not there is existence in the past, and whether or not the realm of existence or the world is constant. These and other ideas relative to future events are all based on preconceived notions and never applicable to the present dynamic state of thing. Characteristic of the "logic of sunya," as seen in previous chapters, he exhibits the untenability of each and every position. He also goes on to show the absurdity involved in trying to assign partial characterization to one realm and another partial characterization to yet another realm as, for example, speaking of partially limited and partially unlimited worlds. How then, he asks, could one portion of the perceiver be destroyed and another remain undestroyed? Thus we come to the final and foremost teaching of the historical Buddha, i.e., the true law (saddharma), which is beyond all views and valuation in the strictest sense. Indeed, as Nagarjuna reminds us, all existences are of the nature of Sunyata (devoid of characterization).

Part IV (Conclusion)

27. *Views (ditthi*). Buddha's denial of a permanent and eternal self (*atman*) and his explanation of the human personality and its survival of death in terms of the doctrine of dependent arising have remained unpalatable to most philosophers ever since he presented them. Veridical memories of past existences being connected with present experience as a result of meditation, as in the case of the Buddha and many other ascetics, and sometimes without any such practice or effort,131 have received a two-fold interpretation in the hands of these philosophers. Some have assumed the existence of a permanent and eternal self or substratum to account for such phenomena, even in the absence of so-called empirical evidence (empiricism as understood by the Buddha?) to support the belief in a permanent and eternal self. These are the eternalists (*sassata-vadin*). Others have rejected not only the belief in a permanent and eternal serf but also the veridical, though sporadic, memories as mere hallucinations of deranged minds. These are the annihilationists (*ucchedavadin*). These two views have prevailed in the world until the present day, just as similar views regarding the relationship between cause and effect have survived. The reasons for the prevalence of such views were explained briefly by the Buddha in the Kaccayanagott-sutta when he spoke of inclinations (upaya), grasping (*upadana*), and involvement (*abhinivesa*) on the part of the human beings. More detailed explanations were given in other discourses. Whether there were to be veridical memories of past lives or not, the Buddha recognized that human beings were prone to ask three types of questions regarding existence:132

1. "Did I exist in the past or not?" (*Ahosim nu kho ati tam addhanam, na nu kho ahosim ati tam addhanam*). This, according to the Buddha, pertains to the prior end of existence (*pubbanta*), and is prompted by a desire to know the first beginnig of things, including oneself.

2. "Will I exist in the future or not?" (*Bhavissami nu kho anagatam addhanam*, *na nu kho bhavissami anagatam addhanam*). This pertains to the future and is prompted by a desire to know the final end of things, including one's own destiny.

3. "Do I exist in the present, or do I not exist in the present?" (*Aham nu kho asmi, no nu kho asmi*). This pertains to the status of one's present existence.

The Buddha felt that such speculations led to a wide variety of views (*ditthi*), sixty-two as specified in the *Brahmajala-suttanta*,133 of which permanent existence (*atthita*, *sassata-ditthi*) and annihilation (*n'atthita*, *uccheda-aitthi*) are foremost. Even though the Buddha recognized veridical memories of past existences, yet because of the absence of any empirical evidence to support the hypothesis of a permanent and eternal substratum as well as the difficulties involved in predicting future events with absolute certainty, the Buddha questioned his disciples as to whether it is appropriate for them to "brood over the past" (*pubbantam patidhaveyyatha*) or long for the future (*aparantam adhaeyyatha*) or be unnecessarily skeptical about the present (*paccuppannam addhanam ajjhattam kathamkathi assatha*). He advised them that instead, with the resources available, they should try to understand things as they have come to be (*yathabhutam*) and work out freedom from suffering. Getting enamoured of any view, whether it is appropriate or inappropriate, would lead to further bondage and suffering. Hence the Buddha's advice to his disciples: "Without grasping on to a view, being endowed with proper perception and morality, and having restrained one's greed for pleasures of sense, one avoids a future birth."134

It is significant to note that Nagarjuna's final chapter on "Views" (*ditthi*) deals with the same issues. He begins his chapter with a reference to the three epistemological inquiries of human beings in relation to the past, present, and future, which give rise to various views on the nature of man and the universe. The first three verses present in identical terms the Buddha's own explanation of these views as stated in the passage from the *Majjbima-nikaya* quoted above. These inquiries and graspings (*upadana*) are then understood as the reason for the variety of views discussed in verses 4-28. As the notes on these verses would indicate, these twenty-five verses deal with the variety of views discussed by the Buddha in the *Brahmajala-suttanta*, thus providing undeniable evidence that Nagarjuna had access to most of the discourses of the Buddha that came to be preserved in the Nikayas and the Agamas, and that he was merely restating the original message of the Buddha rather than providing a philosophical justification of a sectarian view.

The variety of wrong views (*miccha-ditthi*) was rejected by the Buddha primarily on pragmatic grounds, that is, because they do not lead to freedom and happiness.135 They neither bring about worldly fruits (*attha*) nor they contribute to the ultimate fruit (*paramattha*), i.e., freedom and happiness. Instead they lead to dogmatism, conflict, and suffering. The "middle position" as the right view (*samma-dittht*), whether it be dependent arising (*paticcsamuppada*) or non-substantiality (*anatta*), or as Nagarjuna puts it, "absence of self-nature" (*nihsvabhava*) or emptiness (*sunyata*), leads to worldly fruits as well as the

ultimate fruit. However, if that right view were to become another dogma, it would certainly contribute to conflict and suffering, thereby losing its pragmatic value. In other words, a right view is one for which there cannot be grasping, for if one were to grasp it it would turn out to be a closed view not an open one. This explains why Nagarjuna concludes his chapter on "views," and along with it his famous treatise, with a salutation to the Buddha, a salutation that clearly reflects his knowledge of the Buddha's attitude towards dogmative views (as embodied in the verse quoted previously):

I reverently bow to Gautama who, out of compassion, has taught the true doctrine for the relinquishing of all views. (XXVII.30)

BATCHELOR (POETIC "TRANSLATION")

Opinion

"I was here before."
"No, you weren't."
"This will last forever."-
Horizons of the past.

"I will survive."
"No, you won't."
'This will end."
Horizons of the future.

What happened in the past
Is not happening any more.
If you think what happened then became you now,
What you grasp would be something else.
What are you but what you grasp?

If you are what you grasp,
You would not be here.
For what you grasp comes and goes;
It cannot be you.
How can the grasped be the grasper?

You're not different from what happened then.
If you were, you would not need a past.

You could survive without having to die.
The past would be severed, revocable.
Others would experience your acts.
Without a past you would be
Either manufactured or uncaused.

"I was here before."
"No, you weren't."
"I was and I wasn't."
"You neither were nor weren't."
"I will survive"
"No, you won't."

Opinions are absurd.

If the gods were us,
We would be eternal;
For the gods are unborn in eternity.
Were we other than them,
We would be ephemeral.
Were we different,
We would never connect.

If I were half a god and half a man,
I would be eternal and ephemeral.
What can be ephemeral
Without eternity?

If this ends, what world would follow?
If this never ends,
What world would follow?
Like the flame of a lamp
The flow of matter and mind
Neither ends nor never ends.

This would end
If mind and matter failed to flow
From the dying of their past;
It would never end
If mind and matter failed to flow
From a past that never died.

If half this ended and half did not,
I would both end and never end,
Leaving half the grasper
Dead and half undead,
Half the grasped destroyed,
Half undestroyed.

Everything is empty –
In whom? About what?
Do opinions erupt?

For Gautama.
In whose embrace
Dharma was shown
And opinions vanished.

27. Views

The word translated here as "views" *(drishtis)* is a technical term in Nagarjuna's vocabulary: it does not mean any metaphysical view, but only a view connected in some way to seeing *self-existence (svabhava)* in oneself or in the phenomena of the world at large. (See Key Terms.)

Verse 3 brings up the philosophical problem of personal identity over time and change. Nagarjuna is denying that the "I" in the past can he the same as the "I" of today since real (self-existent) things do not change, but any rebirth or other development requires change and thus no real entities are involved (vv. 4-5). There is also no self apart from the acquisition involved in new rebirths, and it is not identical to that process either; but, on the other hand, this "self" does not *not* exist conventionally (vv. 7-8). The "I" that existed in past is not *identical* to the "I" of today (v. 3), but the past "I" and the present "I" are not completely *different* either (vv. 9-10); this again entails that no real entities are involved. So, there is no identity or absolute difference, but the self is still a phenomenal reality. The four options of "exist," "not exist," "both exist and not exist," and "neither exist nor not exist" are again shown to not apply (v. 13). A variation involving being human or being divine follows (vv. 15-20).

Verses 17 and 25 rely on the idea that contradictory properties cannot exist together: permanent and impermanent, limited and unlimited. But something could be limited in one physical dimension and unlimited in another - e.g., a line one inch high (and thus finite in one dimension) and infinitely long (and thus infinite in another). Those Hindu traditions that accept a permanent, transcendental self would argue that a person is finite in his or her life on earth but something infinite continues after death. Nagarjuna may be responding to that.

Verse 18 reads: "If 'It is both permanent and impermanent' were established, then it is accepted that 'It is neither permanent nor impermanent' could be established." Verse 28 has the same form. Apparently, this is something like the existence of a *bhava* being necessary to establish an *abhava*: only if we could establish that something existed with *both* features could we establish its absence, i.e., something not merely without one of the features but without *either* one - the opposite of having both features. Verse 20 relates to the four options: if there is nothing permanent, then there is nothing to contrast with it (i.e., nothing impermanent), and therefore there could not be anything both permanent and impermanent (since neither exists) or anything existing apart from those two features; thus, we cannot think in those terms at all to describe what is real.

"Loka" in verses 2 and 21 is usually translated "world," but it encompasses all there is in this realm - hence, the "cosmos" may be a better translation. If the cosmos is either finite or infinite, obviously there cannot be any more - no other world - to "all there is." If we found some limit, either it is the true end of the cosmos (and so there is nothing beyond it), or there is something beyond it and so that is not the true limit - either way, there is nothing beyond any true limit to the cosmos. The analogy for rebirth in the next verse of a flame burning is normally used to show that there is no finite entity involved in the process of rebirth but only a series of changes.

The last verse on "views *(drishtis)"* presents the problem of whether Nagarjuna himself had any views. This will be discussed in the Essay. Also notice that the last verse stating that the Buddha taught a doctrine contradicts verse 25.17 which says that the Buddha did not teach any doctrine. We might say that this verse is from the conventional point of view, but it would be odd for Nagarjuna to end his treatise on that note. If, as some have suggested, the last two chapters were added later, then verse 25.17 would be Nagarjuna's final word on the subject.

27

An Examination of Views

In the sutras, the Buddha taught:

The ones who correctly see dependent arising just as it is will not adhere to views of an earlier, present, or future period of time.

IT IS POSSIBLE to have one of several different views about the self and the universe it inhabits. For example, one could believe that the self and the universe always existed in the past, or that at some point in the past they did not exist. One could believe that the self and the universe will always exist in the future, or that at some point they will not. Finally, one could hold the view that they exist now or that they do not.

Those who see dependent arising just as it is, however, do not adhere to any such views. They know that the true nature of the self and the universe transcends all such notions of existence and nonexistence. They know that when things appear either to exist or not to exist, it is only mere appearance manifesting due to the coming together of causes and conditions, with no inherent nature to it at all. This is the meaning of the Buddha's teaching quoted above, and in this chapter Nagarjuna proves the validity of this teaching with logical reasoning.

Here again, there are different explanations given for why this chapter was written. The commentary entitled Completely Fearless and Buddhapalita both assert that followers of the Shravakayana asked Nagarjuna, "Please explain how it is that all the different permutations of views are impossible from the perspective of the Shravakayana sutras as well," and that Nagarjuna composed this chapter to fulfill their request.

Bhavaviveka writes that there were those who argued, "The five aggregates exist because they are the support in which views abide," and that in response Nagarjuna wrote this chapter to explain how it is that views themselves do not exist.

Finally, Chandrakirti states that Nagarjuna composed this chapter in answer to those who asked him, "The Buddha taught, 'The ones who see dependent arising will not believe in an earlier or later period of time.' What are these earlier and later periods of time, and how can one come to abandon the belief in their existence?"

By analyzing the true nature of the self and the universe, we can gain certainty that none of the views that hold them to be permanent, impermanent, finite, or infinite are accurate. As Nagarjuna teaches in the twenty-second verse:

The continuum of the aggregates
Is like the continuum of a butter lamp.
Therefore, to say that the aggregates are finite is illogical
And to say that they are infinite is illogical.

Individuals are composed of the five aggregates. The continuum of these five aggregates that spans the course of countless past and future lifetimes is like the continuum of a butter lamp, and therefore it cannot be described as finite or infinite. Like a butter lamp, the past aggregates have all ceased to exist, which eliminates the possibility that anything within them has infinite duration. That the future moments of the aggregates unfailingly occur, however, eliminates the possibility that they are finite, that they have some time limit to their existence.

Here it is also helpful to consider one's aggregates that appear in a dream: They are neither finite nor infinite, because they are just dependently arisen mere appearances.

The twenty-ninth and final verse of the chapter is a summary of all the refutations of the various views that have been explained up to this point:

Since all things are empty,
Why would anyone, anywhere, at any time,
View things as being permanent or anything else?

The commentary to this verse reads, "The genuine nature of reality transcends all conceptual fabrications. Therefore, all inner and outer things are dependently arisen and empty, like reflections, so why would anyone who knew this, anywhere, at any time, view things as being permanent or anything else? They would not, because they would know everything to be emptiness."

There is no valid reason for the views that things are permanent, impermanent, finite, or infinite to arise, because all phenomena are dependently arisen, like reflections, and because the nature of reality is the emptiness that transcends conceptual fabrications. Phenomena are of this nature of emptiness because their mode of appearance is that they are dependently arisen mere appearances.

This chapter has demonstrated that these inferior views of permanence and so forth do not truly exist, and therefore the one who holds them does not really exist either. The explanation that some views are inferior can be made only in dependence upon the notion that there are some better views to have—therefore, this is only a presentation from the perspective of apparent reality and the concepts that fabricate it. In the true nature of reality, there are neither good views nor bad ones. Samsara and nirvana are of the nature of perfect equality; they are undifferentiable. As Nagarjuna taught in chapter 25, "An Examination of Nirvana" (verses 19-20):

Samsara is not the slightest bit different from nirvana.
Nirvana is not the slightest bit different from samsara.

The true nature of nirvana
Is the true nature of samsara,
And between these two
There is not even the tiniest, subtlest difference.

Therefore, there are really no inferior views, nor anyone who has inferior views. These things simply do not exist in genuine reality. Nagarjuna described the way that things are imagined and designated in apparent reality in this verse from chapter 7, “An Examination of the Composite” (verse 34):

Like a dream, like an illusion,
Like a city of gandharvas,
That’s how birth and that’s how living,
That’s how dying are taught to be.

Concluding Homage

Holding us in your incredible wisdom and love,
You taught us the genuine Dharma
To help us abandon all views.
I prostrate before you, Gautama.

THIS IS THE HOMAGE with which Nagarjuna concludes the text, offering his prostration to the Buddha in gratitude for the Buddha’s tremendous kindness.

The commentary to this verse reads, “The Protector of Beings taught the genuine Dharma not out of any desire for wealth, respect, or renown, but rather out of his completely pure wisdom and great compassion imbued with nonreferential love (fn The Buddha’s nonreferential love is the perfect union of love and emptiness. It is completely free of the concepts of subject, object, and action; at the same time it spontaneously performs limitless benefit for sentient beings without any notion of some being more worthy of affection than others. It is the very essence of the Buddha’s enlightened mind, and manifesting it within oneself is the ultimate fruition of the Mahayana path.). Holding the beings who wander in samsara close to his heart, he taught the genuine Dharma in order to help them abandon all inferior views that cling to mistaken extremes. His teachings are the cause of attaining the omniscient wisdom that abides neither in the extreme of existence nor in that of peace. . . . They are prajnaparamita, the teachings on dependent arising that completely dissolve all conceptual fabrications. You who taught in this way are the sage called Gautama, the unequaled Lion of the Shakyas. Recalling your great kindness, and with deep respect, I prostrate before you.” Thus ends *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*.

KĀRIKĀ STUDY

Chapter XXVII

दृष्टिपरीक्षा सप्तविंशतितमं प्रकरणम्।

中論觀邪見品第二十七(三十一偈)

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dṛṣṭiparīkṣā saptaviṁśatitamaṁ prakaraṇam ||

zhōng lùn guān xié jiàn pǐn dì èr shí qī (sān shí yī jié;jì)

| lta ba brtag pa źes bya ba ste rab tu byed pa ñi śu bdun pa'o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
CHAPTER XXVII - Examination of (Dogmatic) Views

JONES (Skt):
27. Views

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Examination of Views

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
27. Analysis of Views

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
[27] Examination of Doctrines (30 verses)

SPRUNG (Skt):
[omitted]

STRENG (Skt):
Section 27 - An Analysis of the Views About Reality (dogmas) In 30 verses

ROBINSON (Skt):
27. views (about whether the self is eternal or non-eternal).

BOCKING (Ch):
Chapter 27 Contemplation of Wrong Views 30 verses

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Investigation of Views

DOCTOR (Tb):
CHAPTER XXVII - Analysis of Views

GARFIELD (Tb):
Chapter XXVII: Examination of Views

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
CHAPTER XXVII - Examination of Views

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Examination of Views

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
CHAPTER 27: AN EXAMINATION OF VIEWS

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/0 We have heard your refutation of wrong views in the Mahayana Dharma. Now we wish to hear you refute wrong views in the Sravaka-Dharma .

CANDRAKĪRTI COMMENTARY

[Chapter omitted by Sprung]

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Chapter Twenty Seven Examination of Views (Drsti-pariksa)

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

Chapter XXVII Examination of Views

The final chapter of the text, like the previous chapter, applies the results of the climactic analyses of Chapters XXIV and XXV. It is noteworthy that all of the classic erroneous views discussed and refuted in this chapter are refuted earlier in the text. Indeed, Chapters XXIV and XXV are immediately preceded by a chapter on errors. One might therefore think that this chapter is otiose, or at least misplaced. For here Nāgārjuna considers a range of alternative metaphysical views conflicting with Nāgārjuna's analysis in terms of emptiness. These views are all well - known and considered false by all schools of Buddhist philosophy. So why does Nāgārjuna return to them as a collection at the close of the text?

The previous chapter demonstrated the positive payoff of the analysis of emptiness and its relation to conventional phenomena. Nāgārjuna there argued that one can exploit emptiness and an understanding of emptiness in following the path to nirvāṇa. But the pursuit of the path entails the elimination of error. In fact, it can negatively be characterized, as we saw in the nirvāṇa chapter, specifically as the elimination· of error. So it is important for Nāgārjuna to show that the analysis developed in XXIV and XXV can not only promote positive movement toward nirvāṇa but also the eradication of the erroneous views that bind us to saṃsāra. That is the burden of this final chapter. It is also important dialectically to see that Nāgārjuna is demonstrating that the root of all of these erroneous views is the view that the self or the external world exist inherently. If, he will argue, one grants either of those claims, one is stuck with one or more of these errors. It therefore follows that any view, including any view of any other Buddhist school including: all of the schools that castigate these views on independent grounds - that posits inherently existent entities will succumb to these errors. Nāgārjuna thus concludes by arguing not only that his position is capable of leading to nirvāṇa, but that it is the only position capable of doing so.

Kārikā XXVII.1

अभूमतीतमध्वानं नाभूमिति च दृष्टयः।
यास्ताः शाश्वतलोकाद्याः पूर्वान्तं समुपाश्रिताः॥१॥

LVP 571,10-11 - LVP 594,7-8
[abhūm atītam adhvānaṃ nābhūvam iti dṛṣṭayaḥ |]
yās tāḥ śāśvatalokādyāḥ pūrvāntaṃ samupāśritāḥ ||1||
[Note: "abhūm atītam adhvānaṃ nābhūvam iti dṛṣṭayaḥ"
- line missing in ms.; reconstructed from the Tibetan by LVP.]

我於過去世 為有為是無
世間常等見 皆依過去世

T1564: vol 30, pg 36c24
wǒ yū;yú;wū guò qù shì wéi yǒu wéi shì wú
shì jiān cháng děng jiàn jiē yī guò qù shì

།འདས་དུས་བྱུང་མ་བྱུང་ཞེས་དང་།།འཇིག་རྟེན་རྟག་པ་ལ་སོགས་པར།
།ལྟ་བ་གང་ཡིན་དེ་དག་ནི།།སྔོན་གྱི་མཐའ་ལ་བརྟེན་པ་ཡིན།།

Tg tsa 17b6 - Tg tsa 18b7
|| 'das dus byuṅ ma byuṅ źes daṅ | | 'jig rten rtag pa la sogs par |
| lta ba gaṅ yin de dag ni | | mṅon gyi mtha' la brten pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 1 - Whether or not I existed in the past or whether this world is constant, etc., are (questions) all based upon the views of an anterior state of things.

JONES (Skt):
[1] The views "I existed in the past," "I did not exist in the past," "The cosmos is eternal," and so forth all depend on whether there was a past limit.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever views asserting an eternal world, etc. based upon [the perception]: "Did I exist or not exist in the past?" are associated with the prior end [of existence].

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Wherever views state "I neither existed nor did not exist in the past,"
they are supported by those about the past, an eternal world, etc.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
1. Sect Future, Sect Past, Sect Secular,
And Sect Reality, are the doctrines.
They are Belief in Eternity, Belief in the Creator,
Belief in Prophets, and Believers in some kinds of doctrines.

STRENG (Skt):
1. Those views relating to the limits of the past reality are: "The world is eternal," etc., And "I have existed in the past," "I have not existed in the past," etc.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v1 Views of self existing or not existing
In the past,
And of the world being permanent, etc.
All depend on the past.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Those views such as "I occurred or did not occur in the past," the world is permanent, are dependent on the extreme of before.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Past existence and nonexistence,
A permanent world, and so forth—
These views depend
On the extreme of the past. [XXVII.1]

GARFIELD (Tb):
1. The views "in the past I was" or "I was not"
And the view that the world is permanent, etc.,
All of these views
Depend on a prior limit.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
1. The views "in the past I was" or "I was not"
And the view that the world is permanent, etc.,:
All of these views
Depend on a prior limit.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Views such as "I existed in the past" or "I did not exist in the past," or "the world is permanent," etc., all depend on the assumption of a prior limit.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The first line of the verse has been reconstructed by Poussin on the basis of the Tibetan translation. In the Parileyyaka-sutta (S 3.94-99; Tsa 2.25 [Taisho 2.13c-14a]), the Buddha maintained that views such as "The self and the world are eternal" (sassato atta ca loko ca) are metaphysical because they are dispositional answers (sankharo so) to querries about the past such as: "Did I exist in the past or not?" As such, they are not based entirely upon empirical facts. Indeed, they are attempts to go back to the prior end of existence (pubbanta). While the Buddha recognized them as futile attempts, mostly because of the limitations of human knowledge and understanding (see Chapter XI), he was not unwilling to accept whatever evidence available through veridical memories (sadi, pubbenivasanussati). On the basis of such evidence, he characterized the past existences as impermanent (anicca), dispositionally determined (sankhata), and dependently arisen (paticcasamuppanna), and not as permanent (nicca), immutable (dhuva), and eternal (sassata). Nagarjuna's explanation of the metaphysical views of eternalism (sasvata), etc. is, therefore, a vivid representation of the Buddha's attitude regarding such views.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

1. Nāgārjuna summarizes the diagnosis he will offer of the error underlying these metaphysical views: Any view that the self is permanent or nonexistent or that the world is permanent or nonexistent presupposes that one can think coherently about the beginning of time or of identity. For to think of things as permanent requires us either to posit a beginning of time from which they existed or to assert that time has no beginning. To think that there was a past at which the self did not exist or in which the world did not exist presupposes that we can mark a point at which the world came into existence or at which there is a definite separation between a world without the self and a world with the self - an initial moment of personal existence.

Kārikā XXVII.2

दृष्टयो न भविष्यामि किमन्योऽनागतेऽध्वनि।
भविष्यामीति चान्ताद्या अपरान्तं समाश्रिताः॥२॥

dṛṣṭayo na bhaviṣyāmi kim anyo ’nāgate ’dhvani |
bhaviṣyāmīti cāntādyā aparāntaṃ samāśritāḥ ||2||

我於未來世 為作為不作
有邊等諸見 皆依未來世

wǒ yū;yú;wū wèi lái shì wéi zuò wéi bù zuò
yǒu biān děng zhū jiàn jiē yī wèi lái shì

|མ་འོངས་དུས་གཞན་འབྱུང་འགྱུར་དང་། །མི་འབྱུང་འཇིག་རྟེན་མཐའ་སོགས་པར། །
|ལྟ་བ་གང་ཡིན་དེ་དག་ནི། །ཕྱི་མའི་མཐའ་ལ་བརྟེན་པ་ཡིན། །

| ma ’oṅs dus gźan ’byuṅ ’gyur daṅ | | mi ’byuṅ ’jig rten mtha’ sogs par |
| lta (7)ba gaṅ yin de dag ni | | phyi ma’i mtha’ la brten pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 2 - Whether or not I will exist in the future or whether the (world has) limits, etc., are (questions) all based upon the views of a posterior state of things.

JONES (Skt):
[2] The views “Shall I not exist in the future?”, “Shall I become another person in the future?”, “The cosmos has an end,” and so forth, all depend on whether there is a future end to the cosmos.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Whatever views asserting the finite, etc. based upon [the perception]: “Would I not exist in the future or would I become someone else?” are associated with the posterior end [of existence].

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Wherever views otherwise state “I will exist or I will not exist in the future,”
they are supported by the future, an end, etc.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
2. I think that miscellaneous kinds of Doctrines will not be maintained.
How is it impossible for another Doctrine will not come as the decisive criteria at all?
The reason, why I say so, comes from the fact that the age of disappearance has begun too fast already,
And it is absolutely decisive for us to live in the Western End of the World exactly.

STRENG (Skt):
2. The assertion: "I will not become something different in a future time," "I will become something different," and the alternative, etc., are relating to an end in the future.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v2 Whether self will continue or not continue
In the future,
And views about boundedness, etc.,
All depend on the future.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Those views such as I will occur or not occur at another time in the future, the world has an end, are dependent on the extreme of Later.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The views of existence and nonexistence
At a different time in the future,
Of the end of the world, and so forth
Depend on the extreme of the future. [XXVII.2]

GARFIELD (Tb):
2. The view "in the future I will become other" or "I will not do so"
And that the world is limited, etc.,
All of these views
Depend on a final limit.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
2. The view “in the future I will exist at another time” or “I will not do so”
And that the world is limited, etc.:
All of these views
Depend on a posterior limit.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Views such as “I will exist in the future,” or “I will be someone else in the future,” or “the world has limits,” etc., all depend on the assumption of a final limit.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/2 Whether self existed in the past, or did not exist, or both existed and did not exist, or neither existed nor did not exist - these are termed 'views of permanence depending on the past'. Whether self will continue, or will not continue, or will both continue and not continue, or will neither continue nor not continue in the future - these are termed 'views of boundedness or non-boundedness which depend on the future'. On what grounds are such wrong views as these termed 'wrong views'? This we shall now explain.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The assumptions that the self and the world are finite or infinite are similarly based upon one's dispositions (sankhara). Those who are enamored with life as it is would insist upon the world being infinite. Those who are averse to life would advocate finiteness, insisting that there will be no way in which life could continue. This is tantamount to annihilation (uccheda-ditthi,S 3.99; Tsa 2.25 [Taisho 2.14b]).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

2. Similarly, such views require us to be able to talk coherently about the end of the world or the end of personal existence - to be able to speak of a future time where nothing exists, or of the end of time, or of an unlimited future existence or of a definite moment when the self ceases to exist, whereas before it had existed. Nāgārjuna begins by discussing arguments regarding the self, opening with a set of arguments for the permanence of the self:

Kārikā XXVII.3

अभूमतीतमध्वानमित्येतन्नोपपद्यते।
यो हि जन्मसु पूर्वेषु स एव न भवत्ययम्॥३॥

abhūm atītam adhvānam ity etan nopapadyate |
yo hi janmasu pūrveṣu sa eva na bhavaty ayam ||3||

過去世有我 是事不可得
過去世中我 不作今世我

guò qù shì yǒu wǒ shì shì bù kě dé;děi;de
guò qù shì zhōng wǒ bù zuò jīn shì wǒ

།འདས་པའི་དུས་ན་བྱུང་གྱུར་ཞེས།།བྱ་བ་དེ་ནི་མི་འཐད་དོ།
།སྔོན་ཚེ་རྣམས་སུ་གང་བྱུང་བ།།དེ་ཉིད་འདི་ནི་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| ’das pa’i dus na byuṅ gyur źes | | bya ba de ni mi ’thad do |
| sṅon tshe rnams su gaṅ byuṅ ba | | de ñid ’di ni ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 3 - It is not possible to assert (categorically) that I existed in the past. For, what had been the case in the anterior state of existence is not the same now.

JONES (Skt):
[3] The view “I existed in the past” is not appropriate, for whoever was in the past is in fact not identical to the one in the present.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The view that I existed in the past is not appropriate, for whosoever was in the previous birth, he, indeed, is not identical with his person.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The statement “I existed previously” is not said.
Indeed, this one does not exist in previous births.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
3. Sect Future, Sect Past, and Sect Secular,
Are not manifesting themselves actually in front of us already.
Sect Future, Sect Past, and Sect Secular, should be manifesting themselves already in front of us.
But actually speaking, such kinds of examples, which should appear exactly, have never appear itself yet at all.

STRENG (Skt):
3. The assertion: "I existed in a past time (1)" does not obtain, Since this present being is not (i.e. "ii" is not the same as "i") that one who was in a former birth.

ROBINSON (Skt):
That I existed in past time is not a fact, because he who was in former live;, is not identical with this one.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v3 'In the past, I existed'.
This is untenable.
The self which existed in the past
Does not constitute the present self.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is incorrect to say: “I occurred at a time in the past.” Whatever occurred before, that is not this.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Saying “It existed in the past”
Indeed, does not make sense.
Whatever occurred in past lives
Is not the same as this. [XXVII.3]

GARFIELD (Tb):
3. To say "I was in the past"
Is not tenable.
What existed in the past
Is not identical to this one.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
3. To say “I was in the past”
Is not tenable.
What existed in the past
Is not identical to this one.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
It is not appropriate to assert “I existed in the past,” since whosoever existed in the past is not identical to this one now.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This statement may appear, at first sight, to mean a denial of rebirth or survival; that is, it would be inappropriate to say: "I existed in the past." However, if one is careful in observing the emphasis in the second line, namely, sa eva ("he himself'), it will become apparent that what is denied is not any relationship between two lives, but the identity of the two persons in different existences. Therefore, the statement, "I existed in the past," becomes metaphysical only if an absolute identity is posited, which indeed was the proclivity of the metaphysician.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

3. It is a fundamental confusion to think that because I can say that I or someone or something else existed in the past that there is a real identity between what exists now and what existed then. Identity requires that we share all properties, and that is trivially impossible over time. But any assertion of the permanence of the self requires that we be able to identity it over time.

Kārikā XXVII.4

स एवात्मेति तु भवेदुपादानं विशिष्यते।
उपादानविनिर्मुक्त आत्मा ते कतमः पुनः॥४॥

sa evātmeti tu bhaved upādānaṃ viśiṣyate |
upādānavinirmukta ātmā te katamaḥ punaḥ ||4||

若謂我即是 而身有異相
若當離於身 何處別有我

ruò wèi wǒ jí shì ér shēn yǒu yì xiàng;xiāng
ruò dāng lí yū;yú;wū shēn hé chǔ bié yǒu wǒ

|དེ་ཉིད་བདག་ཏུ་འགྱུར་སྙམ་ན། །ཉེ་བར་ལེན་པ་ཐ་དད་འགྱུར།
|ཉེ་བར་ལེན་པ་མ་གཏོགས་པར། །ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་བདག་ནི་གང་ཞིག་ཡིན།།

| de ñid bdag tu 'gyur sñam na | | ñe bar len pa tha dad 'gyur |
| ñe bar lan (18a1)pa ma gtogs par | | khyod kyi bdag ni gaṅ źig yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 4 - (Granted that) the self-same atman exists (i.e., in the previous and present states) but with a different perceptual clinging (upadana) what kind of an atman is it, then, which is separated from clinging?

JONES (Skt):
[4] If that past self is in fact the present self, then the acquisition of a new rebirth would be distinct from the self. But what self can there be that is free of such acquisition?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it were to occur [to someone]: "He, indeed, is the self," then grasping is identified. Separated from grasping, what constitute your self?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
He is defined as "the self" but would be grasping.
Again, how is your self exempt from grasping?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
4. If it is actually true that the so-called Soul really exists in this world,
It might be much more possible for our sense perception to find the so-called Soul exactly.
In Sect Future, they are relying upon Soul, which can have ability to flee from our sense limitation.
But it is perfectly unclear for such a kind of Soul to exist actually, or not.

STRENG (Skt):
4. Were he in a previous birth, that individual self (atma) which he acquires in coming into existence would be different. Moreover, what kind of individual self is there without acquisition (upadana)?

BOCKING (Ch):
27v4 If you say that the self is the same,
Only the body has different characteristics;
Apart from within a body
Where could another self be found?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If you think that that became me, then that-which-is-clung-to would be something else. What is your self apart from that-which-is-clung-to?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If you think, "That itself is the self
The appropriated would be different.
Apart from appropriated,
What is this self of yours? [XXVII.4]

GARFIELD (Tb):
4. According to you, this self is that,
But the appropriator is different.
If it is not the appropriator,
What is your self?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
4. If, according to you, that is the self,
Then the appropriator would be different.
Apart from the appropriator,
What is your self?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If the one who existed before is this one now, although with a different mind and body, what kind of self exists separate from grasping?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The Buddha explained self-consciousness expressed in such statements as "I am ... "(asmiti) as dependent upon (upadaya) the five aggregates. It is like seeing one's own reflection on a clean mirror or a pan of clear water. In this case, one cannot perceive one's reflection unless there is a personality that is reflected, and these constitute the five aggregates (S 3.105). However, converting this self-consciousness to a cogito, a "self' that is permanent and eternal, is also the work of upadana, meaning "grasping or clinging." It is sometimes described as thirsting or craving (tanha) and this could be for becoming (bhava) or other-becoming (vibhava)(S 3.26; Tsa 3.23 [Taisho 2.19a].

Thus, neither self-consciousness nor a "self' would be found independently (upadana-vinirmukta). However, the attainment of freedom, described as anupada vimukti, does not imply the negation of self-consciousness, but only of the "thirsting for becoming," (bhava-tanha), which otherwise could lead to the belief in a permanent and eternal self that is independent of the aggregates, and idea already rejected by Nagarjuna in Chapter XXV.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

4. Suppose that one through introspection or analysis takes some putative entity - one’s body, one’s stream of consciousness, or whatever - to be one’s self. There will be in that act a duality of appropriator and the thing appropriated as the self or as part of the self. But at different times what is appropriated and what is appropriating differ. Both subject and object will necessarily be distinct. But in order to posit the appropriating entity as the self, it must retain its identity over time. The sequence of appropriators hence fails to provide a candidate for a continuing self. But, Nāgārjuna points out, there is no other candidate.

Kārikā XXVII.5

उपादानविनिर्मुक्तो नास्त्यात्मेति कृते सति।
स्यादुपादानमेवात्मा नास्ति चात्मेति वः पुनः॥५॥

upādānavinirmukto nāsty ātmeti kṛte sati |
syād upādānam evātmā nāsti cātmeti vaḥ punaḥ ||5||

離有無身我 是事為已成
若謂身即我 若都無有我

lí yǒu wú shēn wǒ shì shì wéi yǐ chéng
ruò wèi shēn jí wǒ ruò dōu;dū wú yǒu wǒ

།ཉེ་བར་ལེན་པ་མ་གཏོགས་པའི།།བདག་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན་བྱས་པའི་ཚེ།
།ཉེ་བར་ལེན་ཉིད་བདག་ཡིན་ན།།ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་བདག་ནི་མེད་པ་ཡིན།།

| ñe bar len pa ma gtogs pa'i | | bdag yod ma yin byas pa'i tshe |
| ñe bar len ñid bdag yin na | | khyod kyi bdag ni med pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 5 - If atman cannot exist separated from perceptual clinging, then the clinging itself will be the atman. But, again, according to your assertion, there could be no atman.

JONES (Skt):
[5] If it is maintained that there is no self free of the acquisition of new rebirths, then such acquisition would itself be the self, and again it would follow for you that there is no self.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
When it is assumed that there is no self separated from grasping, grasping itself would be the self. Yet this is tantamount to saying that there is no self.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
When a deed is done, "the self does not exist exempt from grasping."
The self would be grasping and again, for us, that "self' does not exist.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
5. Perception does never escape.
But what is called the Individual Soul creates the harvest.
Perhaps Perception might be the same as the Individual Soul.
And so what is called the Individual Soul does never exist at all.

STRENG (Skt):
5. If it were held that: "There is no individual self without the acquisition," Then the individual self would be only the acquisition or it is not an individual self at all.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v5 No self exists apart from a body
This fact has already been established
If you say that the body is the self,
If it is all, then there is no self.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Were you [to say] that there exists no self apart from that-which-is-clung-to, if the very that-which-is-clung-to were the self, your self would be non-existent.

DOCTOR (Tb):
When it is held that there is no self
Apart from the appropriated,
If the appropriated is itself the self,
Your self does not exist. [XXVII.5]

GARFIELD (Tb):
5. Having shown that there is no self
Other than the appropriator,
The appropriator should be the self.
But it is not your self.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
5. Having shown that there is no self
Apart from the appropriated,
If the appropriated is the self,
Your self does not exist.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If a self cannot exist separate from grasping, then grasping itself is the self. But this is to say there is no self.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The assertion that there is no self apart from grasping (upadana-vinirmukta) provides the identity theorists with the opportunity of identifying the self with grasping. Thus, when the Buddha, having denied a self, maintained that consciousness (vinnana) provides a link between two lives (D 3.105; Chang 12.2 [Taisho 1.767a]), one of his disciplies, Sati, immediately assumed that "this consciousness itself transmigrates, and not another" (idam eva vinnanam sandhavati samsarati anannam,M 1.256; Chung 54.2 [Taisho 1.767a]), thereby attributing an identity theory to the Buddha. The Buddha's immediate response was to deny such identity by asserting that consciousness is dependently arisen (paticcasamuppanna). Then the Buddha proceeded to show how consciousness, when explained in terms of causal dependence, leads to a denial of such identity. This, indeed, is what Nagarjuna endeavors to do in the present context.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

5. The self that is posited by the advocate of a permanent self is a substantial entity capable of grasping, not a mere evanescent activity. So it cannot be the appropriator. Moreover, Nāgārjuna points out in the next verse, the same argument applies, mutatis mutandis, to the act of appropriation. To identify that with the self would be to identify agent and action:

Kārikā XXVII.6

न चोपादानमेवात्मा व्येति तत्समुदेति च।
कथं हि नामोपादानमुपादाता भविष्यति॥६॥

na copādānam evātmā vyeti tat samudeti ca |
kathaṃ hi nāmopādānam upādātā bhaviṣyati ||6||

但身不為我 身相生滅故
云何當以受 而作於受者

dàn shēn bù wéi wǒ shēn xiāng shēng miè gù
yún hé dāng yǐ shòu ér zuò yū;yú;wū shòu zhě

།ཉེ་བར་ལེན་ཉིད་བདག་མ་ཡིན།།དེ་འབྱུང་བ་དང་འཇིག་པ་ཡིན།
།ཉེ་བར་བླང་བ་ཇི་ལྟ་བུར།།ཉེ་བར་ལེན་པོ་ཡིན་པར་འགྱུར།།

| ñe bar len ñid bdag ma yin | | de ’byuṅ ba daṅ ’jig (2)pa yin |
| ñe bar blaṅ ba ji lta bur | | ñe bar len po yin par ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 6 - Again, clinging per se is not atman because it rises and vanishes. Indeed, how could perceptual clinging be identified with a perceiver?

JONES (Skt):
[6] And the self is not just acquisition since acquisition arises and ceases. In addition, how indeed could the acquisition become the one who acquires?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Grasping is not identical with the self, for that [i.e., grasping] ceases and arises. Furthermore, how can grasping be the grasper?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
As grasping rises and falls, it is not the self.
How will grasping be called the grasper?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
6. Perception is perfectly different from the Individual Soul.
Something, which can cover other things, can also have ability to make others wet.
Because everything can get its name and characteristics,
Everything can get its characteristics in future.

STRENG (Skt):
6. The individual self is not the acquisition, since that acquisition appears and disappears. Now really, how will "he who acquires" become "that which is acquired?

ROBINSON (Skt):
The atman is not identical with the appropriation; the latter perishes and arises; how could the appropriated be the appropriation?

BOCKING (Ch):
27v6 The body alone does not constitute the self,
Since the body's characteristics arise and cease
How could receiving possibly
Constitute the receiver?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
The very that-which-is-clung-to is not the self: it arises and passes away. How can that-which-has-been-clung-to be the one that clings?

DOCTOR (Tb):
The appropriated is not the self,
For it arises and disintegrates.
How could the appropriated
Ever be the appropriator? [XXVII.6]

GARFIELD (Tb):
6. Appropriating is not the self.
It arises and ceases.
How can one accept that
Future appropriating is the appropriator?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
6. The appropriated is not the self.
It arises and ceases.
How can the appropriated
Be the appropriator?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Grasping is not the same as the self because grasping arises and ceases. Besides, how can grasping be the same as the one who grasps?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

As was done by the Buddha, (see comments above XXVII. 5), Nagarjuna is rejecting the notion of self (atman) on two grounds. First, it is assumed to be permanent and eternal, whereas grasping that is identified with the self is subject to arising and ceasing. Secondly, the self is also assumed to be the agent behind all human action and, therefore, of grasping. If so, how can it be both action and agent at the same time?

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

6. Two problems are developed in this verse: First of all, the self that the reificationist wishes to posit is a permanent, enduring self. But appropriating is a momentary action that arises and ceases constantly with new objects of appropriation. A sequence of such actions is hardly a substantial subject. This is a straightforwardly Humean argument. Second, Nāgārjuna points out, even if one argued that the self was substantial and also identical to that sequence, there is a further difficulty: The self that is posited by this interlocutor is an enduring subject of these acts ‘of appropriation. But some of the members of the sequence have yet to come into existence. If the self exists entirely at all moments of time, as an unchanging substantial subject, it cannot be identified with a sequence, some of whose members are not presently existent.

Kārikā XXVII.7

अन्यः पुनरुपादानादात्मा नैवोपपद्यते।
गृह्यते ह्यनुपादानो यद्यन्यो न च गृह्यते॥७॥

anyaḥ punar upādānād ātmā naivopapadyate |
gṛhyeta hy anupādāno yady anyo na ca gṛhyate ||7||

若離身有我 是事則不然
無受而有我 而實不可得

ruò lí shēn yǒu wǒ shì shì zé bù rán
wú shòu ér yǒu wǒ ér shí bù kě dé;děi;de

།བདག་ནི་ཉེ་བར་ལེན་པ་ལས།།གཞན་དུ་འཐད་པ་ཉིད་མ་ཡིན།
།གལ་ཏེ་གཞན་ན་ལེན་མེད་པར།།གཟུང་ཡོད་རིགས་ན་གཟུང་དུ་མེད།།

| bdag ni ñe bar len pa las | | gźan du ’thad pa ñid ma yin |
| gal te gźan na len med par | | gzuṅ yod rigs na gzuṅ du med |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 7 - Again, an atman different from perceptual clinging is not possible. If it were different then, surely, a non-perceptual clinging atman would also be a possibility. But that is not the case.

JONES (Skt):
[7] On the other hand, a self arising apart from acquisition is not admissible. If it were other than acquisition, it could be grasped as distinct, but that is not so grasped.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Furthermore, a self that is different from grasping is not appropriate. A person who is without grasping can be observed. However, if he were to be different [from grasping], he could not be observed.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Again, a self different from grasping does not happen.
Indeed, if he would be grasped by nongrasping, he should not be grasped as different.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
7. In another case leaving from the sense perception again,
The Individual Soul does never manifest itself.
Because, being to be understandable, is perfectly different from acceptable,
And so just at the different case, there is a possibility that something can never be acceptable at all.

STRENG (Skt):
7. Moreover, it does not obtain that the individual self is different from the acquisition. If the individual self were different, it would be perceived without the acquisition; but in fact it is not so perceived.

ROBINSON (Skt):
It is not a fact that there is an atman other than the appropriation, for it would then be apprehended without appropriation, and it is not [so] apprehended.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v7 Suppose the self existed apart from the body;
This would not be correct.
Without receiving, there would be a self,
But in reality this is never found.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is not correct for the self to be other than that-which-is-clung-to. If it were other, with nothing to cling to, then something [i.e. the self] fit to be apprehended would not be apprehended.

DOCTOR (Tb):
It does not make sense for there to be
A self that is different from the appropriated.
If different, it could reasonably be perceived
In the absence of appropriation, yet it cannot. [XXVII.7]

GARFIELD (Tb):
7. A self that is different
From the appropriating is not tenable.
If it were different, then in a nonappropriator
There should be appropriation. But there isn't.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
7. It is not tenable that the self is different
From the appropriated.
If it were different, then without the appropriated
It should be observed. But it is not.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Furthermore, a self that is different from grasping is not appropriate. If the self were different, it could be found without grasping, but no such self is ever found.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

For the Buddha as well as for Nagarjuna , the denial of a substantial entity is based upon empirical evidence, namely, the perception of an individuality consisting of the five aggregates. The five aggregates do not appear individually as insulated discrete elements. They appear as a lump (punñja) which retains its individuality (based upon dispositions) and continuity (founded upon consciousness). In such a context he is called a person (hoti satto ti sammuti, S 1.135; Tsa 45.5 [Taisho 2.327a]). In the context of a society, he becomes a social being with relationships to others (as son, father, or daughter, mother, etc.) In the context of moral behavior, he becomes good or bad (see the explanation of empirical serf by William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol. 1,291-293). However, if the self were to be considered different from the perceived individuality, it would turn out to be a rather mysterious entity and hence unknowable through the available means of knowledge. Candrakīrti, who prefers a transcendentalist interpretation of Nagarjuna, gives a negative explanation of what is very clearly a positive statement of Nagarjuna.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

7. This is a very obscure argument as it is put in the text, but given the context we can flesh it out: The target position here is one according to which the existence of appropriation as a real, persistent feature of cyclic existence is used as the basis for attributing personal identity to a continuing self. That self is not supposed to be the appropriating itself, but rather a separate entity independent of it. Nāgārjuna points out, though, that it is, and for the proponent of this view, it must be possible not to appropriate otherwise nirvāṇa would be impossible. So, there will be a nonappropriator who once was an appropriator. But if appropriation is the basis of the identity of the one who has been liberated with the one who was not, that appropriation should persist in the nonappropriator, which would be contradictory.

Kārikā XXVII.8

एवं नान्य उपादानान्न चोपादानमेव सः।
आत्मा नास्त्यनुपादानः नापि नास्त्येष निश्चयः॥८॥

evaṃ nānya upādānān na copādānam eva saḥ |
ātmā nāsty anupādāno nāpi nāsty eṣa niścayaḥ ||8||

今我不離受 亦不即是受
非無受非無 此即決定義

jīn wǒ bù lí shòu yì bù jí shì shòu
fēi wú shòu fēi wú cǐ jí jué dìng yì

།དེ་ལྟར་ལེན་ལས་གཞན་མ་ཡིན།།དེ་ནི་ཉེར་ལེན་ཉིད་ཀྱང་མིན།
།བདག་ནི་ཉེ་བར་ལེན་མེད་མིན།།མེད་པ་ཉིད་དུའང་དེ་མ་ངེས།།

| de ltar len las gźan ma yin | | de ni ñer len ñid (3)kyaṅ min |
| bdag ni ñe bar len med min | | med pa ñid du'aṅ de ma ṅes |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 8 - Consequently, atman cannot be identical or different from perceptual clinging. It cannot be ascertained further that there is non-perceptual clinging or that the atman does not exist.

JONES (Skt):
[8] Thus, it is neither different from acquisition nor identical to it. There is no self apart from acquisition, nor is it true that it does not exist.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Thus, he is neither different from grasping nor identical with it. A self does not exist. Yet, it is not the case that a person who does not grasp does not exist. This much is certain.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Thus he is neither grasping nor different than grasping.
Nongrasping is not the self nor is he detennined in these.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
8. Following this way, even the different method does not leave perception.
It is not always perception is just Reality.
The Individual Soul does never really exist different from perception.
There is nothing other than This Reality at this place, which is the Absolute Reliability in The Universe.

STRENG (Skt):
8. Thus that individual self is not different from nor identical to the acquisition. The individual self is not without acquisition; but there is no certainty that "It does not exist."

BOCKING (Ch):
27v8 Now the self is not separate from receiving
Nor is it the receiving
Neither non-receiving, nor non-existent;
This is its fixed meaning.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
In that way, it is not other than that-which-is-clung-to nor is it that-which-is-clung-to. The self is not not that-which-is-clung-to, nor can it be ascertained as nothing.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Thus, it is not other than appropriation,
Nor are these two the same.
The self does not exist without appropriation,
Yet neither can it be ascertained as nonexistent. [XXVII.8]

GARFIELD (Tb):
8. So it is neither different from the appropriating
Nor identical to the appropriating.
There is no self without appropriation.
But it is not true that it does not exist.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
8. So it is neither different from the appropriated
Nor identical to the appropriated.
There is no self without appropriation.
But it is not ascertained that it does not exist.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Thus, the self is neither identical to nor different from grasping. Though the self is not without grasping, it is not the case that the self does not exist.

27/8 If you say that the self existed in the past, this is not correct, and why? The self of an earlier period does not constitute the present self, since this would involve the error of permanence. If one admits permanence, then the errors will be countless, and why? Take the case of a man who, on account of his good deeds, becomes a god and then afterwards becomes a man again. If the former self were the same as the self of the present time, then the god would be a man. Or again, it is like a man who, because of evil deeds becomes a candala and subsequently becomes a brahman. If the former self were the same as the present self, the candala would be the brahman.

(37a25) It is like, for example, a brahman from Srvasti called Devadatta, travelling to the City of the King's Residence (Rajagrha). He remains known as Devadatta - he has not been changed. by arriving at the City of the King's Residence. If someone who had previously been a god subsequently became a man, then the god would be the same as the man, and a candala would be the same as a brahman, but this is not so, and why? A god is not the same thing as a man, and a candala is not the same thing as a brahman, because this would involve the error of permanence.

(37bl) You may say that the former self is not the present self, in the same way that a man is called a washerman when he is washing clothes, but a reaper when he is reaping. Although there is no difference between the washerman and the reaper, nevertheless the washerman is not the same thing as the reaper, and in the same way, you may say, the self receiving the body of a god is called a god, and the self receiving the body of a man is called a man. The self is not different, only the bodies are different. This however is not correct, and why? Because if it (the individual) is the same, then we ought not to say that the god becomes a man.

(37b6) Is there no difference between the washerman and the reaper, or is there a difference? If there is no difference, then the washerman should be identical with the reaper, and in the same way the former god should be identical with the man, and the candala the same as the brahman, and here again there would be the error of permanence. If there is a difference, then the washerman would not be the same as the reaper, and the god would not be the man, and the self would not be permanent. Being impermanent, it would not have the characteristic of 'self' and therefore it could not be said to be the same.

(37b10) Question: Self is the same; it is merely that we make distinctions, because of reception, between 'being a god', and 'being a man'. 'Reception' means the body of five skandhas. Through our karmic conditioning we distinguish between 'being a god', 'being a man', 'being a candala' and 'being a brahman', but the self in reality is neither god nor man, neither candala nor brahman. Therefore, there are no such errors.

Reply:

(37b14) This is not correct, and why? If the body makes one a god or a man, a candala or a brahman, if it is not the self, then the self must be another distinct self which exists apart from the body Now, sin and merit, birth and death, going and coming, are all of the body and not of the self . Because of our sins we fall into the three evil paths. Because of our meritorious actions we are reborn in the three good paths. If pain and pleasure, anger and bliss, grief, fear, etc. are entirely of the body and not of the self, what use do they have for a self? It would be like a layman being sentenced for his crimes but as a monk he is exempt. With the causes and conditions of the five skandhas continuing to succeed each other and sin and merit not disappearing, there would nevertheless be liberation. If all this were of the body,

(37b21) (37b29) and not the self, what need would there be for a self?

Question: Sin and merit, etc. are based and rely upon the self, because the self is that which knows, but in the body there is nothing which knows. Surely the knower is the self. It initiates the causes and conditions of action, and sins and merits are the things done. We must recognize that there is a doer, and that doer is the self. The body is what the self employs, and is the place in which the self resides. As an analogy, the master of a house constructs his house using straw, wood, mud and plaster. Because it is for his own body, he builds a good or bad house according to what he uses. It is the same with the self, for one acquires an attractive or ugly body according to whether one performs good or bad deeds. The six paths of samsara are all created by the self, and this is why the body of sin and merit entirely depends upon the self. By way of analogy, it is like a house, which belongs only to the master of the house and not to any other person.

Reply: This analogy does not work, and why? The master of the house can build the house because he has shape, is tangible and has strength. Since the self which you are describing has no form and is intangible, it has no creative power, and having no creative power of its own it cannot cause anything else to act. If there were one single dharma in the world which, though without shape, and intangible, nevertheless had the capacity to do things, then we could

accept and believe this and know that there is a doer, but this is not the case.

(37c4) If the self were the doer then there would be no self-created suffering, for if such a thinker could be attached to pleasurable things then he would never forsake them. If the self does not create suffering and yet suffering inexorably arises, then all other things are also produced automatically, and not created by the self.

(37c7) If the one who sees is the self, then since the eye can see forms, the eye should be the self. If the eye sees and yet is not the self, this contradicts what you said before about the seer being the self. If the seer is the self, then the self ought not to be able to hear or smell objects, such as sounds, etc., and why? Because the eye is that which sees; it cannot hear or smell objects, such as sounds. Therefore, to say that that which sees is the self, is not correct.

(37c11) If you say 'it is like a reaper using a sickle to cut grass; it the same way the self is able to do things using the hands, etc this is not correct, and why? Because the reaper exists quite separately from the sickle, but there is no separate doer apart from the various faculties of body and mind.

(37c14) If you say 'although the doer is not the faculties of eye and ear, etc., the doer does exist', then things could be done by a barren woman's child, for if this were so all the faculties If you say 'the left would be entirely without a self. eye sees things but the right eye cognizes them, and we must accept that there is a separate seer' this is not correct, for the right hand performs actions which the left hand is unable to perform, and therefore there is no separate doer. If a separate doer existed, the left hand could also perform actions carried out by the right hand, but in reality it cannot, and therefore no doer exists.

(37c20) Again, if those who hold that a self exists say that when we see another person eating, saliva is produced in our mouth and this is a mark of self, this is not correct, and why? Because this is power of a thought, not power of a self. Moreover, this denies the causes and conditions of self. A man who is in company may be ashamed to salivate, yet the saliva inexorably comes forth and he cannot control it, so we know that there is no self .

(37c24) Again, there is the evil error of the perverted view that when one who has been a father in a previous life becomes a son in the present life, the self of the father and son is one, on'. the bodies are different. It is like moving from one house to another house; since he is a father, a father does not become any different by entering a different house. If there were a self, then these two (father and son) would be one, and thus a great error would be involved.

(37c28) If you say that this error also applies in the case of the continuity of the five skandhas which are without a self, this is not correct, and why? Even though the five skandhas are continuous, they sometimes function, and sometimes do not function. It is like grape juice, which one who holds to the precepts is allowed to drink. He should not drink grape wine, but if it turns and becomes vinegar then he may again drink it. It is the same with the continuity of the five skandhas; they function, and then do not function.

(38a3) If You say that there is only one self from beginning to end this is wrong, for within the continuity of the five skandhas there is no such error, it is me-rely that through the combination of the five skandhas there is a temporary designation of 'self', which however has no fixedness. It is like beams and rafters combining to form a house, where there is no separate house apart from the beams and rafters. In the same way the self exists through the combining of the five skandhas. Since there is in fact no self apart from the five skandhas, 'self' is merely a temporary designation with no fixed reality.

(38a8) You earlier said435 that there is a separate receiver apart from reception, and that we can distinguish the receiver, according to his receiving, as a god or as a man, etc., but that is all wrong. You should know that only receiving exists with no separate receiver. If you say 'a self exists, distinct from receiving' this is incorrect. If there were a self apart from receiving, how could we speak of the characteristics of such a self? Since its characteristics could not be described, there is no self apart from receiving.

(38al 2) If you say that there is no self apart from the body, and that the self is simply the body, this is not correct either, and why? Because the body has the characteristics, of arising and ceasing, and this is not the, case with the self.

Moreover, how can you call something a receiver by virtue of receiving? If you say that there is a receiver who exists distinct from receiving, this is also incorrect. If the five skandhas were non-receptive and yet a receiver existed, this would have to be a separate receiver apart from the five skandhas and the functions of eye, etc., ought to reach it but in fact they do not reach it. Therefore self is not separate from reception, nor is it the same as reception, nor is it non-reception, nor again is it nonexistent. These are definite principles, so you must recognize them.

To say that self existed in the past is not correct, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Candrakīrti, who favored a transcendentalist interpretation of Nagarjuna, makes this a negative statement. The positive reading given above is justified on two grounds. First, in the previous instances, Nagarjuna was clearly asserting an empirically known (= grbyeta) anupadanah (that is, a person freed from grasping), while at the same time rejecting an atman different from both grasp-hag and non-grasping. Secondly, the positive reading is clearly justified by Kumarajiva's Chinese rendering of this verse. As such, what Nagarjuna is denying is both identity (upadanam eva sah) and difference (anya upadanam). A rejection of metaphysical identity and difference does not necessarily mean that Nagarjuna was abandoning an empirical personality. For Nagarjuna, language need not be necessarily metaphysical in character.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

8. Thus we cannot use the existence of appropriation as a basis on which to construct a permanent self. For that self cannot be both permanent and identified with such a constantly changing activity. But still, that is all there is to the self. This raises the possibility that it would be correct to say that the self does not persist at all that there is no existent person in any sense. It is to this view that Nāgārjuna now turns. He first announces the conclusion - that it is not correct to say that the person who now exists did not exist in the past. There is a sense in which that person is identical with his! her past stages:

Kārikā XXVII.9

नाभूमतीतमध्वानमित्येतन्नोपपद्यते।
यो हि जन्मसु पूर्वेषु ततोऽन्यो न भवत्ययम्॥९॥

nābhūm atītam adhvānam ity etan nopapadyate |
yo hi janmasu pūrveṣu tato ’nyo na bhavaty ayam ||9||

過去我不作 是事則不然
過去世中我 異今亦不然

guò qù wǒ bù zuò shì shì zé bù rán
guò qù shì zhōng wǒ yì jīn yì bù rán

།འདས་པའི་དུས་ན་མ་བྱུང་ཞེས།།བྱ་བ་དེ་ཡང་མི་འཐད་དོ།
།སྔོན་ཚེ་རྣམས་སུ་གང་བྱུང་བ།།དེ་ལས་འདི་གཞན་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| ’das pa’i dus na ma byuṅ źes | | bya ba de yaṅ mi ’thad do |
| sṅon tshe rnams su gaṅ byuṅ ba | | de las ’di gźan ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 9 - It is not possible to assert (categorically) that I did not exist in the past. For, this existence is no different from what had been the case in the anterior state of existence.

JONES (Skt):
[9] The view “I did not exist in the past” does not occur to one who is not different from the one who was in the past.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
The statement, “I did not exist in the past,” is not appropriate, for this person is not different from whosoever existed in the previous lives.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The statement “I did not exist previously” is not said,
for this one is not other than whoever was in previous births.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
9. The Party, which hasn’t been born, the Party in the Past, and the Party for the Secular Society,
Those concrete parties haven’t appeared actually yet.
Because they have relied upon birth, and so they have been born just in front of us already.
The different example does never exist as a concrete one at all.

STRENG (Skt):
9. The assertion: "I have not existed in a past time (2)" does not obtain, For that one now living is not different (i.e. "ii" is not different than "i") from that one who was in a former birth.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Neither is it a fact that I did not exist in past time, for this one is not other than the one who existed in former lives.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v9 That self did not operate in the past;
This is incorrect.
That the self in the past was different
From present self, is also incorrect.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
It is incorrect to say: “I did not occur at a time in the past.” Whatever occurred before, this is not other than that.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Saying “It did not exist in the past,”
Does not make sense either.
Whatever was there in past lives
Is not different from this. [XXVII.9]

GARFIELD (Tb):
9. To say "in the past I wasn't"
Would not be tenable.
This person is not different
From whoever existed in previous times.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
9. To say “in the past I did not exist”
Would not be tenable.
This person is not different
From whoever existed in previous lives.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
It is not appropriate to say “I did not exist in the past,” since *this* person is no different than *that* (past) person.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This, then is a clear denial of absolute difference. Just as much as the statement, "I existed in the past," is not appropriate so long as it is interpreted to mean absolute identity, even so the statement, "I did not exist in the past," is not appropriate as long as it is taken to mean absolute difference.

———

Kārikā XXVII.10

यदि ह्ययं भवेदन्यः प्रत्याख्यायापि तं भवेत्।
तथैव च स संतिष्ठेत्तत्र जायेत वामृतः॥१०॥

yadi hy ayaṃ bhaved anyaḥ pratyākhyāyāpi taṃ bhavet |
tathaiva ca sa saṃtiṣṭhet tatra jāyeta cāmṛtaḥ ||10||

若謂有異者 離彼應有今
我住過去世 而今我自生

ruò wèi yǒu yì zhě lí bǐ yīng yǒu jīn
wǒ zhù guò qù shì ér jīn wǒ zì shēng

།གལ་ཏེ་འདི་ནི་གཞན་གྱུར་ན།།དེ་མེད་པར་ཡང་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར།
།དེ་བཞིན་དེ་ནི་གནས་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།།དེར་མ་ཤི་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te ’di ni gźan gyur na | | de med par yaṅ ’byuṅ bar ’gyur | (4)de bźin de ni gnas ’gyur źiṅ | | der ma śi bar skye bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 10 - If this existence were different (from what had been the case in the anterior state) then, surely, it would exist independently or detached. It would subsist thus and so, or arise to persist eternally.

JONES (Skt):
[10] If this one is different from that one, it would arise regardless of that one. In that case, one would remain so and be reborn without first dying.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If this person were to be different [from that person in the previous existence], then he would come to be even forsaking that person. In that case he would remain the same and, in such a context, an immortal would emerge.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If this one would be different [from previous births], he would be enumerated one by one.
If he would endure, then an immortal would be born.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
10. Because the World has always possibility to be different,
There is possibility for the World even to receive serious refusal actually.
The world always has its possibility to become the objects of such kinds of refusal.
And in such a situation being possible to get the Birth, is just the possibility to come back to Death.

STRENG (Skt):
10. If that present person were different, he would exist in exclusion of that former one. Therefore either that former person persists, or he would be born eternal!

BOCKING (Ch):
27v10 If you say that they are different
The one now should exist separately from the other one.
Self abiding in the past,
And the present self being self-produced.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If this were other, it would arise even without that. Likewise, that could remain and be born without dying in that [former life].

DOCTOR (Tb):
If it were something other,
It could arise even in its absence.
Likewise, that would remain
And there could be birth without death there. [XXVII.10]

GARFIELD (Tb):
10. If this one were different,
Then if that one did not exist, I would still exist.
If this were so,
Without death, one would be born.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
10. If this one were different,
Then I would exist even without it having existed.
If this were so,
Without that one dying, this one would be born.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If *this* person were different from *that* person, then *this* would arise separate from *that.* If this were the case, then *that* person would never die, or *this* person would live eternally.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Absolute difference implies absolute identity. Nagarjuna has already shown that "other-nature" (para-bhava) means the self-nature (svabhava) of another (XV.3, svabhavah parabhavasya parabhavo hi kathyate). Absolute identity as well as absolute difference, this involves complete independence, and as such it would constitute immortality. Nothing is to be achieved. Kumarajiva renders the phrase tatra jayeta vamrtah as "The atman will be self-caused."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

10. If there were a genuine difference in entity between the current stage and the previous stages ‘of a person, they would be independent. If that were so, the current stage - since if it depends on anything, depends on the previous stage - would come into existence depending on nothing. That is, it would be possible for none of my previous stages to exist, but for me, as the person with my past, to pop into existence ex nihilo. Or, on the other hand, it would be possible, if the current stage and previous stages were completely different and independent, for the current stage to come into existence without the previous stage having passed out of existence, which is absurd.

Kārikā XXVII.11

उच्छेदः कर्मणां नाशस्तथान्यकृतकर्मणाम्।
अन्येन परिभोगः स्यादेवमादि प्रसज्यते॥११॥

[ucchedaḥ karmaṇāṃ nāśaḥ kṛtam anyena karma ca |
pratisaṃvedayed anya evam ādi prasajyate ||11||]
[Note: Verse missing in ms.; reconstructed from the Tibetan by LVP.]

如是則斷滅 失於業果報
彼作而此受 有如是等過

rú shì zé duàn miè shī yū;yú;wū yè guǒ bào
bǐ zuò ér cǐ shòu yǒu rú shì děng guò

།ཆད་དང་ལས་རྣམས་ཆུད་ཟ་དང་། །གཞན་གྱིས་བྱས་པའི་ལས་རྣམས་ནི།
།གཞན་གྱིས་སོ་སོར་མྱོང་བ་དང་། །དེ་ལ་སོགས་པར་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།།

| chad daṅ las rnams chud za daṅ | | gźan gyis byas pa'i las rnams ni |
| gźan gyis so sor myoṅ ba daṅ | | de la sogs par thal bar 'gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 11 - If that were the case then such erroneous notions as interruption, destruction of actions, actions done by someone but enjoyed by another, etc., would accordingly follow.

JONES (Skt):
[11] If so, there would be the annihilation of actions and the destruction of effects. Another would experience the actions done by oneself, and so forth.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
[If that were the case,] there would be annihilation and destruction of actions. This implies that the fruit of action performed by one will be experienced by another.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
So, the fruit of actions by one would be enjoyed by another.
Thus annihilation and destruction of actions follows.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
11. Relying upon Action, to cut something is not always a benevolence at all.
Even though what is done is perfectly different from what has been planned,
Their attitude for them to do the same work again, can be recognized as if it were different work.
Similarly the first fruits are usually attached so much.

STRENG (Skt):
11. – note 4 : Verse 11 is not available in the Sanskrit test, but it is known from the Tibetan translation

BOCKING (Ch):
27v11 This would be severance, cessation,
Loss of action and reward.
That one acting, this one receiving
And other such errors as these.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Cut off and actions wasted, acts committed by others would be experienced by someone else. Such would be the consequences.

DOCTOR (Tb):
There would be annihilation, action would be wasted,
The action done by one
Would be experienced by another—
These and other flaws would ensue. [XXVII.11]

GARFIELD (Tb):
11. Annihilation and the exhaustion of action would follow;
Different agents' actions
Would be experienced by each other.
That and other such things would follow.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
11. The cutting of the continuum and the nullification of karma would follow;
The karma accumulated by some
Would be experienced by others.
This and other such absurdities would follow.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If this were the case then interrupted or destroyed actions would follow, and the consequences of actions committed by one person would be experienced by another.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The verse has been reconstructed by Poussin on the basis of the Tibetan translation. How a metaphysical conception of difference would lead not only to a denial of survival but also a repudiation of moral responsibility has been already discussed by Nagarjuna (Chapter XII). There it was shown that he depended upon a discourse of the Buddha to explain this problem. The present is simply a restatement of that argument.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

11. We could make no sense of the actual empirical fact of conventional personal identity; action done at one moment would be done by one person, and that person would experience none of its consequences. To the extent that we could make sense of them at all, the phenomena of memory and experiencing the consequences of one's previous actions would become interpersonal affairs, which seems at least a bit odd.

Kārikā XXVII.12

नाप्यभूत्वा समुद्भूतो दोषो ह्यत्र प्रसज्यते।
कृतको वा भवेदात्मा संभूतो वाप्यहेतुकः॥१२॥

nāpy abhūtvā samudbhūto doṣo hy atra prasajyate |
kṛtako vā bhaved ātmā saṃbhūto vāpy ahetukaḥ ||12||

先無而今有 此中亦有過
我則是作法 亦為是無因

xiān wú ér jīn yǒu cǐ zhōng yì yǒu guò
wǒ zé shì zuò fǎ yì wéi shì wú yīn

།མ་བྱུང་བ་ལས་འབྱུང་མིན་ཏེ།།འདི་ལ་སྐྱོན་དུ་ཐལ་བར་འགྱུར།
།བདག་ནི་བྱས་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དང་།།འབྱུང་བའམ་རྒྱུ་མེད་ཅན་དུ་འགྱུར།།

| ma byuṅ ba las ’byuṅ min te | | ’di la skyon du thal bar (5)’gyur |
| bdag ni byas par ’gyur ba daṅ | | ’byuṅ ba’am rgyu med can du ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 12 - Again, it is not the case that present existence arose without an anterior existence for, otherwise, an error will result. This would mean that atman will either have a creative nature or be something without a cause.

JONES (Skt):
[12] Nor, having been nonexistent does something come to be. Here an error arises: either the self was something made, or having arisen it arose uncaused.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Yet, in that context, the error of assuming an emergent without prior existence does not follow. Either the self would be caused or, if it has occurred, it would be without a cause.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
No one, having not existed previously, is born. Otherwise an eoor follows here
either the self would be produced spontaneously or the one born is uncaused.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
12. God Visnu is never vigor of Dynamic Beauty.
Because at that place some kinds of Vice attach to the place.
What has been done also, has existed as the Individual Soul.
The co-existence of such miscellaneous things and phenomena, are not always recognizable at all.

STRENG (Skt):
12. There is no existing thing which is "that which has not existed prior." Therefore, the error logically follows that Either the individual self is "what is produced" or it originates without a cause.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v12 Previously nonexistent, now existent;
There are errors in this as well.
Self would create dharmas
And this would be causelessness.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
There is no occurence from what has not occured. In that case faults would follow: the self would be something made or even though it occured it would be uncaused.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Something previously nonexistent does not arise
Because flaws would follow:
The self would be a product
And its arising would lack a cause. [XXVII.12]

GARFIELD (Tb):
12. Nothing comes to exist from something that did not exist.
From this errors would arise.
The self would be produced
Or, existing, would be without a cause

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
12. Nothing comes to exist from something that did not exist.
Absurd consequences would follow from this:
The self would be produced,
Would arise anew, or be without a cause.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Yet it does not follow that *this* (present) existence arose without *that* (past) existence. Either the self would be caused, or if it has occurred, it would be without a cause.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/12 'The self in the past does not constitute the present self' is not correct, and why? The past self is not different from the present self. If the present self were different from the past self then the present self ought to exist quite separately from that other self. Also, the past self, would abide in that (body), and this body would have to produce itself anew, and if so, this would fall into the extreme of severance losing all karmic action and reward.

Also that person would sin, while this person would receive the retribution, and there would be countless other such errors Also this self, having been inexistent previously would now be existent, and this would also be an error. Self would create dharmas, and this would be causelessness. Therefore it is not correct to say that the past self does not constitute the present self.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The concept of self (atman) was posited in order to account for the continuity in the human personality which could also explain moral responsibility. However, the denial of an eternal self led to the opposite view that there is no continuity, but annihilation (uccheda). The denial of an eternal self and the consequent assertion of annihilation do not imply (na prasajyate) the further metaphysical view that something that did not exist before comes to be (abhutva sambhoti), which came to be interpreted as the abhutva bhava utpada in the Sautrantika school (see Kalupahana, Causality, p.-254). In other words, there is no implication here that existence is completely independent, without any prior connections. As such, if there were to be any self (atman), it would be "made" (krtaka, see karaka at XXVI. 10). If it is not, and if it were assumed to arise, the self would be causeless.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

12. Moreover, since the past, as per the discussion of time in Chapter XIX and the discussion of dependent origination in VII, does not actually exist, we would have the consequence of an existent (the present person) being brought into existence dependent upon something that no longer exists (some past person). Anything that exists has some past.

Kārikā XXVII.13

एवं दृष्टिरतीते या नाभूमहमभूमहम्।
उभयं नोभयं चेति नैषा समुपपद्यते॥१३॥

evaṃ dṛṣtir atīte yā nābhūm aham abhūm aham |
ubhayaṃ nobhayaṃ ceti naiṣā samupapadyate ||13||

如過去世中 有我無我見
若共若不共 是事皆不然

rú guò qù shì zhōng yǒu wǒ wú wǒ jiàn
ruò gòng ruò bù gòng shì shì jiē bù rán

།དེ་ལྟར་བདག་བྱུང་བདག་མ་བྱུང་།།གཉིས་ཀ་གཉིས་ཀ་མ་ཡིན་པར།
།འདས་ལ་ལྟ་བ་གང་ཡིན་པ།།དེ་དག་འཐད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| de ltar bdag byuṅ bdag ma byuṅ | | gñis ka gñis ka ma yin par |
| 'das la lta ba gaṅ yin pa | | de dag 'thad pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 13 - Consequently, the (false) views that I existed in the anterior state, I did not exist, both or neither, are all impossible.

JONES (Skt):
[13] Therefore, the view "I existed in the past," or the view "I did not exist," or both, or neither is admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Thus, whatever view there is such as, "I existed in the past; I did not exist; both or neither," is not really appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Thus the view "I existed in the past, I did not exist,
or both or neither," does not arise.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
13. Relying upon those methods, people, who look at the process, are,
Sometimes people, who believe in Visnu, who they are, and sometimes people, who do not believe in Visnu, who they are. .
It is said that a person, who believe in Visnu, and a person, who does not believe in Visnu, are the same.
The fact, which exists here, as it is, does never come only for passing.

STRENG (Skt):
13. Thus the view concerning the past which asserts "I have existed (1)," or "I have not existed (2)," Both "existed and not existed" (3) or neither (4): this does not obtain at all.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v13 Just like the views of self
As existent, or nonexistent in the past;
Whether it is both, or neither
These are all incorrect.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Therefore, "the self occured, did not occur, both or neither:" all those views of the past are invalid.

DOCTOR (Tb):
Thus, that the self existed, did not exist,
That it both existed and did not,
Or neither existed nor did not exist—
These views on the past are untenable. [XXVII.13]

GARFIELD (Tb):
13. So, the views "I existed," "I didn't exist,"
Both or neither,
In the past
Are untenable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
13. So, the views "I existed," "I didn't exist,"
Both, or neither
In the past
Are untenable.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Thus, views such as, "I existed in the past," "I did not exist," both or neither, are not appropriate.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/13 Just as in seeking f or self in the past, there are the wrong views that it existed or did not exist, so too the views that it both exists and does not exist, or neither does nor does not exist are also wrong views. These are all wrong, for the same reasons as the errors previously discussed.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The views (drsti) referred to here are the metaphysical views relating to identity. difference, both or neither. It should be noted that the reasons for rejecting these views are empirical. Empiricism, in the Buddha as well as in Nagarjuna, allows for the recognition of continuity without having to posit absolute identity or absolute difference.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

13. While Nāgārjuna has not explicitly considered the "both" or "neither" horns of the tetralemma, we have seen enough of these arguments by this stage to know how to complete the picture. Since neither a continually existent nor a discontinuous self makes sense, both can't make sense since that would just be double non" sense. And the "neither" option is not open since there is no third alternative. Nāgārjuna now points out that the argument applies straightforwardly to the future existence of the self:

Kārikā XXVII.14

अध्वन्यनागते किं नु भविष्यामीति दर्शनम्।
न भविष्यामि चेत्येतदतीतेनाध्वना समम्॥१४॥

adhvany anāgate kiṃ nu bhaviṣyāmīti darśanam |
na bhaviṣyāmi cety etad atītenādhvanā samam ||14||

我於未來世 為作為不作
如是之見者 皆同過去世

wǒ yū;yú;wū wèi lái shì wéi zuò wéi bù zuò
rú shì zhī jiàn zhě jiē tóng;tòng guò qù shì

|མ་འོངས་དུས་གཞན་འབྱུང་འགྱུར་དང་||འབྱུང་བར་མི་འགྱུར་ཞེས་བྱ་བར|
|ལྟ་བ་གང་ཡིན་དེ་དག་ནི||འདས་པའི་དུས་དང་མཚུངས་པ་ཡིན||

| ma ’oṅs dus gźan ’byuṅ ’gyur daṅ | | ’byuṅ bar (6)mi ’gyur źes bya bar |
| lta ba gaṅ yin de dag ni | | ’das pa’i dus daṅ mtshuṅs pa yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 14 - The view, whether or not I will exist in the posterior state, is the same (i.e., analogous) as that discussed with respect to the anterior state of existence.

JONES (Skt):
[14] The view "I shall exist in the future" or "I shall not exist in the future" is the same as the views associated with the past.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
A view such as "Will I exist in the future?" or "Will I not exist in the future?" is comparable to those associated with the past.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
The statement "I will exist in the future, I will not exist in the future,"
is that doctrine not the same as the statement about this in the past?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
14. Relying upon traveling, what is it impossible for us to arrive at?
What will exist clearly, might exist already for us to look at Dharma.
Not have I arrived at yet, is the Real Existence of Ourselves at these Real Situations in the Concrete Facts at this place.
What have gone, or what has gone a little ahead, are all the same in their situations.

STRENG (Skt):
14. The views: "I will become something in a future time (1')," Or "I will not become (2') something," etc. (3') (4'), should be considered like those views of the past.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v14 Whether the self will operate
Or not operate, in the future;
Such views as these
Are the same as those of the past.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
"I will occur at another time in the future," "I will not occur:" all those views are similar to [those of] the past.

DOCTOR (Tb):
The views that "it will exist
At a different time in the future,"
Or that, "it will not exist in the future"
Are equal to those about the past. [XXVII.14]

GARFIELD (Tb):
14. To say "in the future I will exist or
Will not exist,"
Such a view is like
Those involving the past.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
14. To say "in the future I will exist" or
"I will not exist":
Such views are like
Those involving the past.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Views such as "I will exist in the future," "I will not exist in the future," etc., are like those associated with the past.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

24/14 The four Propositions about whether the self will or will not operate in the future are like the errors relating to the past and should be discussed along with them. Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here again, the views that are inappropriate are those involving identity and difference, not any explanation of what the future could be based upon one's experience of the process of dependent arising.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

14. Another possible avenue to a permanent self is the classical Indian view (not unlike certain Judeo-Christian views) that the human soul partakes of the divine, and that its divinity is what engenders its eternality:

Kārikā XXVII.15

स देवः स मनुष्यश्चेदेवं भवति शाश्वतम्।
अनुत्पन्नश्च देवः स्याज्जायते न हि शाश्वतम्॥१५॥

sa devaḥ sa manuṣyaś ced evaṃ bhavati śāśvatam |
anutpannaś ca devaḥ syāj jāyate na hi śāśvatam ||15||

若天即是人 則墮於常邊
天則為無生 常法不生故

ruò tiān jí shì rén zé duò yū;yú;wū cháng biān
tiān zé wéi wú shēng cháng fǎ bù shēng gù

།གལ་ཏེ་ལྷ་དེ་མི་དེ་ན།།དེ་ལྟ་ན་ནི་རྟག་པར་འགྱུར།
།ལྷ་ནི་མ་སྐྱེས་ཉིད་འགྱུར་ཏེ།།རྟག་ལ་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་ཕྱིར་རོ།།

| gal te lha de mi de na | | de lta na ni rtag par ’gyur |
| lha ni ma skyes ñid ’gyur te | | rtag la skye ba med phyir ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 15 - If the heavenly being is a human being, then there will be constancy. For, the heavenly being will be unborn and, moreover, a constant being will not arise.

JONES (Skt):
[15] If a man is a reborn god, there would be permanence (i.e., something unchanging and eternal). The god is unborn, for the permanent is not born.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is thought that a human is the same as a divine being, then there would be the eternal. If the divine being were to be non-arisen, then he would not be born and that would constitute the eternal.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If divine is the same as human, then pennanence exists.
A god is not born, would not be born, indeed, he is eternal.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
15. When Reality is God, and Reality are Human Beings,
Similarly Eternity exists like this.
What hasn’t been born, might be God.
Because the Eternity is never be born at all.

STRENG (Skt):
15. If "This is a man, this is a god" obtains, then eternity (i) exists, For god is un-produced, and certainly something eternal would not be born.

ROBINSON (Skt):
If the man is Identical with the god, he is thus eternal; the god would be un- arisen, since the eternal is not born.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v15 If the god were the same as the man
This would fall into the extreme of permanence
The god would be non-arising
Because permanent dharmas do not a-rise.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the divine were human, then there would be something permanent. The divine is utterly unborn, because there is no birth in permanence.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the god were the human,
It would be permanent.
The god would be unborn,
For the permanent has no birth. [XXVII.15]

GARFIELD (Tb):
15. If a human were a god,
On such a view there would be permanence.
The god would be unborn.
For any permanent thing is unborn.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
15. If a god were a human,
Then it would be permanent.
The god would be unborn.
For that which is permanent is unborn.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If a human were a god, there would be permanence since a god is unborn.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/15 If you hold that the god is the same as the man, this is permanence, for unless the god is reborn as a man, how can you call him a man? Since permanent dharmas do not arise, permanence is not correct either.

Further:

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Kārikā XXVII.16

देवादन्यो मनुष्यश्चेदशाश्वतमतो भवेत्।
देवादन्यो मनुष्यश्चेत्संततिर्नोपपद्यते॥१६॥

devād anyo manuṣyaś ced aśāśvatam ato bhavet |
devād anyo manuṣyaś cet saṃtatir nopapadyate ||16||

若天異於人 是即為無常
若天異人者 是則無相續

ruò tiān yì yū;yú;wū rén shì jí wéi wú cháng
ruò tiān yì rén zhě shì zé wú xiàng;xiāng xù

།གལ་ཏེ་ལྷ་ལས་མི་གཞན་ན།།དེ་ལྟ་ན་ནི་མི་རྟག་འགྱུར།
།གལ་ཏེ་ལྷ་མི་གཞན་ཡིན་ན།།རྒྱུད་ནི་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།།

| gal te lha las mi gźan na | | de lta na ni mi rtag ’gyur |
| gal te (7)lha mi gźan yin na | | rgyud ni ’thad par mi ’gyur ro |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 16 - If a human being is different from the heavenly being, then there will be non-constancy. If that is so, there cannot possibly be a continuity (of beings).

JONES (Skt):
[16] If the man is different from the god, then there would be impermanence. If the man is different from the god, a continuity is not admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is thought that a human is the same as a divine being, then there would be the non-eternal. If it is thought that a human is different from a divine being, then continuity is not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If a human is different from a god, then interruptedness exists.
If a human is different from a god, then uninterruptedness does not happen.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
16. When what are different from God, might be Human Beings,
What is not Eternal One, can exist as Idea.
When what is different from God, might belong to human beings,
The Relation between Cause and Effect, does never appear at all.

STRENG (Skt):
16. If man is different from god, there would exist something non-eternal (ii). If man is different from god, then a continuity does not obtain. (i.e. they cannot be different)

ROBINSON (Skt):
If the man is different from the god, then he is non-eternal; if the man is different from the god, then succession is not a fact.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v16 If the god is different from the man
This is impermanence
If the god differs from the man
There is no continuity between them.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the human were other than the divine, then there would be no permanence. If the divine and the human were different, there could be no continuity [between them].

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the god were different from the human,
It would be impermanent.
If god and human were different,
There could not reasonably be one stream of being. [XXVII.16]

GARFIELD (Tb):
16. If a human were different from a god,
On such a view there would be impermanence.
If the human were different from the god,
A continuum would not be tenable.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
16. If a human were different from a god,
Then it would be impermanent.
If the human and the god were different,
Their continuum would not be tenable.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If a human were other than a god, there would be impermanence, and a continuum (of existence) is not possible.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/16 If the god is different from the man, then this constitutes impermanence, and impermanence implies the errors of severance and cessation, etc. It is like the errors previously discussed; if the god and the man are different, then there is no continuity between them, whereas if there is continuity then they cannot be said to be different.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

In addition to attainment of the ultimate goal of life (paramartha) which is freedom (nirvana), the Buddha allowed for the possibility of a human being reaching up to the status of a deity or a divine being (deva), assumed to be one who is materially as well as morally superior to ordinary human beings, yet not coming anywhere close to the ultimate goal (see S 1.228; Tsa 40.1 [Taisho 2.290b]). However, the Buddha refused to recognize these divine beings as eternal and permanent entities (D 1.20, see Chang 14.1 (Taisho 1.90b-c]). The recognition of the above possibility could prompt the substantialists to discover "some-thing" (kimcit) in the human being that is identical with the divine. Nagarjuna is here rejecting any such identity, as well as any alternate theory that could make divinity uncaused.

Furthermore, the emphasis on absolute difference would not only lead to the belief in non-eternality (asasvata), which would imply a denial of continuity in or the process of becoming (samtati), the latter being distinguished from the metaphysical process referred to earlier (see XVII.7-10).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

16. But if the human is at all different from a god, as is eminently plausible (i.e., nobody seriously argues that humans simply *are* gods), then the permanence of the divine in no way entails the permanence of the person. There is another possibility, however, namely that the person is part divine and part mortal:

Kārikā XXVII.17

दिव्यो यद्येकदेशः स्यादेकदेशश्च मानुषः।
अशाश्वतं शाश्वतं च भवेतच्च न युज्यते॥१७॥

divyo yady ekadeśaḥ syād ekadeśaś ca mānuṣaḥ |
aśāśvataṃ śāśvataṃ ca bhavet tac ca na yujyate ||17||

若半天半人 則墮於二邊
常及於無常 是事則不然

ruò bàn tiān bàn rén zé duò yū;yú;wū èr biān
cháng jí yū;yú;wū wú cháng shì shì zé bù rán

།གལ་ཏེ་ཕྱོགས་གཅིག་ལྷ་ཡིན་ལ།།ཕྱོགས་གཅིག་མི་ནི་ཡིན་གྱུར་ན།
།རྟག་དང་མི་རྟག་འགྱུར་བ་ཡིན།།དེ་ཡང་རིགས་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

| gal te phyogs gcig lha yin la | | phyogs gcig mi ni yin gyur na |
| rtag daṅ mi rtag ’gyur ba yin | | de yaṅ rigs pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 17 - If one portion is heavenly and another human, then there will be both constancy and non-constancy. But that is not possible.

JONES (Skt):
[17] If one part were divine and one part human, there would be permanence and impermanence together, and this is not admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If a part were to be divine and the other part to be human, then there would be both the eternal and the non-eternal, and this too would not be proper.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If one part would be human and the other part divine,
there would be eternal and noneternal, and that does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
17. When the Paradise perhaps were only one place,
It might be one Part of the Total, and it might belong to Human Beings.
There were both the Two Possibilities, that the One is just that the Paradise is not Eternal, and the Other one is the Paradise is just Eternal.
And those two Ideas can never attached to any Fact at all.

STRENG (Skt):
17. If one part were divine and another part human, (i.e. a man with an eternal soul) Then there would be something non-eternal together with that which is eternal (iii); but that is not possible.

ROBINSON (Skt):
If one part is divine and one part is human, then he is both eternal and non- eternal, and that is not valid.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v17 If half-god and half-man,
Then you fall into both extremes
Of permanence and impermanence
And this is not correct.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If one part were divine and one part were human, there would be both permanence and no permanence. But that is not reasonable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If one part were divine
And another part human,
It would be permanent and impermanent.
That is not reasonable either. [XXVII.17]

GARFIELD (Tb):
17. If one part were divine and
One part were human,
It would be both permanent and impermanent.
That would be irrational.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
17. If he were partly divine
And partly human,
He would be both permanent and impermanent.
That would make no sense.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If one part were human and one part divine, there would be both permanence and impermanence, but this is not proper.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/17 Suppose that half of the body of the living being were divine , and half of the body were human. If this were so, then it would be both permanent and impermanent the god-half being permanent and the human half impermanent, but this would not be right, and why? Because of the error of one body having -two characteristics.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The combination of two metaphysical views does not provide for a non-metaphysical one. The Buddha's rejection of such views is clearly stated in the Brahmajala-suttanta (D 1.21). Nagarjuna is simply reiterating that position here.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

17. The problem with this option is that either we say that the person is both permanent and impermanent, which is contradictory, or that the divine part is permanent and the mortal part impermanent. But if the person is a mereological sum of these two parts, then since there is an impermanent part, the whole is constantly changing and the inherent identity of the person from moment to moment is still lost.

Kārikā XXVII.18

अशाश्वतं शाश्वतं च प्रसिद्धमुभयं यदि।
सिद्धे न शाश्वतं कामं नैवाशाश्वतमित्यपि॥१८॥

aśāśvataṃ śāśvataṃ ca prasiddham ubhayaṃ yadi |
siddhe na śāśvataṃ kāmaṃ naivāśāśvatam ity api ||18||

若常及無常 是二俱成者
如是則應成 非常非無常

ruò cháng jí wú cháng shì èr jù;jū chéng zhě
rú shì zé yīng chéng fēi cháng fēi wú cháng

།གལ་ཏེ་རྟག་དང་མི་རྟག་པ།།གཉིས་ཀ་གྲུབ་པར་གྱུར་ན་ནི།
།རྟག་པ་མ་ཡིན་མི་རྟག་མིན།།འགྲུབ་པར་འགྱུར་བར་འདོད་ལ་རག།

| gal te rtag daṅ mi rtag pa | | gñis ga grub par gyur na ni |
| rtag pa ma yin mi rtag min | | (18b1)’grub par ’gyur bar ’dod la rag |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 18 - If both constancy and non-constancy could be established (concomitantly), then similarly neither constancy nor non-constancy could also be established at will.

JONES (Skt):
[18] If the claim “It is both permanent and impermanent” were established, then it is accepted that the claim “It is neither permanent nor impermanent” could be established.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Supposing both the eternal and the non-eternal are established, then it is not possible to either assert the eternal or the non-eternal.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If both eternal and noneternal are established,
“neither eternal nor noneternal” are intentionally both proved also.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
18. Both Something Not Eternal, and Something Eternal,
When miscellaneous occurrences manifest themselves in the two kinds together,
What have been accomplished are not as eternal joy,
But they are never what are eternal at all.

STRENG (Skt):
18. If something both non-eternal and eternal were proved, Then, no doubt, something "neither eternal nor non-eternal (iv)" is proved.

ROBINSON (Skt):
If “both eternal and non-eternal” were established, then “neither eternal nor non-eternal” might be established too.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v18 If both permanence and impermanence
Are established together,
In this case 'neither permanence
Nor impermanence' should be established.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If both permanence and impermanence were established, you would have to assert non-permanence and non-impermance as established.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If permanent and impermanent
Were both established,
It would be possible to establish
The neither permanent nor impermanent. [XXIII.18]

GARFIELD (Tb):
18. If it could be established that
It is both permanent and impermanent,
Then it could be established
That it is neither permanent nor impermanent.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
18. If it could be established that
He is both permanent and impermanent,
Then one would have to say that
He is neither permanent nor impermanent.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If both permanence and impermanence could be established, then something neither permanent nor impermanent could be established.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/18 If both permanence and impermanence can be established together it naturally follows that 'neither permanence nor impermanence' can be established,, but since permanence and impermanence are opposites, permanence and impermanence are never in fact established together, and therefore 'neither permanence nor impermanence is not established either.

Moreover, it is also incorrect to say that birth and death (samsara) has no beginning, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna is here refusing to accept a conclusion which is only a part of a conjunctive proposition.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

18. That is, the “both” and “neither” horns of the tetralemma stand or fall together. Permanence and impermanence are mutually exclusive and exhaustive alternatives. They can neither be co-present, . nor co-absent. (The option of asserting them in different voices conventional and ultimate - is not open to the opponent here, who is trying to defend an inherently existent self.)

Kārikā XXVII.19

कुतश्चिदागतः कश्चित्किंचिद्नच्छेत्पुनः क्वचित्।
यदि तस्मादनादिस्तु संसारः स्यान्न चास्ति सः॥१९॥

kutaścid āgataḥ kaścit kiṃcid gacchet punaḥ kva cit |
yadi tasmād anādis tu saṃsāraḥ syān na cāsti saḥ ||19||

法若定有來 及定有去者
生死則無始 而實無此事

fǎ ruò dìng yǒu lái jí dìng yǒu qù zhě
shēng sǐ zé wú shǐ ér shí wú cǐ shì

|གལ་ཏེ་གང་ཞིག་གང་ནས་གར||འོང་ཞིང་གོང་དུའང་འགྲོ་འགྱུར་ན|
|དེ་ཕྱིར་འཁོར་བ་ཐོག་མེད་པར||འགྱུར་ན་དེ་ནི་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན||

| gal te gaṅ źig gaṅ nas gar | | ’oṅ źiṅ goṅ du’aṅ ’gro ’gyur na |
| de phyir ’khor ba thog med par | | ’gyur na de ni yod ma yin |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 19 - If anyone conies from somewhere and again goes (or returns) to somewhere else, then satpsara will indeed be beginningless. However, such a situation does not exist.

JONES (Skt):
[19] If someone carne from someplace and then could go somewhere, cyclic existence would be beginningless. But that is not the case.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If anyone has come from somewhere and again were to go somewhere, then the life-process would be beginningless. Such a situation does not exist.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If anyone who has come from somewhere would go anywhere else,
then *saTJIsiira* would be beginningless, but that does not exist.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
19. From where have I come for whom, or for what?
Where shall I go for whom, or for what?
From what kind of purpose shall I work from the endlessly past age until now?
The so-called Aimless Wandering might be as if it were nothing to exist as Reality.

STRENG (Skt):
19. If someone, having come from somewhere, in some way goes somewhere again, Then there would be existence-in-flux with no beginning; but this is not the case.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v19 If dharmas had a fixed 'coming'
And a fixed 'going'
Birth and death would have no beginning
But in reality there are no such things.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If something came from somewhere and went somewhere, then samsara would be without beginning. That is not the case.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If something came somewhere from somewhere
And then would go somewhere else,
Then cyclic existence would have no beginning,
Yet that is not the case. [XXVII.19]

GARFIELD (Tb):
19. If anyone had come from anyplace
And were then to go someplace,
It would follow that cyclic existence was beginningless.
This is not the case.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
19. If anyone had come from anyplace
And were then to go anyplace,
It would follow that cyclic existence was beginningless.
This is not the case.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If anyone comes from somewhere and again goes somewhere, then samsara is beginningless. But this cannot be.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/19 If dharmas were fixed and there were places from which they came and to which they went, then birth and death would have no beginning but if we investigate these dharmas with prajna-insight we cannot find anywhere whence they came, or anywhere w1lither they go. It is therefore not correct to say that birth and death have no beginning. Moreover:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The metaphysics rejected in Chapter II is referred to in the first line. The second line emphasizes the ideas expressed in Chapter XI.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

19. As Nāgārjuna has argued, if there were to be true identity through time, so that the person who exists now is literally identical to one who existed in the past and to one who will exist in the future, this would have to be in virtue of sharing some essence. But this would make real change impossible. The person, once in saṃsāra, would be there essentially - the state of being in saṃsāra would hence be inherently existent. (Here Nāgārjuna is using the term "beginningless" as a synonym for "inherently existent.") If saṃsāra were inherently existent, it would have to be eternal and unchanging. Nirvāṇa would be unattainable, and saṃsāra would be utterly hopeless. But given the possibility of transformation, it follows that such literal identity must be abandoned.

Kārikā XXVII.20

नास्ति चेच्छाश्वतः कश्चित् को भविष्यत्यशाश्वतः।
शाश्वतोऽशाश्वतश्चापि द्वाभ्यामाभ्यां तिरस्कृतः॥२०॥

nāsti cec chāśvataḥ kaścit ko bhaviṣyaty aśāśvataḥ |
śāśvato 'śāśvataś cāpi dvābhyām ābhyāṃ tiraskṛtaḥ ||20||

今若無有常 云何有無常
亦常亦無常 非常非無常

jīn ruò wú yǒu cháng yún hé yǒu wú cháng
yì cháng yì wú cháng fēi cháng fēi wú cháng

།གལ་ཏེ་རྟག་པ་འགའ་མེད་ན། །མི་རྟག་གང་ཞིག་ཡིན་པར་འགྱུར། །རྟག་པ་དང་ནི་མི་རྟག་དང་། །དེ་གཉིས་བསལ་བར་གྱུར་པའོ།།

| gal te rtag pa 'ga' med na | | mi rtag gaṅ źig yin par 'gyur |
| rtag pa daṅ ni mi rtag daṅ | | de gñis (2)bsal bar gyur pa'o |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 20 - If there is nothing constant, (by the same token) how could there be anything non-constant, both constant and non-constant, and separated from both constant and non-constant?

JONES (Skt):
[20] If there is nothing permanent, what could be impermanent? Or both "permanent and impermanent"? Or apart from either permanence or impermanence?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If it is thought that there is nothing eternal, what is it that will be non-eternal, both eternal and non-eternal, and also what is separated from these two?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If nothing eternal exists, what will exist that is noneternal outside of both or neither eternal and also noneternal?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
20. The existence of the Eternity does not exist really at all.
Where can we find the Existence of Having Limitations anywhere at all?
The Eternity and the Non-Eternity are only the Model of Duality.
What Have Been Concealed might be manifestation of the sufficiently concealed Expressions.

STRENG (Skt):
20. If someone who is eternal does not exist, who will exist being non-eternal, Or who being both eternal and non-eternal, or devoid of these two characteristics ?

BOCKING (Ch):
27v20 Now, if there is no permanence
How can there be impermanence
Or both permanence and impermanence
Or neither permanence nor impermanence?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If there were nothing permanent at all, what thing could be impermanent, permanent and impermanent, free of both?

DOCTOR (Tb):
When nothing is permanent,
What could be impermanent!
Permanence, impermanence,
And both have been dismissed. [XXVII.20]

GARFIELD (Tb):
20. If nothing is permanent,
What will be impermanent,
Permanent and impermanent,
Or neither?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
20. If nothing is permanent,
What could be impermanent,
Permanent and impermanent,
Both of these are eliminated?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If nothing is permanent, what can be impermanent, both, or neither?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/20 If it is the case that, if we investigate with prajna-insight, we find no dharma that can possibly be permanent, then what could be impermanent, since impermanence exists only by virtue of permanence? If neither of these two exists, how can there be 'both permanence and impermanence', and if 'both permanence and impermanence' does not exist how can 'neither permanence nor impermanence exist. It is because of 'both permanence and impermanence existing that neither permanence nor impermanence exists.

Therefore, the four propositions regarding permanence, etc. which are based and rely upon the past are untenable. Also untenable are the four propositions based and relying on the future regarding whether the world is bounded or not bounded, etc., which we shall now discuss. Why is this?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Here again, we have Nagarjuna's analysis of "something" (kascit), an entity that he was determined to get rid of on previous occasions (XXV. 19,20,24). The theories of identity, difference, both or neither, are associated with such metaphysical entities. Hence Nagarjuna's refusal to accept such theorizing.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

20. Finally, given that there are no permanent entities, no entities, from the ultimate point of view, can serve as inherent bases of predication. That is, the views that Nāgārjuna has been considering regarding the nature of the self, which purport to give its ultimate nature, must all be seen as incoherent on that ground alone - namely, that they propose an ultimate analysis. Nāgārjuna now turns his attention to views not about the self, per se, but about the world as a whole:

Kārikā XXVII.21

अन्तवान् यदि लोकः स्यात्परलोकः कथं भवेत्।
अथाप्यनन्तवांल्लोकः परलोकः कथं भवेत्॥२१॥

antavān yadi lokaḥ syāt paralokaḥ kathaṃ bhavet |
athāpy anantavāl lokaḥ paralokaḥ kathaṃ bhavet ||21||

若世間有邊 云何有後世
若世間無邊 云何有後世

ruò shì jiān yǒu biān yún hé yǒu hòu shì
ruò shì jiān wú biān yún hé yǒu hòu shì

།གལ་ཏེ་འཇིག་རྟེན་མཐའ་ཡོད་ན།།འཇིག་རྟེན་ཕ་རོལ་ཇི་ལྟར་འགྱུར།
།གལ་ཏེ་འཇིག་རྟེན་མཐའ་མེད་ན།།འཇིག་རྟེན་ཕ་རོལ་ཇི་ལྟར་འགྱུར།།

| gal te ’jig rten mtha’ yod na | | ’jig rten pha rol ji ltar ’gyur |
| gal te ’jig rten mtha’ med na | | ’jig rten pha rol ji ltar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 21 - If the world has limits, how could there be another world? On the other hand, if the world has no limits, how could there be another world? - Note: Loka is either the world or the realm of existence.

JONES (Skt):
[21] If the cosmos had a limit, how could there be another world beyond it? If the cosmos had no limit, how could there be another world?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the world were to have a limit, how could there be another world? Furthermore, if the world were to have no limit, how could there be another world?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If the world has an end, how could there be another world? But if the world has no end, how could there be another world?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
21. When we have the limitation of Time, the Area of Freedom might become open.
Even though it is impossible for us to know the reason, it might be possible for us to expect the Perfectly Different Area of the World exactly.
Just in That Situations, the Fact to have the limited term, are the very Happy Situations.
Therefore it is impossible for us to know the reason, why there is any kind of possibility to experience the Very Happy World actually.

STRENG (Skt):
21. If the world would come to an end, how would an other-world come into existence? If the world would not come to an end, how would an other-world come into being?

BOCKING (Ch):
27v21 If the world is bounded
How can there be a subsequent world?
If the world is unbounded
How can there be a subsequent world?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If this world had an end, how would the next world come to be? If this world had no end, how would the next world come to be?

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the world had an end,
How could there be another world?
If the world had no end,
How could there be another world? [XXVII.21]

GARFIELD (Tb):
21. If the world were limited,
How could there be another world?
If the world were unlimited,
How could there be another world?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
21. If the world had an end,
How could there be a next world?
If the world had no end,
How could there be a next world?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If the world were limited, how could there be another world? If the world were not limited, how could there be another world?

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/21 If the world had boundaries there could not be any subsequent world, but in reality there are subsequent worlds and therefore it is not correct to say that the world has boundaries. If the world had no boundaries there would be no subsequent world either, but in fact there are subsequent worlds and it is therefore incorrect to say that the world does not have boundaries. Moreover, both of these extremes is untenable, and why?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Having discussed the metaphysical views renting to duration, i.e., eternality, etc., of the world and the self, Nagarjuna moves on to a discussion of the theories relating to the extent of the world. The rejection of the metaphysical notions of the finite and the infinite are based upon a recognition of the possibility of a future world (para-loka). According to Nagarjuna's analysis, a finite (anta) implies absence of continuity (uccheda), and as such militates against any conception of a future world explained in terms of dependent arising (pratityasamutpada). The infinite (ananta) implies permanence or eternality (sasvata) and, as such, it would be meaningless to speak of a future world as an "other world" (para-loka), for it would be identical with the previous world.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

21. Nāgārjuna begins by questioning the sense of the question regarding the limits of the world: It seems to be like a question about the size of a table. But it is not. It is not, that is, a question about whether there is anything beyond the world. For suppose that the world is limited. That suggests that there is something beyond it. But that just means that we haven’t come to the end of the world. The whole world includes that stuff that lies beyond. Or suppose that the world is unlimited. That suggests that there is nothing beyond the world. But that just means that everything that is in the world is, in fact, in the world, which is trivial. The question ‘regarding the limits of the world, so Nāgārjuna suggests, is nonsensical.

Kārikā XXVII.22

स्कन्धानामेष संतानो यस्माद्दीपार्चिषामिव।
प्रवर्तते तस्मान्नान्तानन्तवत्त्वं च युज्यते॥२२॥

skandhānām eṣa saṃtāno yasmād dīpārciṣām iva |
tasmān nānantavattvaṃ ca nāntavattvaṃ ca yujyate ||22||

五陰常相續 猶如燈火炎
以是故世間 不應邊無邊

wǔ yīn cháng xiàng;xiāng xù yóu rú dēng huǒ yán
yǐ shì gù shì jiān bù yīng biān wú biān

།གང་ཕྱིར་ཕུང་པོ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུན།།འདི་ནི་མར་མེའི་འོད་དང་མཚུངས།
།དེ་ཕྱིར་མཐའ་ཡོད་ཉིད་དང་ནི།།མཐའ་མེད་ཉིད་ཀྱང་མི་རིགས་སོ།།

| gaṅ phyir phuṅ po rnams kyi rgyun | | 'di ni mar me'i 'od daṅ mtshuṅs |
| de phyir mtha' yod ñid daṅ ni | | (3)mtha' med ñid kyaṅ mi rigs so |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 22 - The continuity of (the function of) the skandhas is like the continual burning of the flame and, therefore, it is not possible to speak of limits or non-limits.

JONES (Skt):
[22] Since the continuity of the bodily aggregates is like the flame of a lamp, neither a limit nor the absence of a limit is admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
As this series of aggregates proceeds along like a flame of a lamp, [speculation about] its finitude or its infinitude is not proper.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Since the continuity of the personality heaps in these rolls onward like a lamp of flame,
having an end or not having an end [finitude and infinity] thus does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
22. The Stream of Miscellaneous Things and Phenomena, are the Simple Facts of this World in front of us,
Therefore it is very similar to the one stream of light, which is researched as if it were a line of the stream.
Therefore it seems to be very different, but at the same time it seems to be very similar to each other.
And so the things and phenomena, which are not so similar, are also actually to be Loved without distinction.

STRENG (Skt):
22. Since the continuity of the "groups of universal elements" (skandhas) from one moment to the next functions like flames of lamps, The view: "both having an end and not having an end" is not possible.

ROBINSON (Skt):
Since this series of skandhas proceeds like the flames of a lamp, it is not valid to say that [the world] is finite or is infinite.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v22 The constant succession of the five skandhas
Is like the flame of a lamp
Because of this the world,
Can be neither bounded nor unbounded.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
Because the continuity of the aggregates is similar to the light of a lamp, therefore the very existence or non-existence of an end is unreasonable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
This continuity of the aggregates
Is just like an oil lamp's light.
Hence, neither finitude
Nor infinitude makes sense. [XXVII.22]

GARFIELD (Tb):
22. Since the continuum of the aggregates
Is like the flame of a butterlamp,
It follows that neither its finitude
Nor its infinitude makes sense.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
22. Since the continuum of the aggregates
Is like the flame of a butterlamp,
It follows that neither its finitude
Nor its infinitude makes sense.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Since the continuity of the aggregates proceeds like the flame of a lamp, notions of its finitude or infinitude are not proper.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
The continuum of the aggregates
Is like the continuum of a butter lamp.
Therefore, to say that the aggregates are finite is illogical
And to say that they are infinite is illogical. (22)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/22 Out of the five skandhas again arise the five skandhas. The five skandhas succeed each other in sequence, like the flame of a lamp which exists through the combination of its conditions. If the conditions are not exhausted, the lamp does not go out, but if they are exhausted it goes out. Therefore, it cannot be said that the world either has or does not have boundaries. Moreover:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The simile of the lamp (padipa) was popular among the Buddha and his disciples, especially in their explanation of freedom (nibbana). As the flame of a lamp is extinguished, because of the absence of the conditions necessary for its continuous burning, so is a person's mind freed when the fuel that feeds its continuous burning with anxiety is exhausted. Explaining this process in terms of dependence, it would be most inappropriate to speak of its finitude or infinitude, independent of any conditions that are involved in its continuity or lack of continuity. This is a clear indication that an absolutistic conception is incompatible with an explanation based upon conditionality.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

22. In this discussion, Nāgārjuna is focusing on the temporal limits of the world. Again, the question regarding whether the world has temporal limits presupposes that it is a single entity that either exists forever or that passes out of existence. But the world, Nāgārjuna suggests, is more like a flame. It is a series of distinct flickering events. While each event is momentary, the sequence continues. But there is no entity that persists and can be said to be eternal or momentary.

Kārikā XXVII.23

पूर्वे यदि च भज्येरन्नुत्पद्येरन्न चाप्यमी।
स्कन्धाः स्कन्धान् प्रतीत्येमानथ लोकोऽन्तवान् भवेत्॥२३॥

pūrve yadi ca bhajyerann utpadyeran na cāpy amī |
skandhāḥ skandhān pratītyemān atha loko ’ntavān bhavet ||23||

若先五陰壞 不因是五陰
更生後五陰 世間則有邊

ruò xiān wǔ yīn huài bù yīn shì wǔ yīn
gēng shēng hòu wǔ yīn shì jiān zé yǒu biān

|གལ་ཏེ་སྔ་མ་འཇིག་འགྱུར་ཞིང་།|ཕུང་པོ་འདི་ལ་བརྟེན་བྱས་ནས།
|ཕུང་པོ་དེ་ནི་མི་འབྱུང་ན།|དེས་ན་འཇིག་རྟེན་མཐའ་ཡོད་འགྱུར།|

| gal te sṅa ma ’jig ’gyur źiṅ | | phuṅ po ’di la brten byas nas |
| phuṅ po de ni mi ’byuṅ na | | des na ’jig rten mtha’ yod ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 23 - If a skandha is destroyed in the anterior state and the present skandha does not arise by being relationally conditioned by the former, then the realm (of function) will have limits.

JONES (Skt):
[23] If the prior aggregates were destroyed in the past, and the current aggregates did not arise dependent upon them, then this world of rebirths would have a limit.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the prior aggregates were to be destroyed and these aggregates were also not to arise depending upon these other [aggregates], then the world would be finite.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If former *skandhas* are to be destroyed, and these depend on those
skandhas which are to be unarisen, then the world would have an end [be finite].

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
23. Before being to be revered,
It is impossible for me to be revered and go ahead at all.
Miscellaneous Things and Phenomena are producing the Miscellaneous Things and Phenomena as This World without fail.
There the Intermediate Space can exist making a kind of limited Space like the End.

STRENG (Skt):
23. If the former "groups" would disappear, those new "groups" which are dependent on those former "groups" would not arise; Therefore, the world would come to an end (ii).

ROBINSON (Skt):
If former skandhas disintegrated and later skandhas did not arise dependent on the former, then the world would be finite.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v23 If, the previous skandhas having perished,
Independently of these five skandhas
The subsequent skandhas were to arise,
The world would have boundaries.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the former perished and that [future] aggregate did not arise in dependence upon this aggregate, then this world would have an end.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the previous were to cease,
And if, based on these aggregates,
Those aggregates would not arise,
The world would have an end. [XXVII.23]

GARFIELD (Tb):
23. If the previous were disintegrating
And these aggregates, which depend
Upon those aggregates, did not arise,
Then the world would be finite.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
23. If the previous ones had ceased,
And depending on these aggregates
Those aggregates would not arise,
Then the world would be finite.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If the prior aggregates were destroyed and these aggregates, depending on those, did not arise, the world would be finite.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

23. We could say that the world is finite if its current state simply ceased and nothing else arose. But absent that, there is no basis for positing an end, and dependent origination argues against positing an end to the world in time.

Kārikā XXVII.24

पूर्वे यदि न भज्येरन्नुत्पद्येरन्न चाप्यमी।
स्कन्धाः स्कन्धान् प्रतीत्येमांल्लोकोऽनन्तो भवेदथ॥२४॥

pūrve yadi na bhajyerann utpadyeran na cāpy amī |
skandhāḥ skandhān pratītyemāṃl loko ’nanto bhaved atha ||24||

若先陰不壞 亦不因是陰
而生後五陰 世間則無邊

ruò xiān yīn bù huài yì bù yīn shì yīn
ér shēng hòu wǔ yīn shì jiān zé wú biān

|གལ་ཏེ་སྔ་མ་མི་འཇིག་ཅིང༌||ཕུང་པོ་འདི་ལ་བརྟེན་བྱས་ནས|
|ཕུང་པོ་དེ་ནི་མི་འབྱུང་ན||དེས་ན་འཇིག་རྟེན་མཐའ་མེད་འགྱུར||

| gal te sṅa ma mi ’jig ciṅ | | phuṅ po ’di la brten byas nas |
| phuṅ po de ni mi ’byuṅ na | | (4)des na ’jig rten mtha’ med ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 24 - If a skandha is not destroyed in the anterior state and the present skandha does not arise by being relationally conditioned by the former, then the realm (of function) will not have any limits.

JONES (Skt):
[24] If the prior aggregates were not destroyed in the past, and the current aggregates did not arise dependent upon them, then this world of rebirths would not have a limit.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the prior aggregates were not to be destroyed and these aggregates were also not to arise depending upon these other [aggregates], then the world would be infinite.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If former *skandhas* are not to be destroyed, and these also depend on
those *skandhas* which are to be unarisen, then the world would be infinite.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
24. Before the time, when the circumstances have not been prepared lovely yet,
I do never like to prepare the preparation well ahead.
When the five kinds of aggregates are just manifesting themselves clearly as the World,
The Space of the Universe will have possibility to exist as the Boundless Space in Reality.

STRENG (Skt):
24. If the former "groups" would not disappear, these new "groups" which are dependent on those former "groups" would not arise; Therefore, the world would be eternal (i).

ROBINSON (Skt):
If former skandhas did not disintegrate and later skandhas did not arise dependent on the former, then the world would be infinite.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v24 If. the previous skandhas not having perished,
Also independently of these five skandhas
The subsequent five skandhas were to arise
The world would be boundless.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If the former did not perish and that [future] aggregate did not arise in dependence upon this aggregate, then this world would not have an end.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the previous were not to cease,
And if, based on these aggregates,
Those aggregates would not arise,
The world would be endless. [XXVII.24]

GARFIELD (Tb):
24. If the previous were not disintegrating
And these aggregates, which depend
Upon those aggregates, did not arise,
Then the world would be infinite.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
24. If the previous ones had not ceased,
And depending on these aggregates
Those aggregates did not arise,
Then the world would be infinite.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If the prior aggregates were not destroyed and these aggregates, depending on those, did not arise, the world would be infinite.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/24 if, after the previous five skandhas have perished, the subsequent five skandhas arise, independently of the earlier five skandhas, then the world has boundaries. Where no further five skandhas are produced after the previous five skandhas have ceased, this is called a boundary. 'Boundary means the final body.

(39a11) If , the previous five skandhas not yet having perished, the subsequent five skandhas arose independently of these five skandhas, then the world would have no boundaries, and this would be permanence. But in reality this is not so, and therefore to hold that the world does not have boundaries is not correct. Worlds are of two kinds; the worlds of countries and the worlds of living beings. This refers to a world of living beings. Moreover, as is said in the 'Four Hundred Contemplations'

(39a16) "Since the true Dharma, the teacher

And the hearer are difficult to obtain

Thus birth and death

Are neither bounded nor unbounded."

Because we have not attained the true Dharma our birth and death and going and coming are unbounded. Since we may at some time manage to hear the true Dharma and attain the Way, we cannot say that the world is unbounded. We shall now refute 'both bounded and unbounded'.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The above is a criticism of an explanation of the continuity in the aggregates which does not take into consideration their causal dependence. If the aggregates were looked upon as things that appear and disappear with no causal relations, then only can one speak of a finite world. In other words, the conception of a finite world involves one of the extreme views discussed earlier, namely, annihilation (uccheda). The non-arising of the aggregates dependent upon other aggregates would then imply permanence, and this is what is involved when one speaks of an infinite world.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

24. On the other hand, the world would be infinite if it reached a stage where its current state became permanent. But again, given the nature of dependent arising, this is not a likely eventuality.

Kārikā XXVII.25

[Robinson states that the Chinese XXVII.25 has no correlate with the Sanskrit?]

अन्तवानेकदेशश्चेदेकदेशस्त्वनन्तवान्।
स्यादन्तवाननन्तश्च लोकस्तच्च न युज्यते॥२५॥

antavān ekadeśaś ced ekadeśas tv anantavān |
syād antavān anantaś ca lokas tac ca na yujyate ||25||

真法及說者 聽者難得故
如是則生死 非有邊無邊

zhēn fǎ jí shuì zhě tīng zhě nàn dé;děi;de gù
rú shì zé shēng sǐ fēi yǒu biān wú biān

།གལ་ཏེ་ཕྱོགས་གཅིག་མཐའ་ཡོད་ལ། །ཕྱོགས་གཅིག་མཐའ་ནི་མེད་འགྱུར་ན།
།འཇིག་རྟེན་མཐའ་ཡོད་མཐའ་མེད་འགྱུར། །དེ་ཡང་རིགས་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།

| gal te phyogs gcig mtha' yod la | | phyogs gcig mtha' ni med 'gyur na |
| 'jig rten mtha' yod mtha' med 'gyur | | de yaṅ rigs pa ma yin no |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 25 - If one portion is limited and another non-limited, then perhaps the realm (of function) will be both limited and non-limited. But that is not possible.

JONES (Skt):
[25] If one part of the cosmos had a limit and one part did not, the cosmos would both have a limit and not have a limit, and this is not admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
If the world were to be partly finite and also partly infinite, it would be both finite and infinite, and this too is also not proper.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
But if one part is finite and one part is infinite,
the world would be finite and infinite and that does not occur.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
25. When the similarity of the End is just the one point, which belongs to one point of the whole line.
Such a kind of one place in the line, might be similar to the point, which exists everywhere through the line.
Perhaps what seems to be similar to the Truth, might be different from the Truth Actually,
And the Concrete Fact ourselves at the Real Point, might be never complicated at all.

STRENG (Skt):
25. If one part were finite and the other were infinite, The world would be both finite and infinite (iii); but this is not possible.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v25 If the world were half bounded
And half unbounded
Then it would be both bounded
And unbounded: Not so.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If one part had an end and one part did not have an end, the world would be with and without an end. That too is unreasonable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If one part were finite
And another part infinite,
The world would and would not have an end.
Tins does not make sense either. [XXVII.25]

GARFIELD (Tb):
25. If one part were finite and
One part were infinite,
Then the world would be finite and infinite.
This would make no sense.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
25. If it were partly finite and
Partly infinite,
Then the world would be finite and infinite.
This would make no sense.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If the world were partly finite and partly infinite, it would be both finite and infinite. But this makes no sense.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/25 If the world were half bounded and half unbounded then it would be 'both bounded and unbounded', but if this were Sol then one dharma would have two characteristics, and this is not correct. Why is this?

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The rejection of both the finite and the infinite, the eternal as well as the non-eternal, as constituting the reality, was prompted by the Buddha's refusal to recognize two different levels of reality: a changing and finite world contrasted with an eternal and infinite ultimate reality or an Absolute. As such, neither in the Buddha's philosophy, nor in Nagarjuna's thinking is there any room for an Absolute of any sort.

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

25. Nāgārjuna now makes use of the argument mobilized at XXVII: 17. The world cannot have these contradictory properties any more than an individual can.

Kārikā XXVII.26

कथं तावदुपादातुरेकदेशो विनङ्क्ष्यते।
न नङ्क्ष्यते चैकदेश एवं चैतन्न युज्यते॥२६॥

katham̩ tāvad upādātur ekadeśo vinaṅkṣyate |
na naṅkṣyate caikadeśa evam̩ caitan na yujyate ||26||

若世半有邊 世間半無邊
是則亦有邊 亦無邊不然

ruò shì bàn yǒu biān shì jiān bàn wú biān
shì zé yì yǒu biān yì wú biān bù rán

།ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ན་ཉེར་ལེན་པོའི། །ཕྱོགས་གཅིག་རྣམ་པར་འཇིག་འགྱུར་ལ།
།ཕྱོགས་གཅིག་རྣམ་པར་འཇིག་མི་འགྱུར། །དེ་ལྟར་དེ་ནི་མི་རིགས་སོ།

| ji lta bur na ñer len po'i | | phyogs gcig rnam par 'jig (5)'gyur la |
| phyogs gcig rnam par 'jig mi 'gyur | | de ltar de ni mi rigs so |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 26 - How, indeed, could one portion of the perceiver be destroyed and another remain undestroyed? However, this (situation) is not possible. - Note: The perceiver is a collective term for the function of the skandhas.

JONES (Skt):
[26] How could one part of one who clings perish and one part not? This is not admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can it be possible that one part of a grasper is destroyed and the other part is not destroyed? This too is not proper.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How will one part of a grasper be destroyed and
one part not destroyed? And thus thatis not reasonable.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
26. Why is it possible for them to get a so lot of money with such a kind of job?
The two arms might work as well as more than two arms.
Even in future we should never approach to the works of two arms.
Usually The Real Situations of The World, is just This Fact in front of ourselves, which is not bound by anything at all.

STRENG (Skt):
26. Therefore, how can it be that one part of "one who acquires" karma will be destroyed, (i.e. the body – man ?) And one part not destroyed? (i.e. the very subtle mind – the divine part ?) This is not possible.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v26 How could one part of that recipient
Of the five skandhas be destroyed
While one part is undestroyed
This is not correct.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How can one part of the one-who-clings perish while one part does not perish? Likewise, that is unreasonable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
How could one part
Of the appropriator be destroyed
And another part not be destroyed?
This does not make sense. [XXVII.26]

GARFIELD (Tb):
26. How could one think that
One part of the appropriator is destroyed
And one part is not destroyed?
This position makes no sense.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
26. How could one think that
The appropriator has partly ceased
And has partly non-ceased?
This does not make sense either.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How can one part of a grasper be destroyed while another part is not destroyed? This too is not proper.

[No commentary on this verse]

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Kārikā XXVII.27

उपादानैकदेशश्च कथं नाम विनङ्क्ष्यते।
न नङ्क्ष्यते चैकदेशो नैतदप्युपपद्यते॥२७॥

upādānaikadeśaś ca kathaṃ nāma vinaṅkṣyate |
na naṅkṣyate caikadeśo naitad apy upapadyate ||27||

彼受五陰者 云何一分破
一分而不破 是事則不然

bǐ shòu wǔ yīn zhě yún hé yī fēn pò
yī fēn ér bù pò shì shì zé bù rán

།ཇི་ལྟ་བུར་ན་ཉེར་བླང་བ།།ཕྱོགས་གཅིག་རྣམ་པར་འཇིག་འགྱུར་ལ།
།ཕྱོགས་གཅིག་རྣམ་པར་འཇིག་མི་འགྱུར།།དེ་ལྟར་དེ་ཡང་མི་རིགས་སོ།།

| ji lta bur na ñer blaṅ ba | | phyogs gcig rnam par ’jig ’gyur la |
| phyogs gcig rnam par ’jig mi ’gyur | | de ltar de yaṅ mi rigs so |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 27 - How, indeed, could one portion of the perception be destroyed and another remain undestroyed? This, (situation), again, is not possible. - Note: The perception refers to the clinging or grasping function of the skandhas.

JONES (Skt):
[27] How could one part of the clinging perish and one part not? This too is not admissible.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
How can it be possible that one part of grasping is destroyed and another part is not destroyed? This too is not appropriate.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
How will one part of what is called grasping be destroyed and one part not be destroyed? That also does not take place.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
27. When our Perceptional Function is just identified into One,
How is it necessary for us to approach Names?
We should never necessary to approach only One Spot.
It is absolutely impossible for only one concrete fact manifests itself alone.

STRENG (Skt):
27. How, indeed, can it be that one part of the acquisition of karma (i.e. the learning stored in the body) will be destroyed, And one part not destroyed? (i.e. the learning stored in the mind) That, certainly does not obtain.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v27 Receiving is also like this;
How can one part be destroyed
And one part not destroyed?
This is not correct.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
How can one part of that-which-is-clung-to perish while one part does not perish? Likewise, that is unreasonable.

DOCTOR (Tb):
How could one part
Of the appropriated be destroyed
And another part not be destroyed?
That does not make sense either. [XXVII.27]

GARFIELD (Tb):
27. How could one think that
One part of the appropriation is destroyed
And one part is not destroyed?
This position makes no sense.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
27. How could one think that
The appropriated has partly ceased
And partly not ceased?
This does not make sense either.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
How can one part of grasping be destroyed while another part is not destroyed? This is also not appropriate.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/27 How could one part of the 'recipient of the five skandhas' be destroyed and the other part not destroyed? One entity cannot be both permanent and impermanent. It is the same with reception; how could one part be destroyed whilst the other. –. part was not destroyed, since this would involve the error of the dual characteristics of permanence and impermanence? Therefore it is not the case that the world is both bounded and unbounded.

We shall now refute the view that the world is neither bounded nor unbounded:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

Nagarjuna leaves no room for the recognition of an eternal and absolute entity either in the person grasping (upadatr) or in grasping (upadana).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

27. The appropriator here is the self; the appropriation, the existence of the world. Nāgārjuna in these two verses is summing up and drawing together the conclusions of the two main arguments in the chapter. We want to say on the one hand that neither the world nor the self is permanent. Both are thoroughly characterized by impermanence. On the other hand, we want to say of both that they endure in time and of each that there is no fixed boundary to its identity. But it can't be that either has both of these properties.

Kārikā XXVII.28

अन्तवच्चाप्यनन्तं च प्रसिद्धमुभयं यदि।
सिद्धे नैवान्तवत्कामं नैवानन्तवदित्यपि॥२८॥

antavac cāpy anantaṃ ca prasiddham ubhayaṃ yadi |
siddhe naivāntavat kāmaṃ naivānantavad ity api ||28||

受亦復如是 云何一分破
一分而不破 是事亦不然

shòu yì fù rú shì yún hé yī fēn pò
yī fēn ér bù pò shì shì yì bù rán

།གལ་ཏེ་མཐའ་ཡོད་མཐའ་མེད་པ།།གཉིས་ཀ་གྲུབ་པར་གྱུར་ན་ནི།
།མཐའ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན་མཐའ་མེད་མིན།།འགྲུབ་པར་འགྱུར་བར་འདོད་ལ་རག།

| gal te mtha’ (6)yod mtha’ med pa | | gñis ka grub par gyur na ni |
| mtha’ yod ma yin mtha’ med min | | ’grub par ’gyur bar ’dod la rag |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 28 - If both the limited and non-limited could be established (concomitantly), then, similarly, neither the limited nor non-limited could also be established at will.

JONES (Skt):
[28] If the claim “It is both limited and limitless” were established, then it is accepted that the claim “It is neither limited nor limitless” could be established.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Supposing both the finite and the infinite are established, then it is not possible to assert either the finite or the infinite.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
If both finite and infinite are established, then
“neither finite nor infinite” are also intentionally proved.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
28. To have the End is just the same as to produce the End positively.
In that case, the accomplishment of preparations, includes the two kinds of factors, Those are the preparation and accomplishment.
In the situations of accomplishment, having an End, is never pleasurable condition.
The situation, which does not having any Eternity might be the Most Hopeful Situation.

STRENG (Skt):
28. If the view "both finite and infinite" were proved, Then no doubt, "neither finite nor infinite" (i.e. nothing at all) could be proved.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v28 If both bounded and unbounded
Can be established together
Then 'neither bounded nor unbounded'
Would also be established.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
If both the presence and absence of an end were established, you would have to assert non-presence and non-absence as established.

DOCTOR (Tb):
If the finite and infinite
Were both established,
It would be possible to establish
The neither finite nor infinite. [XXVII.28]

GARFIELD (Tb):
28. If it could be established that
It is both finite and infinite,
Then it could be established that
It is neither finite nor infinite.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
28. If it could be established that
It is both finite and infinite,
Then one would have to maintain that
It is neither finite nor infinite.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
If both finite and infinite could be established, then “neither finite nor infinite” could also be established.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/28 'Unbounded' exists by virtue of being the opposite of 'bounded', in the same way that short exists as the opposite of long. The opposite of being or not being is 'both being and not being' and the opposite of 'both being and not being' is 'neither being nor not being'. If 'both bounded and unbounded' were definitely established then there would be 'neither bounded nor unbounded I, and why? Because they depend upon each other.

In what has gone before we have already refuted the third proposition 'both bounded and unbounded' , so how can there possibly be 'neither bounded nor unbounded', since there is no interdependence?

Upon investigation, the four views of the world having boundaries, etc., which rely upon the future are found to be entirely untenable.

Further:

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This rejection of the finite and the infinite is comparable to the rejection of the eternal and the non-eternal (XXVII. 18).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

28. This verse echoes XXVII: 18. If either the self or the world could be conceived as both finite and infinite, finitude and infinitude would make no sense at all. They are contradictory properties and cannot characterize the same thing at the same time. Moreover, they are exhaustive alternatives.

Kārikā XXVII.29

अथवा सर्वभावानां शून्यत्वाच्छाश्वतादयः।
क्व कस्य कतमाः कस्मात्संभविष्यन्ति दृष्टयः॥२९॥

atha vā sarvabhāvānāṃ śūnyatvāc chāśvatādayaḥ |
kva kasya katamāḥ kasmāt saṃbhaviṣyanti dṛṣṭayaḥ ||29||

若亦有無邊 是二得成者
非有非無邊 是則亦應成

ruò yì yǒu wú biān shì èr dé;děi;de chéng zhě
fēi yǒu fēi wú biān shì zé yì yīng chéng

།ཡང་ན་དངོས་པོ་ཐམས་ཅད་དག།སྟོང་ཕྱིར་རྟག་ལ་སོགས་ལྟ་བ།
།གང་དག་གང་དུ་གང་ལ་ནི།།ཅི་ལས་ཀུན་ཏུ་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར།།

| yaṅ na dṅos po thams cad dag | stoṅ phyir rtag la sogs lta ba |
| gaṅ dag gaṅ du gaṅ la ni | | (7)ci las kun tu ’byuṅ bar ’gyur |

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 29 - Since all existences are of the nature of sunyata, where, by whom and in what manner could such (false) views on constancy, etc., ever arise?

JONES (Skt):
[29] In addition, because all entities are empty, what views of permanence, and so forth, would arise - and in whom, about what, and how?

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
Thus, because of emptiness of all existents, where, to whom, which and for what reason views such as the eternal could ever occur?

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
Because of the openness of all beings, why, which,
of what, and where will views about permanence, etc., develop?

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
29. There also the Whole Situations of All Existences are the problems again.
Leaving from the balanced state of the Autonomic Nervous System, and leaving from the Eternity, there is a only fact just Going on.
Where, belonging to what, to whom among many, or from whom,
Persons, who are seen, might be many.

STRENG (Skt):
29. Because of the emptiness of all existing things, How will the views about "eternity," etc., come into existence, about what, of whom, and of what kind?

BOCKING (Ch):
27v29 Since all dharmas are empty
Views about the permanence, etc. of the world –
In what place, and at what time,
And by whom, would such views be generated?

BATCHELOR (Tb):
And because all things are empty, about what and in whom do views such as that of permanence spring forth?

DOCTOR (Tb):
Alternately, because all things are empty,
How could views of permanence and so on,
Occur in any form, anywhere,
And to anyone at all? [XXVII.29]

GARFIELD (Tb):
29. So, because all entities are empty,
Which views of permanence, etc., would occur,
And to whom, when, why, and about what
Would they occur at all?

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
29. Alternatively, because all entities are empty,
Which views of permanence, etc., would occur,
And by what means, with respect to what, to whom,
And why would they occur at all?

HAGEN (paraphrase):
Thus, because all existents are Empty, where, to whom, which and for what reason would views of permanence occur at all?

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
Since all things are empty,
Why would anyone, anywhere, at any time,
View things as being permanent or anything else? (29)

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/29 In the above, he (Nagarjuna) has refuted all views in the Sravaka-Dharma, and now he states that in the Great Vehicle Dharma all dharmas have had from the beginning the nature of utter emptiness. Within this empty nature of dharmas there are no persons and no Dharma, so there can be no production of wrong views or right views. 'Place' means location. 'Time' means a particular day, month or year. 'whom' means a person. 'Such' means the substance of all views.

(39b18) If there are fixed views of permanence, impermanence etc., there must be a person who generates these views. When self is destroyed there is no production of such views by a person. There must be a place for manifestly observed dharmas to be negated; how much more a time? If all these views exist they should have a fixed reality, but if they were fixed they could not be destroyed, and we have already negated them on various grounds in what has gone before; therefore you should know that views have no fixed substance; how can they arise? As the verse says: 'In what place, and at what time, and by whom would such views be generated?'

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

The recognition of dependently arisen phenomena (pratityasamutpanna dharma) means the acceptance of the non-substantiality or emptiness of all these things. If things are non-substantial, how can there be views about the eternal and the non-eternal, the finite and the infinite? The answer to this question has been provided by the Buddha and clearly restated by Nagarjuna. It is the result of an urge on the part of human beings to find absolute answers to questions such as "Where did I come from?" or "Where do I go from here?" These questions would be raised and attempts to answer them be made so long as human beings are propelled by a "craving for becoming" (bhava-trsna) or "craving for other-becoming" (vibhava-trsna). This was the riddle of human existence faced by the Buddha. Understanding that riddle of existence, the Buddha attained freedom (nirvana) by spewing out craving (trsna) and abandoning any grasping (upadana).

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

29. But if we bear in mind the emptiness of all phenomena, on the subject and on the object side, these views do not even arise as possibilities. The self and all of the phenomena in the world itself, being empty, are dependently arisen, conventional phenomena. Their emptiness itself is dependently arisen and empty. There is no candidate for permanence. There is no candidate for ultimate impermanence. And to the extent that we grasp and live this truth, there is no one to stand over and against the world as “I” against “it.”

Kārikā XXVII.30

सर्वदृष्टिप्रहाणाय यः सद्धर्ममदेशयत्।
अनुकम्पामुपादाय तं नमस्यामि गौतमम्॥३०॥

sarvadṛṣṭiprahāṇāya yaḥ saddharmam adeśayat |
anukampām upādāya taṃ namasyāmi gautamam ||30||

一切法空故 世間常等見
何處於何時 誰起是諸見

yī qiè fǎ kōng gù shì jiān cháng děng jiàn
hé chǔ yū;yú;wū hé shí shuí qǐ shì zhū jiàn

།གང་གིས་ཐུགས་བརྩེ་ཉེར་བཟུང་ནས།།ལྟ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྤང་བའི་ཕྱིར།
།དམ་པའི་ཆོས་ནི་སྟོན་མཛད་པ།།གོ་ཏ་མ་དེ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ།།

|| gaṅ gis thugs brtse ñer bzuṅ nas | | lta ba thams cad spaṅ ba'i phyir |
| dam pa'i chos ni ston mdzad pa | | goo tam de la phyag 'tshal lo ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

INADA (Skt):
Verse 30 - I reverently bow to Gautama (the Buddha) who out of compassion has taught the truth of being (saddharma) in order to destroy all (false) views.

JONES (Skt):
[30] I bow to Gautama the Buddha, who through compassion taught the true doctrine for removing all views.

KALUPAHANA (Skt):
I reverently bow to Gautama, who, out of compassion, has taught the true doctrine in order to relinquish all views.

MCCAGNEY (Skt):
I bow to him, Gautama, who, from compassion,
taught the true Teaching for the purpose of abandoning all views.

NISHIJIMA (Skt?):
30. All People, who are related with the reverence, might be belong to the people, who have Belief in Morals,
The True Righteousness might have been moved to the wrong place for it.
The pitiful situations for people, have been accepted to them as they are.
But I offer the Whole-Hearted Admire for Gautama Buddha, who accepted those Many kinds of Doctrines as pitiable.

STRENG (Skt):
30. To him, possessing compassion, who taught the real dharma For the destruction of all views—to him, Gautama, I humbly offer reverence.

ROBINSON (Skt):
I bow reverently to Gautama, who, taking compassion, taught the True Dharma, in order to cut off all views.

BOCKING (Ch):
27v30 To Gautama. Great Sage and Master,
Who from pity and compassion preached this Dharma,
Entirely cutting off all views;
We now bow our heads in reverence.

BATCHELOR (Tb):
I bow down to Gautama, whose kindness holds one close, who revealed the sublime dharma in order to let go of all views.

DOCTOR (Tb):
By the love of his heart, he accepts us
And, so that all views may be relinquished,
Reveals the sacred Dharma.
To the teacher, Gautama, I prostrate. [XXVII.30]

GARFIELD (Tb):
30. I prostrate to Gautama
Who through compassion
Taught the true doctrine,
Which leads to the relinquishing of all views.

GARFIELD-SAMTEN (Tb):
30. I prostrate to Gautama
Who, through compassion,
Taught the exalted Dharma,
Which leads to the relinquishing of all views.

HAGEN (paraphrase):
I reverently bow to Gautama who, out of compassion, has taught the True Dharma in order to relinquish all views.

GOLDFIELD (Tb):
[CONCLUDING HOMAGE]
Holding us in your incredible wisdom and love,
You taught us the genuine Dharma
To help us abandon all views.
I prostrate before you, Gautama.

PINGALA COMMENTARY

27/30 'All views' means, if the teaching is summarized, five views, or if detailed, sixty-two views. It was in order to cut off all these views that He preached the Dharma. The Great Sage and Master Gautama, has immeasurable, unbounded and inconceivable wisdom and insights and this is why we bow our heads to him in reverence.

KALUPAHANA COMMENTARY

This final statement of Nagarjuna referring to the Buddha's preaching of the doctrine (sad-dharma) is to be contrasted with his statement at the end of the chapter on freedom (nirvana)(XXV.24), where he says that the Buddha did not "preach anything as ..." (na ... kascid dharmo buddhena desitah), and should open the eyes of those who stick to a completely negative interpretation of Nagarjuna. Nagarjuna's remarks clearly show that he was aware that the Buddha did not speak "metaphysically" but only "empirically."

GARFIELD COMMENTARY

30. The most common interpretation of this final verse has the phrase "all views" (Tib: *lta-ba thams-cad,* Skt: *sarva-drsti)* referring to all false views, that is, all views according to which things have inherent existence. (fn 137. This, for instance, is the view urged unanimously by Je-Tsong Khapa (pp. 477-84), mKhas-grub-rje (pp. 112-17), and dGe-'dun-grub (p. 237) and by most of the Geluk-pa scholars with whom I have consulted. Whether Candrakīrti or Aryadeva read the text this way is unclear. On the other hand, many Nyingma scholars adopt the alternative reading I suggest here. In conversation, H.H. the Dalai Lama has suggested to me that the Geluk-pa interpretation may make the most sense from the standpoint of philosophy and for the purposes of characterizing an inferential understanding of emptiness, but that the Nyingma understanding may provide a better expression of the nature of the direct understanding of emptiness and may be more useful for guiding meditative practice. The Yen. Prof. Geshe Yeshes Thap-Khas, on the other hand (oral commentary). suggests that the two interpretations are both intended - the first as the teaching regarding the conventional truth, and appropriate for those not yet advanced in meditative practice, and the second as a teaching regarding the nature of the direct realization of emptiness experienced by a buddha at enlightenment, and by advanced practitioners in meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness. Huntington (1989), pp. 119-22, presents a clear and compelling discussion of such direct realization. He writes of the difference between a dualistic and nondualistic awareness of the world: "The difference is one of attitude, for all else remains as it was. Similarly, when the bodhisattva cultivates non-dualistic knowledge he both sees and sees through the natural interpretations that structure his world. He sees nothing new or different, but he knows, directly and incorrigibly, that all the elements of experience are dependent upon one another and upon the nature of the perceiving consciousness in a very profound and significant way." (p. 122)) These, after all, are the views under examination and refutation in this chapter. And it is the clear purport of this chapter that these views are the principal hindrances to enlightenment and the causes of attachment to cyclic existence. On this reading, Nāgārjuna exempts his own view and therefore the Madhyamika understanding of the Buddhist doctrine, which Nāgārjuna here reminds us was taught compassionately explicitly to enable the rejection of these ·views. *That* doctrine, or standpoint, on this reading, is not to be relinquished. Indeed, one might say, it is not even a "view" in the relevant sense since a view must be a view of something, and the analysis in terms of emptiness reveals a world with no entities to view. This interpretation is urged unanimously by all of the commentaries with which I am familiar and by many of the scholars with whom I have consulted.

But there is a second reading available, not instead of, but in addition to, the standard reading. (fn 138. Both the Most Yen. Khamtrul Rinpoche and the Most Yen. Samdhong Rinpoche emphatically support the second reading. as the primary meaning of the verse and as the final expression of the emptiness of emptiness (personal communication). Inada (1970) waffles. In his commentary (p. 164), he endorses the "all views" reading. But in his translation (p. 171), he inserts "false" parenthetically before "views." These are clearly not consistent moves. Ng (1993) also agrees with the "false view" reading. See pp. 18-20.) There is a startling grammatical and poetic parallel between this closing verse and the dramatic dedicatory verses. Both have the form, if translated literally, almost preserving Tibetan word order, "To him who . . . To that [great one/Gautam] I prostrate" *(gang gis ... dam-pa/go-dam de la phyag-'tshallo).* The echo at the end of the opening is apparent, and it draws attention to Nāgārjuna's denial in the dedication of the possibility of any predication from the ultimate point of view of the inability to say anything positive that is literally true about the ultimate nature of things. When this is joined with our reading of such verses as XVIII: 7,9; XXII: 11, 12, 15; XXIV: 18; and XXV: 23 - all of which emphasize in different ways the impossibility of literal statements about the ultimate and the merely ostensive character of language about it, despite the need for such conventional assertion to enable one to approach ultimate truth - we can see a double entendre in this verse. For, if one reads it not from the conventional point of view as in the previous interpretation, but as an echo of the dedication, one can see Nāgārjuna's own view and the Buddhist Dharma itself included under "all views" and, hence, necessarily to be relinquished once it is understood and used. And compare especially XIII: 8: "The victorious ones have said That emptiness is the relinquishing of all views. For whomever emptiness is a view, That one has accomplished nothing."

We can now return to this verse with more of Nāgārjuna's analysis available: For the practitioner who directly realizes emptiness, nothing is present to consciousness but emptiness itself. For such a consciousness, there literally is no object since there is in such a consciousness no reification of the kind that gives rise to subject-object duality. Moreover, since such a consciousness is directed only upon what can be found ultimately to exist and since nothing can be so found, there is literally nothing toward which such a consciousness can be' directed. But this very fact is what is ostended by the dictum that emptiness is itself empty: Emptiness is not the real object as opposed to the unreal objects of ordinary perception, not the object that appears when false appearance is shed. In fact, to the extent that it appears as an object at all, it does so as falsely as any table. If so, the best we can then say is that from such a standpoint the words "emptiness is empty" ascribe no property to any object at all. From that standpoint, there is no view to be expressed, where a view is something that can be given assertoric voice. For a view is possible if, and only if, (1) there is *something* to view and (2) there is some *way* in which it is viewed. That is, first, if it were possible to have a (true) view about emptiness, emptiness would have to be a thing - an object of awareness. But if we supposed that it is, a dilemma emerges: Emptiness must then exist either conventionally or ultimately. The latter, as we have seen, is impossible since then it would fail itself to be empty and not only would a central tenet of Madhyamika philosophy be contradicted, but the remainder would be rendered incoherent as well. But positing emptiness as a conventional existent and as the object of a correct view is no better, for things that appear conventionally appear *as* entities - as phenomena that exist independently and substantially. And all such appearance is, from the standpoint of Madhyamika, in an important sense *false* appearance. To put this point another way, true predication is always predication from a perspective in which the subject of the predicate exists and within which the predicate can be instantiated. For conventional entities, the conventional standpoint provides such a perspective. But for emptiness, neither the conventional nor the ultimate standpoint can do the job: In the conventional standpoint, there is no emptiness; in the ultimate standpoint there are no entities at all.

Now let us consider the second entailment - that concerning the manner in which emptiness would need to be viewed. Views are views of things under descriptions and, hence, are views of things as having some nature. I view this paper as paper, as white, as a bearer of print, as a product of a tree, and so forth. And again, so long as I am characterizing a conventional entity as it is viewed from the conventional perspective, there is no problem here. But when we attempt to extend this analysis to emptiness itself, problems arise. For the attribution of properties - descriptions under which things can be viewed - again requires the existence of the substrata and the possibility of their serving as property bearers, as well as the dualism between substratum and property this presupposes. The perspective from which this continued existence and this dualism are available is the conventional perspective for it is only conventions that bring ontology into play. But again, in that perspective, we don't find emptiness; we find all kinds of entities, but we find them *as entities* and, hence, as nonempty. But from the perspective in which we find emptiness, we don't find any entities or any characteristics, not even emptiness itself or the fact of its emptiness. Hence again, since we can't view emptiness even as empty, in view of its very emptiness, we can't have a view of emptiness. This point is made pithily in a verse quoted by Nāgārjuna in his autocommentary to the *Vigrahavytivartani:* "By their nature, the things are not a determinate entity. For they have only one nature, i.e. no nature" (*Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita-sutra).*

This reading of the concluding verse, and by implication of the related verses we have noted (particularly XIII: 8), would not entail any self-refutation or any denial of the need at the conventional level for the assertion of Buddhist doctrine or the critique articulated by Nāgārjuna in *Mula-madhyamaka-kārikā.* On the contrary, this interpretation would be consistent with the raft metaphor popular in Buddhist philosophy (one discards the raft after one has crossed the river; it would be foolish to continue to carry it overland; similarly, Buddhist teachings are soteriological in intent and are to be discarded after their goal has been attained) or the laxative metaphor of the *Ratnakuta-sutra* mobilized by Candrakīrti in his comments on XIII: 8 and Sextus (one wants the medicine to be expelled along with the pathogenic bowel contents) used to discourage grasping even to the Dharma. Hence Nāgārjuna acknowledges that, having announced in the dedication that nothing can be said truly about the final nature of things and having defended this thesis exhaustively in the text, his words and those of the Buddha cannot even be taken as literally true about the final nature of things. Hence in order to realize that nature, one must relinquish even a literal, nonostensive reading of these texts. (fn 139. The Yen. Prof. Geshe Yeshes Thap-Khas (oral commentary) points out that emptiness as it appears in direct realization does not appear as an entity *(ngospo).* From the ultimate point of view there are no entities. Since a view is always a view of an entity, in direct realization of emptiness, there is a necessary relinquishing of all views, including all Buddhist and all Mādhyamika views. But, he argues, it does not follow that one not directly realizing emptiness can relinquish all views or, in particular, that one should relinquish true ones. Insofar as direct realization of emptiness is a primary goal of Buddhist practice, he argues, and especially of the practice of Buddhist philosophy, it is hence appropriate to read this verse in this way as well as in the more conventional way.

The Yen. Geshe Yeshe Topden (also in oral commentary) puts this a bit differently: Emptiness, he argues, when it is known inferentially, is known as a positive phenomenon and appears as an inherently existent entity, even though the subject of such a cognition knows that it is not so (compare a mirage that appears as water even to someone who knows that it is merely a mirage). And in order to realize emptiness in this way, one must make use of the Mādhyamika view while rejecting all false views.

To one who directly apprehends emptiness, however, he claims, emptiness, while an object of such an awareness, is not a positive phenomenon, but a mere negation of all positive phenomena and is not different in entity from the mind cognizing it. In such an awareness, he claims, since emptiness does not appear as qualified in any way and since such an awareness is nonconceptual, there is no view of emptiness. So, he argues, even the Mādhyamika view is to be relinquished at the stage of direct realization. Nonetheless, the verse indicates first, on his reading, the necessity to relinquish all false views, and then, in direct realization to relinquish the Mādhyamika view. Mukherjee (1985) makes a similar point:

"A significant point that the Mādhyamikas never fail to make out is that reason and concepts have a place in *Vyavahdra.* It is possible to select a pattern, hold a position without clinging to it, i.e., without being dogmatic. It teaches one to look at a view as something relative and shows that the error of clinging is not essential to reason Did not the Buddha himself use words, concepts without clinging to them?

By being free of clinging one attains a level that is transcendent to all the views, but at the same time he remains fully cognisant of the other levels in their minutest details without losing sight of the undivided reality. He sees these levels as not yet perfect; he sees them as various stages on the way to the perfect." (pp. 221-22)

See also Kalupahana (1986), p. 80. But Kalupahana also says that these final lines "clearly show that Nāgārjuna was aware that the Buddha did not speak 'metaphysically' but only 'empirically' " (p. 391). That conclusion certainly does not follow. I refuse to give a metaphysical theory of the nature of phenomena and to refuse to characterize what cannot be spoken of coherently does not by itself constitute an eschewal of metaphysics. Nor does it indicate that the arguments offered in this text are empirical. Manifestly, a great deal of metaphysics (albeit of a highly critical and negative kind) and very little empirical discussion occur in this text.)

One must realize the ultimate truth dependent upon the conventional, but abandon all of these necessarily conventional designations as characterizations of an ultimate nature that is ultimately uncharacterizable. (fn 140. Wood (1994) argues, following his nihilistic interpretation of Nāgārjuna, that here and in *Vigrahavytivartani* Nāgārjuna is, in virtue of denying the existence of even his own view, completing a nihilistic program that denies existence of any kind to anything. As should be clear by now, I think that this nihilistic reading is untenable. Nonetheless, it is surely the case that Wood is correct in claiming that Nāgārjuna wishes - to treat emptiness in exactly the way that he treats other phenomena - as empty - and that any theory about it that presupposes it has an essence must be false. I part company with Wood only when he goes on to interpret emptiness as complete nonexistence. A careful reading of *Vigrahavytivartani* reveals, as Wood notes, that Nāgārjuna denies that he has a proposition *(prarijnā),* but not that he utters words. Nāgārjuna is working to show the merely conventional character of his utterance and that its utility does not entail the - existence of any convention - independent reality as its semantic value. But that is a far cry from nihilism. See Garfield (unpublished) for a more sustained discussion of emptiness and positionlessness.)

The anticipation of Wittgenstein's close of the *Tractatus* is remarkable:

6.54 My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them - as steps - to climb beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throwaway the ladder after he has climbed up it.)

7 What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.

Nāgārjuna may well have intended (and of course we have no way of knowing what he intended, nor would it make much difference to interpretation at this point) both readings - the standard reading at the conventional level, according to which the truth of his own standpoint contrasts with all other false views, and this latter reading at the ultimate level, at which his own view must itself be seen as a merely conventional ostention of an ineffable ultimate truth. (fn 141. Streng (1973) agrees. See chap. 6.) And if the doctrine of the two truths and their identity is correct, these readings are mutually entailing. To assert from the conventional standpoint that all phenomena are empty and that all views according to which they are not are to be relinquished is to recognize from the ultimate standpoint that there are no phenomena to be empty and that no view attributing any characteristic to anything can be maintained. Even the emptiness of emptiness is empty. . . .

May whatever merit has been achieved through this work and through its study be dedicated to the liberation of all sentient beings from cyclic existence.

Closing

[Colophon]

༄༅།མཛོད་བྱང་།༄༅།
དབུ་མ་རྩ་བའི་ཚིག་ལེའུར་བྱས་པ་ཤེས་རབ་ཅེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཆོས་མངོན་པ་རྣམ་པར་གཞག་པ།
དོན་དམ་པའི་དེ་ཁོ་ན་ཡང་དག་པར་སྟོན་པ།
ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པའི་ཚུལ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ།
སློབ་དཔོན་བདག་ཉིད་ཆེན་པོ་འཕགས་པ་ཀླུ་སྒྲུབ་མི་འཕྲོགས་པའི་མཁྱེན་རབ་དང་ཐུགས་རྗེར་ལྡན་པ།
དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་ཐེག་པ་བླ་ན་མེད་པའི་ཚུལ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ།
རབ་ཏུ་དགའ་བའི་ས་བསྒྲུབས་ནས།
བདེ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་ཞིང་དུ་གཤེགས་པ།
འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་དང་བའི་འོད་ཅེས་བྱ་བར།
དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ཡེ་ཤེས་འབྱུང་གནས་འོད་ཅེས་བྱ་བར་འགྱུར་བས་མཛད་པ་རྫོགས་སོ།
དབང་ཕྱུག་དམ་པའི་མངའ་བདག་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་དཔལ་ལྷ་བཙན་པོའི་བཀའ་ལུང་གིས།རྒྱ་གར་གྱི་མ
ཁན་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་དབུ་མ་པ།།
དང་།
ཞུ་ཆེན་གྱི་ལོ་ཙ་བ་དགེ་སློང་ཅོག་རོ་ཀླུའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་གྱིས་བསྒྱུར་ཅིང་ཞུས་ཏེ་གཏན་ལ་ཕབ་པ།
འདི་ལ་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་ཉི་ཤུ་རྩ་བདུན།
ཤློ་ཀ་བཞི་བརྒྱ་བཞི་བཅུ་རྩ་དགུ་ཡོད།
བམ་པོ་ནི་ཕྱེད་དང་གཉིས་སུ་བྱས་སོ།
སླད་ཀྱིས་ཁ་ཆེའི་གྲོང་ཁྱེར་དཔེ་མེད་ཀྱི་དབུས།
གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་རིན་ཆེན་སྦས་པའི་དབུས་སུ།
ཁ་ཆེའི་མཁན་པོ་ཧ་སུ་མ་ཏི་དང་།
བོད་ཀྱི་སྒྲ་བསྒྱུར་གྱི་ལོ་ཙ་བ་པ་ཚབ་ཉི་མ་གྲགས་ཀྱིས་མིའི་བདག་པོ་འཕགས་པ་ལྷའི་སྐུ་རིང་ལ་
འགྲེལ་པ་ཚིག་གསལ་བ་དང་བསྟུན་ནས་བཅོས་པའོ།
སླད་ཀྱིས་ར་ས་འཕྲུལ་སྣང་གི་གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་དུ།
རྒྱ་གར་གྱི་མཁན་པོ་ཀ་ན་ཀ་དང་།
ལོ་ཙ་བ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ཞུ་ཆེན་བགྱིས་པའོ།།

Romanized Tibetan

LVP 594,9-10 -
samāptaṃ cedaṃ madhyamakaśāstraṃ sakalalaukikalokottarapravacananītaneyārthavyākhyānanaipuṇyaviśāradaṃ śrāvakapratyekabuddhānuttarasamyaksaṃbuddhabodhimaṇḍāsanadāyakam iti ||

Tg tsa 18b7-19a6 –
|| gaṅ gis thugs brtse ñer bzuṅ nas | | lta ba thams cad spaṅ ba’i phyir |
| dam pa’i chos ni ston mdzad pa | | goo tam de la phyag ’tshal lo ||
(19a1)|| dbu ma rtsa ba’i tshig le’ur byas pa śes rab ces bya ba theg pa chen po’i chos mṅon pa rnam par gźag pa | | don dam pa’i de kho na yaṅ dag par ston pa | śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i tshul gsal bar byed pa | slob (2)dpon bdag ñid chen po ’phags pa klu sgrub mi ’phrogs pa’i mkhyen rab daṅ thugs rjer ldan pa | de bźin gśegs pa’i theg pa bla na med pa’i tshul gsal bar byed pa | rab tu dga’ ba’i sa bsgrubs nas | bde ba can gyi źiṅ du gśegs (3)pa | ’jig rten gyi khams daṅ ba’i ’od ces bya bar | de bźin gśegs pa ye śes ’byuṅ gnas ’od ces bya bar ’gyur bas mdzad pa rdzogs so ||

|| dbaṅ phyug dam pa’i mṅa’ bdag rgyal po chen po dpal lha btsan po’i bka’ luṅ gis | (4)rgya gar gyi mkhan po chen po dbu ma pa | dzñ’a na garbha daṅ | źu chen gyi lo tstsha ba dge sloṅ cog ro klu’i rgyal mtshan gyis bsgyur ciṅ źus te gtan la phab pa | ’di la rab tu byed pa ñi śu rtsa bdun | | śloo ka bźi brgya bźi bcu rtsa dgu yod | bam po ni phyed daṅ (5)gñis su byas so | | slad kyis kha che’i groṅ khyer dpe med kyi dbus | gtsug lag khaṅ rin chen sbas pa’i dbus su | kha che’i mkhan po ha su ma ti daṅ | bod kyi sgra bsgyur gyi lo tstsha ba pa tshab ñi ma grags kyis mi’i bdag po ’phags pa lha’i sku riṅ la (6)’grel pa tshig gsal ba daṅ bstun nas bcos pa’o ||

|| slad kyis ra sa ’phrul snaṅ gi gtsug lag khaṅ du | rgya gar gyi mkhan po ka na ka daṅ | lo tstsha ba de ñid kyis źu chen bgyis pa’o ||

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

DOCTOR (Tb):
Colophon to the Tibetan Translation

This completes the root stanzas of the Middle Way, entitled “Insight,” which belong to the Abhidharma of the Great Vehicle and which truly reveal ultimate reality. This elucidation of the way of transcendent insight was composed by the great being and noble Master Nagarjuna, possessor of inalienable knowledge and compassion. Illuminating the way of the supreme vehicle of the Thus-Gone One, he accomplished the ground of great joy and departed for the Realm of Bliss. In the world called Clear Light, he will become a Thus-Gone One, known by the name “Light of the Source of Wakefulness.”

As instructed by the great king, Pal-lha Tsenpo, Lord of Perfect Majesty, this translation was prepared, revised, and established by the great Indian preceptor and representative of the Middle Way, Jnanagarbha, and the lotsawa and editor, the monk Chokru Lui Gyaltsen. The twenty-seven chapters and 449 *slokas* are contained in one and a half bampo.

Subsequently, the translation was revised based on the Clear Words commentary during the reign of Aryadeva, Lord of Men, in the Temple of Hidden Jewels, a monastic college situated in the center of the city of Anupamanagara in Kashmir. This revision was undertaken by the Kashmiri preceptor Hasumati and the Tibetan lotsawa, the translator Patsab Nyima Drakpa. The Indian preceptor Kanaka and the same lotsawa later prepared a final revision in the Temple of Rasa Trulnang.

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I'm sorry there are so many mistakes and typos, etc. – Korin, August 2011.